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**“If It Ain’t One Thing, It’s Another”: Black LGBTQ students  
and their experiences with school discipline and punishment**

By

**Quentin Jenkins Jr.**

A Thesis

Submitted to Pitzer College

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the  
Sociology Major

Presented to

Professor **Alicia D. Bonaparte**  
Professor **Marilyn Grell-Brisk**

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## Abstract

School officials have disproportionately applied disciplinary policies and exclusionary practices to Black and LGBTQ youth, causing those students to be negatively sanctioned. Characterized by instruments of surveillance, metal detectors, and the presence of law enforcement, schools in the United States have significantly exacerbated the negative experiences these children have within educational spaces. Schools foster “prison-like” environments and subject Black LGBTQ youth to hyper-surveillance, thus increasing their likelihood of coming in contact with the juvenile justice system. Grounded in BlackCrit and Quare theory, this paper analyzes how the coupled intersecting identities of Blackness and Queerness lead Black LGBTQ youth to have disparate encounters with school discipline and punishment which negatively affects their schooling experiences. To understand their lived experiences, semi-structured interviews were conducted with current college students who attended high schools in major metropolitan cities. I find that the space Black LGBTQ students inhabit within school disciplinary structures, as well as their quotidian interactions with school officials lead to distinct differences in the approach, method, and dispensation of discipline and punishment. Within these educational spaces, administrators and officials perpetuate Black suffering, criminalize and punish Black LGBTQ students differently than their cisgendered counterparts, and engage in their hyper surveillance as a form of control. This can lead to concealment and suppression of queer identity and self-exclusionary behaviors.

**Keywords:** LGBTQ youth, BlackCrit, school discipline, intersectionality, Black education, anti-Blackness, Quare theory

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## Introduction

On August 21, 2021, a TikTok video surfaced of a Black gay student suspended for defending a Black trans student from school bullies at Fulton High School in Knoxville, Tennessee. The student, Willum, posted a series of TikTok videos of an officer standing outside a door alleging that he was suspended while the bullies escaped punishment. Assistant Principal of Fulton High, Beth Haun, claimed that Willum was suspended for using “profanity.” In the video, Willum claims the trans student, Aurora, was being deadnamed<sup>1</sup> by classmates and faced punishment following the altercation. School officials had reportedly placed Aurora in the Restorative Learning Center (RLC), a form of in-school suspension. Willum ends one of the videos by stating, “This is what it feels like to be Black and be part of the LGBTQ community in Knoxville, Tennessee.” Incidents like this one are not isolated as the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) report that 32.7 percent of LGBTQ students missed school in the past month because they did not feel safe, compared to the national average of 4.5 percent for all students (Kosciw et al., 2011). Willum and Aurora are just two of many Black LGBTQ students subjected to school discipline and unfair treatment from public and private school officials. Willum and Aurora’s incident is not an anomaly as Black LGBTQ students' schooling experiences have been neglected and ignored by school officials, resulting in their negative experiences with the education system.

Regarding discipline of Black boys, existing research shows that because of the racialized and gendered representation of Black men, Black boys are typically criminalized because of school officials' assumptions of gang affiliation, their use of inappropriate language, and because school officials attribute their negative behaviors to internal factors (Bridges & Steen, 1998;

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<sup>1</sup> Deadnaming is the act of referring to a transgender or nonbinary person by their birth, given, or former name without their consent

Losen, Noguera, & Skiba, 2010; Toro and Wang, 2021). For Black girls, the literature shows that they are also disciplined for factors viewed as internal deficiencies, but the reasons are different; they are accused of having bad attitudes, being loud, and not following Eurocentric femininity standards (Crenshaw, 2015; Morris, 2012; Wun, 2016). Studies show that the criminalization of Black boys and Black girls in schools puts them at risk of coming in contact with the juvenile justice system and thus increasing their likelihood of being arrested. While this research illuminates racialized disparities in school discipline for Black boys and girls, much less research exists that interrogates the specific experiences of Black LGBTQ youth. Studies on LGBTQ youth and their disparate experiences with school discipline reflect that they are typically criminalized due to public displays of affection, protecting themselves against bullying, self-expression, and violating gender norms (Curtin, 2002; Mitchum & Moodie-Mills, 2014; Snapp et al., 2015). The aforementioned studies are limited in their scope as they do not include students that identify as Black and LGBTQ in their analysis. I believe that a specific insight into the experience of Black LGBTQ students would show that the policies and exclusionary measures taken against the students impacts their outlook on the education system and the relationship with their identities that are stigmatized.

Throughout this thesis, I examine Black LGBTQ students' schooling experiences with discipline and punishment by utilizing a dualistic guiding framework of *BlackCrit* and *Quare theory* to illuminate their disparate experiences given their interlocking identities of Blackness and queerness. To further understand how the intersecting identities impact Black LGBTQ youth experiences, I explore how those interlocking identities influence the type of discipline and punishment they receive and the effects those disciplines and punishments have on the students

schooling experiences. Additionally, I analyze the way Black queer youth view themselves, their life aspirations, and the way they view educational spaces.

This thesis expands on growing research on LGBTQ youth and school discipline by utilizing *BlackCrit* (Dumas & ross, 2016) to center Blackness and call attention to how anti-Blackness is a crucial factor in implementing and applying specific laws, policies, and practices. Additionally, using *Quare Theory* (Johnson, 2001) to acknowledge the distinct experiences LGBTQ people of color have because of their sexuality, racial, and class identities, I conceptualize and highlight the different experiences Black LGBTQ youth have with school discipline for the purpose of providing educators with a more thorough understanding of the youth's experiences in our efforts towards change in the policies and practices that will improve their experiences.

I utilized a dualistic theoretical framework to demonstrate how the different experiences necessitate deeper investigation as they have implications for policy, practice, and implementation for educators, school officials, and educational policymakers. It is worth noting that a racialized-gendered approach has put Black boys at the forefront of discussion regarding disciplinary disproportionality (Hines-Datiri & Andrews, 2017), which contributed to the lack of attention given to other groups of Black youth with overlapping social identities. This motivated educators to implement myopic policies to remedy the discipline gap for Black students. Yet, educators do the opposite as these policies further exacerbate the inequities experienced by Black LGBTQ youth. For example, when strict dress code policies are enforced to promote safety and combat the perceived threat of gang violence (Thompson et al., 2000), these policies inhibit self-identity and self-expression for LGBTQ students fostering a hostile school environment (Kosciw, 2011).



## **Organization of this Thesis**

Chapter 1 begins by exploring the literature on school discipline and punishment. The first section in the literature review discusses scholarship on Black youth's experience with school discipline to provide an understanding of how schooling policies and practices have disproportionately impacted Black youth. The next section in the literature reviews describes the way LGBTQ youth experience school discipline and punishment and how anti-LGBTQ discrimination in schools shape their experiences differently. Chapter 1 then provides an overview of anti-Blackness and Black suffering in education policy.

Chapter 2 lays the foundation for the dualistic theoretical framework that guided this study. I utilize BlackCrit and Quare Theory because taken together they provide the requisite lens to adequately analyze, interrogate and address the limitations of the current discourse. BlackCrit focuses specifically on how anti-Blackness permeates our social institutions and ponders on the idea of Black liberatory fantasies to re-envision how Black people navigate society. Quare Theory expands on the limits of queer theory, and contends that the raced body is an object of analysis when examining queer people of color rather than abstraction and devaluation of their experiences.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology that was engaged to complete this study. The primary source of analysis consists of five in-depth, semi-structured interviews with Black LGBTQ students that attend high schools across Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Seattle, and New York. The interviews conducted focus on three topical areas: background and schooling experiences, discipline and punishment, and perceptions/Black liberatory fantasies. Participation in the study was voluntary and pseudonyms were given to all participants to protect their anonymity.

Chapter 4 identifies the themes present throughout the experiences of my participants. I identified three themes of their schooling experiences: the role that school officials played in killing black joy and birthing black suffering; hyper-surveillance as social control; and LGBTQ negligence and identity concealment. Throughout this chapter I lay out the narratives of my participants and identify each theme, followed by a deep analysis of the themes.

Chapter 5 engages in Black liberatory fantasies as BlackCrit assists us with that articulation. Through the fantasies of my participants I provide recommendations for educators, administrators, and future researchers with ways on how they can improve the experiences of Black LGBTQ youth in educational spaces.

The final chapter, chapter 6 discusses the conclusions of the study reiterating the original research question and explicating the findings and results once more. In this chapter I discuss some shortcomings of this study as well as ways future research can engage with theoretical frameworks like BlackCrit and Quare theory pertaining to the lives of Black people.

## Chapter 1

### Literature Review

#### *Black Youth and School Discipline*

School discipline policies and practices across the United States are highly scrutinized by activists, organizers, and educational leaders because of their disproportionate impact on Black youth. Data collected by the U.S. Department of Education reported that Black students were three times more likely to be suspended or expelled than their white classmates (2014). Research on the discipline gap for Black boys continuously shows that Black students are overrepresented in statistics on school discipline. Following the statistic above, in a study conducted in 364 elementary and middle schools, Black boys were overrepresented in suspension rates, corporal punishments, and expulsion from school for the same behaviors their white counterparts exhibited (Skiba et al., 2011). Black boys typically face these negative sanctions for using inappropriate language, assumed gang affiliation, and perceived disrespect (Ferguson et al., 2000; Gilliam et al., 2016; Noguera, 2010). Expansion in the literature on the discipline gap now includes Black girls and how disciplinary policies affect their experience in schools.

As I stated earlier, research suggests school officials discipline Black girls because they are disrespectful, loud, do not follow Eurocentric femininity expectations, and have bad attitudes (Crenshaw, 2015; Morris, 2012; Wun, 2016). A study of elementary and secondary female students finds that Black girls, similar to their male counterparts, were overrepresented for exclusionary discipline sanctions (Blake et al., 2011). The study also found that Black girls were disciplined for inappropriate dress, defiance, use of profanity, and physical aggression.

### *LGBTQ youth and School Discipline*

As the discourse around racial disparities in school discipline gradually increased in the early 2000s, a few scholars now study how sexual identity and non-conforming gender identity play a role in the disciplining of youth. Focusing on school discipline and exclusionary practices, scholars note how these youth have disparate experiences with discipline policies in educational spaces. LGBTQ youth are typically punished for public displays of affection and violating gender norms (Snapp et al. 2015).

In a study of lesbian and bisexual girls and their experiences with the juvenile justice system in Massachusetts, Curtin (2002) finds that lesbian and bisexual youth experience differential treatment when they engage in sexual activity with each other in the facility. Reportedly at one facility in their study, if a girl had sex with a boy, three months were added to her sentence, whereas if she had sex with another girl, six months were added. This finding correlates with the findings of Snapp et al.: the stigma around LGBTQ youth and same-sex relations warranted harsher disciplinary actions than their heterosexual counterparts. Through their findings, Curtin argues that education and juvenile justice systems create and enforce rules that systematically treat lesbian and bisexual girls differently from, and in many cases are more punitive than other girls. In addition to differential sentences, the girls in Curtin's study report being watched more closely in common areas and blamed for conflict because they are "flamboyant." This hyper-surveillance came as a consequence, not because of the actions of the girls but because of their sheer identity of being queer. Queerness in this context is seen as deviant and something that must be corrected and watched to ensure it is not present or does not happen. The pathologization of the queer identity then acts as a point of erasure. The women in

this study were watched constantly to stop them from engaging in same-sex activities, by subjecting them to such rules controlled their behavior and forced them to follow the rules of the guards by suppressing their identities. In the same vein, The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) suggest that anti-LGBTQ discriminatory policies and practices may also contribute to high discipline rates. They report that 56% of LGBTQ students experienced anti-LGBTQ discrimination at school, and these students were more likely to have received school discipline than those who did not experience discrimination (GLSEN, 2016).

In addition to being disproportionately disciplined, LGBTQ youth may have even more difficulty navigating resources in educational facilities and feeling comfortable advocating for themselves due to racial or ethnic discrimination (Savin-Williams, 1996). Regardless of their identities, all students should feel safe in education spaces; instead, LGBTQ youth are intimidated by school officials and their peers; and when LGBTQ youth attempt to defend themselves the youth are then punished by school officials.

As Snapp et al. (2015) highlight, LGBTQ youth are typically punished for protecting themselves, noting, “[w]hen LGBTQ youth respond to bullying by fighting back, they are often blamed and punished for their victimization” (p. 69). Throughout their study, one participant who identifies as trans was bullied constantly by their classmates. Each time she reported it to the school officials, officials ignored her. After numerous unsuccessful attempts to receive help from school officials because of the constant bullying and harassment, she was forced to defend herself with a weapon at school and subsequently punished. While this example may be extreme, such experiences are not an anomaly for LGBTQ youth, as LGBTQ identification is a consistent risk factor for victimization at school (Myers et al., 2020). Because stigma is associated with LGBTQ identities, these students are under constant surveillance from school officials yet denied

any agency or advocacy when they experience forms of harassment in school. The literature on LGBTQ victimization is consistent; compared to their heterosexual counterparts, they have an increased risk of school victimization (Setoodah, 2018; Toomey & Russell, 2016). It's worth noting that there are potential after-effects of victimization in youth. The after-effects could manifest in a myriad of ways; future deviance, negative perceptions of the education system, and dropping out.

### ***School Victimization***

As current literature suggests, school victimization is consistently higher among LGBTQ youth, and one would assume that these students would receive more attention, support, and guidance within educational spaces. However, studies show that the reality is the exact opposite, as most schools do not have support systems that directly acknowledge LGBTQ students and their unique experiences in schools. For example, Sava et al. (2021) conducted a mixed-method study from 2017 to 2018. They found an urgent need for access to gender-neutral bathrooms, education on gender transitioning, education on safe sex, and access to safe spaces for LGBTQ youth in schools. It's worth noting that Sava et al. expand on their findings and argue for a specific focus on transgender students, and LGBTQ youth of color's needs are unmet to a greater degree than white LGBTQ youth. The limitation in most of the programs for LGBTQ youth focuses on white queer people and ignores the interlocking identities of queer people of color.

Expanding the way LGBTQ youth of color's needs are unmet, the GLSEN asked students to complete an online survey detailing their experience during the 2016-2017 school year. Within the survey, Black LGBTQ students were asked about their feeling of safety, comfort levels in school, any experiences with harassment and assault, and if they had experienced any anti-LGBTQ discriminatory school policies and practices. They found that 40% of Black

LGBTQ students reported experiencing harassment and assault at school due to both their sexual orientation and their race/ethnicity identity. This finding correlates with these students experiencing the lowest level of belonging in schools, greater levels of depression, and being the most likely to skip school because they feel unsafe (GLSEN, 2017). As GLSEN findings suggest, with the compounding identities of Blackness and Queerness, many students' negative experiences in schools have more significant implications regarding their future, specifically in educational spaces. To name a few, these implications include students not feeling self-confident, which negatively affects their mental health, and students feeling excluded in educational spaces, which increases their likelihood of being pushed out of school (Sava, 2021; Myers, 2020).

Similarly, the Gay Straight Alliance network (2018) conducted a focus group with youth across different races, classes, abilities, gender, and sexual identities. Within their focus group, they found that LGBTQ youth of color report increased surveillance and policing, as these students were typically labeled as a "problem student." Being marked as a problem student leads to students experiencing hyper surveillance, as administrators and school officials may impose harsher punishments on students they do not like. In alignment with Snapp et al. (2015), the GSA network additionally reports that LGBTQ youth report being blamed for their victimization and report incidents of harsher school disciplines and biased applications of policies.

As current literature suggests, LGBTQ youth are disciplined and punished by school officials for different reasons than their heterosexual counterparts. Although some reasons for being disciplined may be similar across identities, LGBTQ youth are more disciplined for public displays of affection, violating gender norms, and being punished for their victimization when they defend themselves. The myriad challenges facing Black LGBTQ youth create a different category of suffering for them in educational spaces socially and mentally.

### *Anti-Blackness & Black Suffering in Educational Policy*

School disciplinary policies and punitive practices facilitated and influenced the presence of anti-Blackness within educational spaces. Ian Wilkinson argues that social suffering can be understood as a cultural struggle to reconstitute a positive sense of meaning and purpose for self and society against the brute force of events in which these are violated and destroyed' (Wilkinson, 2005).

In 2006, and 2007, Michael Dumas (2014) conducted ethnographic interviews with 30 Black educators and activists that played active roles in the struggle for school desegregation as part of the Seattle plan, which took effect in 1978. Dumas found that Black leaders view education policies and practices as complicit with and reproducing historical patterns of Black economic exploitation. Black leaders felt that the desegregation of schools did not improve the educational opportunities for Black children due to the administration and teachers' lack of preparation to address the racial climate in schools. Desegregated educational spaces exacerbated suffering for Black students and it must be addressed to fully improve Black students' experiences and promote success and achievement. As Dumas contends, if the cultural politics of Black education is about securing humanity, Black suffering in schools signifies the loss or cultural devaluation of that humanity and the loss of material resources that allow Black subjects to be regarded and educated as human. My study shows how anti-blackness and consequently suffering appears in the personal testimonies of my participants.

In his book *Red, White & Black*, Frank B. Wilderson (2010) argues that educators must acknowledge anti-blackness and how it influences implicit biases in their everyday life inside and outside of the academy. Prior to the civil rights movement, Black people were not given the



opportunity of education; we must be very critical and intentional about Black education and how Black people use education as a liberatory practice. I, therefore, expand on this idea by adding the layer of anti-LGBTQ discrimination within education policies as they intersect for Black LGBTQ students.

Recently, a wave of anti-LGBTQ curriculum laws resurfaced across multiple states in the United States (Rosky, 2017). Now, we see conversations regarding Critical Race Theory, African American Studies, and LGBTQ studies come into question as some politicians argue they should not be taught or prohibit certain topics from being taught (Education Week, 2023). My thesis adds to the existing literature about Black LGBTQ students and their experience with school discipline and punishment. Because scholarship on school discipline and punishment focused largely on Black boys and Black girls, my research also examines the intersecting identities of Blackness and Queerness. I argue that the interlocking oppressive identities of Blackness and Queerness mean Black LGBTQ students have different experiences compared to their heterosexual counterparts. In addition, examining the disparate experiences of the students couched in anti-blackness and anti-LGBTQ discrimination assists educational stakeholders in understanding the unique experiences and complexities within school discipline and how these policies affect students differently.

## Chapter 2

### Theoretical Framework

I utilize dualistic guiding frameworks: Quare theory (Johnson, 2001) and BlackCrit (Dumas & Ross, 2016) to more deeply analyze why identities of Black LGBTQ youth influence their schooling experiences. These theoretical frameworks identify and explicate the limitations of current literature while simultaneously providing me with the language to propose recommendations that speak to the lived experiences of Black LGBTQ youth specifically. While Kimberle Crenshaw coined intersectionality in 1989, the Combahee River Collective expanded on the meaning of intersectionality, “...the idea that multiple oppressions reinforce each other to create new categories of suffering” (Taylor, 2012, p.4). Furthermore, they described oppressions as interlocking, “thus creating new measures of oppression and inequality” (Taylor, 2012, p. 4). Guided by this articulation of intersectionality, my thesis investigates how the identities of Queerness and Blackness subject Black LGBTQ youth to disparate experiences with school discipline and punishment.

#### ***BlackCrit***

In 2018, Charlene Carruthers, a Black queer feminist activist, authored *Unapologetic: A Black, Queer, and Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements*. Carruthers declared

Anti-Blackness is a system of beliefs and practices that attack, erode, and limit the humanity of Black people. Anti-Blackness works 24/7 to kill the Black imagination. Black folks have always been vulnerable to violence by state-supported individuals and institutions. For Black folks in the US, the threat of violence persists regardless of what we do or do not do. Black people are repeatedly told that there’s something inherently criminal about us and that we deserve to be hit. (p.47)

Carruthers’ work explains how a Black, queer, feminist lens can ultimately lead to liberation for Black people through organizing and collective struggles by arguing that we must look at our liberation from an “All of us or none of us” perspective. Carruthers contends that in order to achieve liberation, we must ensure that we all are free and not just those that “fit” the traditional

Black cis-heterosexual male identity. She denounces the ideology of respectability politics and white supremacy and argues that we must center those most marginalized in our community if we truly want to achieve liberation. Black queer feminism argues that all effective feminist work requires an active unlearning of our own internalized racism, anti-blackness, heterosexism/homophobia, classism, and other power structures that oppress us. Additionally, it urges us all to be cognizant of the ways in which anti-homophobia and anti-heterosexist actions are crucial to Black feminists and how anti-racist work is crucial to all effective LGBTQ activism. Simply put, a Black queer feminist theory contends that all oppressions are linked. Critical race theory is another theory scholars use to explain and understand the lived realities of marginalized identities. Additionally, CRT contributes to studies of racial stratification and racial marginalization in higher education.

Critical race theory (CRT) emerged in the 1970s as scholars and activists fought against racism within institutions. CRT argues that race is not biological; rather, it is a social construct that oppresses and exploits people of color. Secondly, CRT argues that if we look at the history of American society, racism has become normalized and permeates our society in every institution ranging from the government to education. Since its emergence, CRT helps education studies resist dominant ideologies and center students of color's experiences in educational spaces (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). In the field of education, critical race theory challenges the traditional claims of the education system and its institutions to objectivity, meritocracy, color, gender blindness, race, gender neutrality, and equal opportunity (Solorzano, 1998). Specifically, CRT highlights and critiques the issues contributing to individuals' lack of success in education spaces to being an "individual" issue. Education studies engaging CRT argue that educational institutions are not inclusive in their frameworks, policies, and programs, so they adversely affect

students of color. CRT's intervention in education has yielded much change, and it helps explore the experiences of people of color more generally.

BlackCrit expands on CRT, focusing on anti-Blackness and how it manifests itself through laws and policies designed to subjugate Black people in the United States (Dumas & ross, 2016). To precisely identify the experiences Black LGBTQ students have, BlackCrit offers language to identify, interrogate, and critique issues that directly affect Black people. BlackCrit argues that anti-blackness is endemic to and central to how we as a society make sense of the social, economic, historical, and cultural dimensions of human life. Within BlackCrit, anti-blackness refers to the relationship between blackness and humanity, whereas, Black humanity is constantly threatened and disdained by our social, political, and education systems. In this case, BlackCrit acts to intervene by detailing how policies and everyday practices reproduce Black suffering. Lastly, Dumas & ross (2016) offer that BlackCrit encourages policy analysis and advocacy to attend to the significance of blackness in the social construction of white supremacy by calling attention to the social life of Black people and their engagement in Black liberatory fantasies. Furthermore, informed by Dumas and ross's critique:

BlackCrit becomes necessary precisely because CRT, as a general theory of racism, is limited in its ability to adequately interrogate what we call 'the specificity of the Black.' That is, CRT is not intended to pointedly address how anti-blackness—which is something different than white supremacy—informs and facilitates racist ideology and institutional practice. More, it cannot fully employ the counterstories of Black experiences of structural and cultural racism because it does not, on its own, have the language to richly capture how anti-blackness constructs Black subjects and positions them in and against the law, policy, and everyday life (p.417).

As a result of BlackCrit's unique way of centering 'Blackness' and the opportunity it provides to claim Blackness as a site of empowerment, resistance, and agency (Dei, 2017), this theoretical framework becomes imperative to evaluate qualitative scholarly works on the experiences of Black LGBTQ youth in education. Specifically, BlackCrit allows for a more expansive understanding of the lived realities of anti-Blackness and how it further impacts Black LGBTQ

youth – particularly as the sheer presence of Blackness can represent an attack on authority. We understand that disciplining Black children is a way to reinforce security, order, and control of the Black body (Dumas & ross, 2016).

### ***Quare Theory***

Coined by E. Patrick Johnson (2001), quare theory emphasizes and highlights the different lived realities and experiences of LGBTQ folks of color. Quare theory argues that the conventional queer theory and queer theories intentionally ignore the contributions of Black queer people intellectually, historically, and politically. Therefore, quare theory challenges whiteness and white privilege within queer studies. Secondly, Quare theory argues that the queer experience is not monolithic and encourages us to center our focus on how identity, resistance, and survival function differently for queer people of color. Johnson asserts, “much of queer theory critically interrogates notions of selfhood, agency, and experience, [and] it is often unable to accommodate the issues faced by gays and lesbians of color who come from race communities” (p.3). Like Johnson, Gloria Anzaldúa (1991) argues “queer is used as a false unifying umbrella which all queers of all races, ethnicities, and classes are stored under” (250). Thus, discourse around class and race disrupts the utopian ideals of LGBTQ unity based solely on the awareness of sexual discrimination. The problematic nature of assuming all LGBTQ-identifying people have the same lived experiences comes when scholars and policymakers attempt to conceptualize and recommend specific policies that they think are in support of all LGBTQ folks but fail because they adversely affect LGBTQ people of color because they do not consider the racialized and classed experiences they have.

Additionally, Quare theory dismantles the focus on whiteness (and the racial privilege that comes with it) within queer theory; Quare theory contends that the raced body is an object of analysis

when examining queer people of color rather than abstraction, disembodiment, and the devaluation of experiences (Johnson, 2001, 2005). Johnson (2001) turns to what hooks describe as a *home place*. According to hooks, a home place is an environment where individuals can resist, foster their spirits, and develop with the support of others (hooks, 1990). Lastly, Quare theory argues that to examine Queer, and Trans people of color, the homeplace is another unit of analysis that explains their experiences. Theorists must value and speak from that homeplace where people of color live out the contradiction of their lives, as well as the homeplace being able to provide space to critique oppression.

By utilizing Quare theory, I humanize the identities of the Black LGBTQ students and the unique experiences they have due to their racial and sexual identity and the overlapping oppression that comes with them both. BlackCrit and Quare theory are essential to my analysis as they both humanize and center on Black LGBTQ folks. As Quare theory focuses on a home place for such individuals, and BlackCrit cites Blackness as a place of empowerment, resistance, and agency, these theoretical frameworks work together to allow me to identify just how disciplinary policies affect and dehumanize Black LGBTQ youth in schools. Expanding on just the point of “identifying”, BlackCrit and Quare theory encourages me to wrestle with the concepts of consciousness, freedom, and urgency for my participants as I provide recommendations after my analysis of their experiences. BlackCrit and Quare theory are relevant to my study because they are not just concerned with calling out anti-Blackness and anti-LGBTQ discrimination, they expand my analysis to then come up with ways to improve the experiences of my participants. The dualistic guiding framework gives us the opportunity to reimagine the futurity of Black LGBTQ people.

## Chapter 3

### Methodology & Method

For the purpose of this study, informed by Frantz Fanon, Howard Thurman, Sylvia Wynter, Charles Long, Wilson Harris, and Lewis Gordon, I implement an Africana phenomenological method. This method consistently focuses on the liberation of Africana identities from the processes of racialization by which they have been divided, doubled, masked, and dehumanized (Henry, 2008). It is the self-reflective descriptions of the constituting activities of the consciousness of Africana people, specifically focusing on racism and the reflection of racism through experiences. The use of Africana Phenomenology as a method of understanding the production of anti-black racism enables my project to possess a more liberatory, humanizing approach to value my participants and their experiences. This method, along with my theoretical framework, means that my data collection and analysis is a reflection of love, appreciation, and compassion as the holistic lived experiences of Black LGBTQ students to understand how the identities of Blackness and Queerness engender a different educational experience for those youth. Their experiences allow me to highlight areas of opportunity for school officials to implement policies that may mitigate their negative experiences. This research approach aligns with my epistemological stance promoting Black LGBTQ students' safety, agency, and healing through collective sharing regarding their unique schooling experiences. The Pitzer College Institutional Review Board approved this investigation on February 7, 2023. After IRB approval, I started the recruitment process. Participants were notified about the IRB approval, the purpose of the study, and the benefits of participating prior to interviews.

### ***Participants***

I interviewed five self-identified Black LGBTQ college students who attend various universities and colleges. When conducting my interviews, the students attended high schools in major cities, including Chicago, Dallas, Seattle, New York, and San Francisco. The participants were between the ages of 18 and 22, with the average age being 20. Two of my participants identified as Queer women, one identified as a trans woman, one identified as a gay man, and one identified as a bisexual woman. Since the focus of the research was to analyze Black LGBTQ students' experiences with school discipline and punishment, Black LGBTQ students were the target group. All interviews were conducted between February and March of 2023.

### ***Procedure***

I recruited participants from university-sponsored events ranging from students of color socials and student list-serves. When participants expressed interest in participating in the study, I contacted them via email and scheduled a time and location for the interview. I used a snowball sampling methodology to recruit participants as I asked participants to refer other students that matched the criteria for the research once their interview was completed. The Snowball sampling technique allows me to use my participants to identify others that may have experience with the subject of my thesis (Johnson, 2014). The average time for the interviews was 56 minutes. I audio-recorded and transcribed all interviews with Otter.ai software. After each transcription, I reviewed each audio recording and transcription to ensure the transcriptions were accurate and picked up each word properly. Additionally, to increase the safety of the participant's identity, I assigned all participants pseudonyms in this study. I stored my data on my laptop which is locked with a passcode, and locked them in a folder that also requires password access.



### ***Interview Protocol***

I conducted five semi-structured interviews as my method for data collection. I implemented the following techniques from Robert Stuart Weiss when conducting my interviews; one was to make sure that my participants were aware that my project would not cause any psychological or physical harm; two, I engaged in effective communication by letting my participant know that I would be recording them, and I had to obtain informed consent from them. Four, I allowed my participants to ask me any questions they may have had before starting the interview to ensure comfort. Lastly, I made sure to establish a natural interview flow by reading my participant's social cues and body language to recognize where I should start with my questions. Participants were first asked questions about their early schooling experiences and their relationship with school discipline and punishment practices. Specific questions were asked about how they perceived discipline and punishment from school officials (e.g., “What were the ways you were disciplined in school?” “What ways did you see LGBTQ students of color disciplined differently from those that are not LGBTQ students of color?” “What schooling routines happened that made you feel unsafe or not welcomed?”). Open-ended questions allowed the students to provide their own perspectives and recollect their experiences with detailed and in-depth answers (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2011.) The full interview protocol can be found in the appendix section.

### ***Positionality***

As a scholar, researcher, friend, collaborator, and student, I, too, am a dreamer. I engage in conversations around schooling and dream of the ways we as a society can improve the experiences of Black youth in educational spaces where education is safer and more liberatory for Black students. With that said, it is important to highlight my positionality as a researcher to

understand how I collected and analyzed my data. I went to a highly policed high school on the South side of Chicago where many instruments of surveillance were present, and my personal background and experience with school discipline and punishment affected the objectivity in my data analysis. Specifically, it could have influenced the type of questions I asked and the pre-assumptions I made about high schools and their practices. Nonetheless, because of my positionality and my insider experience, it provided a methodological advantage, whereas it includes a nuanced perspective for observations and building rapport with participants (Chavez, 2008).

## Chapter 4

### Findings & Analysis

All participants provided rich descriptions of their schooling experiences with discipline and punishment and the schooling experiences they fantasize about. Each student is currently in college, meaning that they have had at least a year to recollect their experiences in high school. These experiences I present are as a collective rather than individually in order to draw parallels to the similarities in their experiences due to their Black and queer identities. Three themes were persistent across the Black LGBTQ youth experiences: school officials' roles in killing Black joy and birthing Black suffering; hyper-surveillance as an intimidation tactic of social control; and LGBTQ negligence & identity concealment.

#### *Theme 1: School Officials' Role in Killing Black Joy and Birthing Black Suffering*

The negative effects of school discipline and punishment on the emotional and mental state of the students was the most common theme among the students interviewed. All participants reported negative feelings toward the education system due to the treatment and actions of school officials. Amari, a 21-year old a Black, gay man who attended a public high school in New York, stated the following:

I used to have to give my self-reassurance that I was doing okay because my teachers weren't doing that for me. Whether that [reassurance] was academically or whether that was through my peers. I remember in tenth grade, and this was probably one of most the lowest points in terms of my social life; I texted almost my whole grade, asking if they liked me as a person. because the admin made me so insecure with myself, like I texted, everyone do you like me as a person like. What do you not like about me? Just because I cared that much about how people felt about me because the administration was like Amari is too loud. He's too bubbly. He's to this, He's to that. He's too flamboyant for me, and this would all be said in front of other students, and so because of that that I suffered inside for so long from my administration. So, even though I wasn't physically, you know, like in danger, I feel like I was socially in danger in that school because of my identity as a fat Black gay student And and at that time as well, there weren't that many students that were out in my school. I think there were, like, maybe three people, and so everybody knew I was queer.

For Amari, the support of school officials was important and their lack of affirmation and their negative judgment of his queer identity, affected his self image and motivated the character of his in-school interactions. They used descriptives like “too much” or “too flamboyant,” which implied that his queer identity was excessive and abnormal. The administration's shunning of his queer identity, caused Amari to look for acceptance amongst his peers in the form of a mass email questioning his likeability. During the interview Amari confessed that because of the treatment at school he learned that he would never be valued by school officials or his peers. Amari’s loss of hope and lack of social recognition from school officials played a pivotal role in his suffering.

Amari's discipline and punishment is implicit, what James (2008) and Monsvold (2011) would consider teachers' psychological bullying behavior. These are incidents performed by teachers where they ridicule, ignore, or isolate students and comment about the student in hurtful ways. The way Amari was judged by school officials could be seen as a method of punishment for being “too queer” which led to the hurtful comments and the isolation caused by the school officials.

When asked about her experience with treatment from teachers and other school officials, Jessica, a 19-year old Black queer woman, details her time during highschool in Seattle, where she experienced multiple incidents that contributed to her growing hatred for school.

one of my teachers, like, my science teacher. He asked me because he was working for a company that donated money for water to Africa, and he, like, asked me why I wasn't donating, considering I have family in Africa. and I was like, Oh, my God! Because he said, you know, don't they not have running water, and he goes on like making all these harmful statements about stereotypes of Africa.

For context, Jessica moved to the U.S. from Africa as a child, which was common knowledge at her high school. This insensitive comment from her science teacher assumes that Jessica is obligated to donate because she’s from Africa and reiterates the stereotype that Africa does not

have access to running water. Jessica was offended by this comment because the teacher spoke as if Africa was a country when in fact, Africa is the second-largest continent in the world. The teacher was not specific as to which country in Africa they were raising money for and talked as if the campaign was for the entire continent, and that was not the case. Another incident where Jessica felt belittled and targeted by another school official was during soccer practice. Jessica recounts:

And another time, bro, like my fucking soccer coach, so basically I had gotten a concussion, and so he, like, was explaining a drill, but he just sucked at explaining, and that's also hard for me sometimes; I'm more of like I need to watch it happen then I could do it, but I did not understand because of the way he was explaining, and I was the one he picked on to show an example of it [the drill], and I messed up, and he like made a joke asked me like, Are you still concussed. like you're awful slow and then kind of like was saying it, But not like even directly towards me, but like towards the team, for like everybody to hear and everyone ended up laughing at me at, and I was just like this just really fucked up, I hate it here for real, and it made me like not even wanna be apart of the team or even the fuckin school anymore.

Jessica describes being belittled by her soccer coach in front of her team. Jessica narrated two different stories, dealing with two different school officials that have said mean and hurtful things that facilitated her growing hatred for school. Fromuth's (2015) findings speak to both Amari and Jessica's experience in which they find that students almost immediately lose their desire to attend school and actually develop a hatred for school as a result of teacher bullying or being singled out consistently by teachers. In both narratives, the students used words like "suffer," "hate," and "danger" when they talked about their experiences with school officials.

Sky, a 20-year old Black queer woman who attended two high schools in Dallas, the first of which she was pushed out, detailed her experience of being threatened by school officials. When asked about why she transferred from her first high school, Sky confessed:

So the reason I transferred was that, near the end of my sophomore year, I was running into issues with my school, where, like any time, I would like, speak up or speak out about anything they would call my parents like for example, the school required you to change your uniform every year. And this is like a school of mostly like low-income people of color, and we're buying like \$70 uniforms like every year, and so I circle a petition around to like create a unified uniform. So we can all wear the same thing like we all know what

grade we're in. We don't need to be wearing different colors based on grade level, and there's only a couple of stores; there are only 2 stores that sell the uniform anyways. So I circled this petition, and they like called me into the office, and they were like. Listen, you're a model student, and I wouldn't want something like to go wrong for you, and they were like telling me to think of my future. I'm like, what are you gonna do, like tell colleges that I started a petition I don't know what they were trying to allude to. And then so, the school had like a theater show from years ago where someone did like blackface, and they had like portraits of the show around the school and legit there was a giant portrait of this person in Black Face so I'm like you need to take it down. And they ignored me, so I organized a walk-out, and then they suspended me for 6 days. So, I was at home for 6 days, and I realized I just can't be here [the school] anymore. They were like threatening my future and suspending me. And like even when I went back to school, the Deans were so rude to me, and I was just like, I don't feel like this place is conducive to my learning. So I just realized I need to go.

Here, Sky recounts her experience at the first high school she attended in Dallas, where she was pushed out because of her activism for Black students and other students of color. First, Sky recounted how she felt threatened by her school officials who used vague but threatening language when she started a petition to get universal uniforms implemented at her school; they used leading phrases like “I wouldn’t want anything to happen to your future,” alluding that her activism could jeopardize her future. Next, she was suspended for 6 days for organizing a walk-out in hopes of getting a portrait with Blackface taken down; and, when she returned, her deans treated her poorly which ultimately led to her being pushed out. Pushout refers to the punitive discipline practices schools use that exclude students from the classroom, often leading to students transferring or leaving school altogether (Morris, 2012). In Sky's case, the threatening, suspension, and differential treatment facilitated her push-out of her first school. Sky thought that transferring to another high school would make her experiences better but soon realized that was not the case. She states:

And so at [redacted], it was a big high school, so they had like 3 police officers on-site at all times, and like like at least like I would say, like 10 to 15 security like Private Security guards. And they were very specific with who they disciplined, mainly Black women on campus. One time me, and my friend were in the lunch room. We were talking, and we were just talking loud, you know, and we were also laughing very loud, and we were hitting each other arms as we were laughing like you know how Black people do. Next thing I know, I feel hands on me. and then I look over, and there's like hands on my friend, and we're being held by like the security officer, and one of them was like like stop right now, like you're going to get suspended if you keep yelling and fighting and we're like, oh, my God, we're not. We're not fighting, you know, like trying to like de-escalate the situation, but they were not having it, and then they grabbed us and was like stand up, stand up! And took us to the office, and we just had to sit there for hours and couldn't go to class.

But I would say, mostly, it was like black women who were punished by the school security. Like if you even talk back to them, they'll be like that's it, and put their hands on you. At that school, they had a lot of autonomy to put their hands on you, which was extremely uncomfortable, and in a way, because of those incidents happening so often, now I don't like to sit anywhere where my back is turned. Definitely, after those experiences in high school, where the security would come behind me and, like, grab me and stuff, I just always get anxious sitting in places where my back is turned. And like I never in my 2 years saw the offices put their hand on a single white student for any reason, even when they would act out too or, like, talk back to them.

Clearly, school officials at Sky's second high school traumatized her. She now becomes anxious when sitting in places where her back is turned. Sky discussed how security officers were quick to put their hands on Black female students; and during her time there, she never saw them physically sanction white students even for exhibiting the same behaviors as Black students.

### **Analysis of Theme One**

Taken together, these narratives capture just how egregious education spaces are for Black students. It is evident that school officials play a driving role in Black suffering. Irrespective of actual policies and practices, their bullying is justified due to the sheer fact that they have authority over students. As Dumas and ross (2016) articulates in their argument of BlackCrit as a framework, Black children's bodies represent the ultimate threat to authority, [therefore] the disciplining of Black children can be understood as the definitive reinforcement of security and order. I argue that my participants experienced what Michael Dumas (2016) describes as Black suffering in education. First, the narratives reveal the active killing of joy, and the everyday anti-blackness that persists within the social aspect of schools. Across the narratives of Amari, Jessica, and Sky, the disciplinary policies were not the sole reasons they suffered and hated school. Instead, it was the everyday social isolation they had to endure because of their intersecting identities and being constantly antagonized by their school officials. Amari explained this suffering he experienced as a fat Black openly-gay man looking for a safe space in his school where he could feel comfortable and supported in his identities instead had to deal

with school officials that bullied him, which led to him experiencing, as he puts it “the lowest point of his social life”. Amari was singled-out in his high school for being too flamboyant, and because of this, it killed Amari’s confidence to the point that he felt the need to text everyone in his grade and ask them what things they did not like about him in order to change himself and fit in to be then accepted by school officials.

Similarly, in Sky’s account, her path from black joy to black suffering happened multiple times at both of her high schools. At her first high school, she was targeted because although she was a “model student,” according to her school officials, she did not know her place, and therefore her organizing a walk-out was cause for her suspension. Important to note is the fact that Sky organized a walk-out because of the everyday social harm she had to endure by seeing a portrait of Blackface in her school.

Instead of listening to their “model student,” they negatively sanctioned her, threatened her, and began mistreating her all because she wanted an anti-black portrait taken down from the school. Here, Sky experiences what Salamisah Tillet (2012) terms the specificity of Black melancholia in the United States, as they suggest that the lived experiences of contemporary anti-black racism are always the haunting or ‘remembering’ of the legacy of racial trauma within the United States. In this case, the portrait of Blackface haunted Sky and killed her joy in the school, which turned her from the “model student” to the problem-student in the eyes of her school officials. The transition to problem-student is evident due to the drastic differential treatment from school officials before her suspension and after her suspension. Although at her first high school, the suffering was because of the social aspect; however, at her second high school, the physical disciplining and punishment of the Black women led to her trauma. Her experience of joy in the lunch room with her friend laughing and hitting each other's arms, as she



describes as things ‘black people do’ when they laugh, turned into a traumatic experience as school officials physically assaulted her and her friend by grabbing them by their arms and forcing them to stand up. This specific incident has now scarred Sky forever, as she now has anxiety when she sits anywhere with her back turned because of the assault she experienced from school officials.

Interestingly enough, I would like to focus specifically on Sky’s point of laughing and hitting each other’s arms as something that ‘black people do’. As Sky mentioned before she detailed the incident, she had already noticed how school security targeted Black female students, and so she dealt with the targeted treatment in her everyday experiences, which could’ve caused her stress already. The loud laughing and shared laughter she had with her friend could be seen as a way to relieve stress and manage her emotions dealing with the everyday anti-black experiences in her new school (Francis, 1994). Therefore, the positive functions of laughter are especially relevant for Black women, where laughter functions as a critical coping mechanism by fortifying the relational bonds among each other in an act of resistance to the everyday trauma they experience (Troutman, 2010; Trouvain, 2014). Here, presuming because of the lack of knowledge of Black culture and Black joy, school security had assumed that the girls were fighting instead of laughing; these two actions are almost the antithesis of each other, but because of the internalized anti-black ideologies, and stereotypes these security guards had it traumatized a young Black girl.

For Jessica, what is most troublesome is the consistent bullying and jokes made to her about her identity and her intelligence. Jessica played soccer ever since she was a little girl; and in high school, she contemplated quitting the team due to insensitive comments made by her soccer coach, as this space was a point where her joy turned into suffering. Jessica’s soccer coach

called her “slow” and asked her if she was still suffering from her concussion because she did not perform a soccer drill the correct way. These comments were made not directly to her, but about her, in front of the team, where everyone laughed at her, in response Jessica said this made her not even want to be a part of the soccer team anymore; something she had once enjoyed was now something she hated because of a school official.

Ultimately, consistent among the narratives of my participants was the killing of Black joy and the birth of Black suffering because of school officials. For these participants, the rational conclusion is that school officials were not there to provide support to them. Instead, their role is to control and isolate them to the point where they have no desire to be in educational spaces anymore. Within theorizing with BlackCrit, their conclusions make sense as BlackCrit argues that the sheer presence of Blackness is an attack on authority. Therefore the actions of the school officials can be seen as normal within BlackCrit because the erasure of Black bodies in education will signify true harmony in the face of white supremacy.

### ***Theme 2: Hyper-surveillance as a method of social control***

Another theme that emerged in the narratives of my participants was hyper-surveillance as an intimidation tactic of social control. This theme specifically helps to more clearly understand the nature of the experiences of Black LGBTQ students. When asked about the reasons that she was disciplined and punished in high school, Danielle, a 21-year old Black trans student who attended a boarding school in San Francisco, talked about her experience of not being able to visit her friends in the female dorms.

I would say that a lot of the discipline was based on my gender identity because I went to a boarding school. So we lived in dorms, and the teachers knew that, at the time, it was early on in my identity as a trans woman, so I didn't understand why they were tripping, but they made it such a big deal about going into the girl's dorm like it was like literally a No-go. So, I got in trouble one time where I had to stay in tutorial, which is like basically like detention, And so I had to go there for like a week after my classes.

Danielle, a trans student, describes how school administrators impeded her ability to socialize with her friends in the "female" dorms. She was given a week of detention simply for being present there and subsequently, constantly surveilled and cautioned about visiting her friends. She states:

They just start like having people at the doors of the dorms, like at the entrances, to make sure that nobody that wasn't supposed to be going in was going in. And even one of the admins that I was cool with would always tell me as I'm like walking around or in passing, he would say, "you know you can't go in the girl dorms" or something along those lines like that. and I'm just like, okay, like, rolling my eyes because it would irritate me that they would constantly remind me I can't even when I wasn't around the dorms. And the thing is, before I was caught in the girl dorms, they never had people standing and guarding the entrances, so I already knew that the shit was set up because of me, you know to keep me out.

When asked about other incidents where LGBTQ students were watched, Danielle talked about a lesbian couple that had been threatened with being expelled for being in the same room together.

Danielle goes on:

I also do remember there being like a black Lesbian couple, There was a black Lesbian couple that they get caught in the same room, but they weren't caught doing anything sexually exactly, but since the school was small, the school officials knew they were a couple and so like, they just assumed because they weren't roommates and in the room together, they had assumed that they were having sex I guess, or doing something sexual but like one of the girls was being threatened to like being expelled but it was weird because they weren't even caught doing something but because they was a couple in the same room, the admin just assumed they were doing something and threatened if they saw them in the same room again one of them would be expelled and like when it's like a straight couple, I want to say that it was either like during free time or something but anyway, they was caught kissing but we all remember that they did not get in trouble and they wasn't threatened to get in trouble or expelled like the lesbian couple so it just felt like it was targetted and like the queer kids was always watched to make sure we didn't do anything with each other.

Danielle details the difference in the surveillance of queer students and heterosexual students. Whereas a Black lesbian couple was caught in the same room together but not engaging in any physical activity were threatened with expulsion, a straight couple caught kissing, received no negative sanctions. Here, Danielle indicates that she felt like the queer students were targeted and always watched as a way to intimidate them so they do not engage in behaviors that defy heteronormative actions and/or gender roles.

Similarly, when asked about their experience with discipline and punishment, Jessica talked about her Spanish teacher, who she felt targeted her inside and outside of the classroom.

Yes bro, when I was in her [spanish teacher] class like if I spoke one word. I'm being like moved to the other side of the room or sometimes just kicked out and I would have to sit in the hallway for like the entire class period missing class and I'm like what about the other person who I was in the conversation with, like, what are you doing about that you know what I mean or just like speaking to me after class for some fucking reason but not the other person. Even when she would clearly fucking see them talking to me first, when I would respond, she still would move me or kick me out and when I told her this, she said I shouldn't have responded to the student or I should know better or practice self-control, shit like that, but like, that wasn't the point...and then Oh, my God! guess what one time, like I'm wearing this jaded dress, and it has like the open back, and it's like so cute, I felt so cute that day, and my fucking Spanish teacher told me that I had to change, but other bitches would always wear jaded dresses, But soon as I wear one, it was scandalous, like other people would wear it. But when I wore it, it was a problem. And no one said anything to me until my Spanish teacher brought it to their attention because I was walking around in the dress all day, and no one said shit until she started making it a big deal.

Clearly, Jessica felt as if her Spanish teacher constantly watched her every move in the classroom, as she had to deal with being moved around in class or sometimes put out of class, excluding her from the lesson and her ability to learn. Even when confronted about the differential treatment and the constant surveillance of her behavior and actions in the classroom, the teacher claimed that Jessica should “know better” or “not respond” and “practice self-control.” Additionally, Jessica also noticed that when she wore a jaded dress [a dress that makes the back visible], everyone made a big deal about it, but when other students wore them, it was not an issue; this also was an issue that was brought to the school admin by her Spanish teacher. Later, I discuss how Jessica was a victim of what scholars call the adultification of Black children.

Sky also had an issue with hyper surveillance as an intimidation tactic once she came back after her six-day suspension due to organizing the walk-out to get the administration to take down the Blackface portrait. When asked about her treatment when she returned, she stated the following:

I feel like I like had like a good relationship with people. But then, like as soon as I start speaking up just the way things shifted, It just hurt, you know, and it was hard to go to school, you know towards the end,

like every day I didn't want to go, and I felt like really depressed, and I just felt like if I did anything like any small thing that I would get in trouble, and I felt like even though there was like no cameras. I felt like I was being surveilled and stuff, so that just like I like, it was like. really, I don't know, like hurtful, like I would cry a lot about like getting in trouble for like small things near the end and just feeling Yeah, I just felt like really desolate. And just like. Yeah. And then I noticed one of the Deans who I was close to, would now stand in the hallway every time there was a passing period, and so like every time I see him, he'd be like, you have 1 min left to get to class, you need to get to class. Also, in the hallway. The security would like, they would call you by name and they would be like Sky, you don't have time to do that. You know, I started being one of the people they call by name to go to class, which was like just a small thing. But you know, you notice these things.

Sky had now seen first-hand how her activism severed the positive relationship she had with her school officials, which now had made her one of the students that were watched. The constant reminder that she needed to get to class and threats of being sent to detention or being suspended again were used as intimidation tactics. These tactics were used to show her that no matter what activism she put on in the school, she still had no power or authority.

### **Analysis of Theme Two**

Danielle, Sky, and Jessica's narratives provide an overview of the ways hyper-surveillance is used as an intimidation tactic of social control. Social controls are social mechanisms used to create rules of behavior for social groups (Meier, 1982). In Danielle's narrative, we see hyper-surveillance used as a way to control the behavior of LGBTQ students at her school. Since Danielle attended a boarding school that had gender-exclusive dorms, she had been given detention for a week for being in the female assigned dorms. Although she identified as trans, the school administration's lack of knowledge of trans-identities led to Danielle's punishment. In society the gender binary is understood as a norm, therefore it had been strictly enforced within the dorms; this ideology then warrants gender nonconforming and trans students to become the target of prejudice and discrimination (Gordon & Meyer, 2007; Roberts et al., 2012). Additionally, studies suggest that for transgender individuals with additional marginalized identities—specifically race and class, the adverse effects of intolerance are even greater (James et al., 2016; Singh, 2013). After the incident occurred, Danielle noticed that the administration

would guard the entrances of the dorms and constantly remind her that she “knows” she can’t go in the female-assigned dorms this was a way to regulate her actions and behaviors so that she would internalize the fact that because she was not a cisgender woman, she was not allowed in those dorms.

Danielle details the story of a Black lesbian couple that had been threatened with expulsion after being caught in the same room and compared it to a time where a heterosexual couple was caught kissing and did not receive any negative sanctions or threats. This specific incident once again shows how the constant surveillance of LGBTQ students was a method to control their behaviors. Because of the stigma surrounding LGBTQ-identities, from the actions of the administration it safe to assume that they saw queer identities and queer actions as deviant, and in order to correct the students, they made sure to remind them that they were being watched and would be punished if they engage in any behaviors or actions that violate heterosexual norms. The administration’s threatening of the Black lesbian couple for being in the same room, but not addressing the heteroesexual couple for kissing sent a message that engaging in physical contact was only deviant behavior when it was among same-sex or queer couples.

Jessica’s narrative of her Spanish teacher expecting her to “know better” and to “not respond” when she would talk during class but allowed other students to get away with doing it speaks to how surveillance was a method of social control used to regulate her behaviors and actions. Everyone in Jessica’s Spanish class were the same age, and in the same grade; yet, the Spanish teacher felt that out of all of the students, Jessica should have “known better.” This phenomenon can be described as adultification bias. Adultification bias is a form of racial prejudice where children of minority groups, typically Black children, are treated by adults as being more mature than they actually are (Dancy, 2014). Adultification is dangerous for Black

students in education because they are automatically seen as deviant, whereas their white counterparts are seen as innocent and therefore given more chances to act-out. Adultification bias was evident when her Spanish teacher punished Jessica even when she did not initiate the disruptive behavior in the classroom. Moreover, Jessica's experience wearing her jaded dress to school and being told that she had to change because it was inappropriate is yet another example of adultification bias at play. Jessica explained how other girls always wore jaded dresses to school but the moment where she wore one to school, she had been told that she had to change. This difference in treatment can be understood as the result of Black girls being sexualized at a younger age than white girls (Brooks, 2021).

In Jessica's case, the hyper-surveillance was a result of adultification and therefore became a method of social control used against her. School officials, specifically her Spanish teacher anti-black notions made her truly believe that Jessica should've known better in comparison to her peers, and used this as a way to silence her inside of the classroom. The teacher did not address disruptions in the classroom, unless it came from Jessica or involved her therefore, to govern her behavior she had not been given the same grace as her peers and was disciplined instead either by being put out of the classroom or moved.

Sky on the other hand, experienced hyper-surveillance as a method of social control through her everyday interactions after she returned from her suspension. To control her behavior, deans would stand in the hallways and constantly remind her that she needed to get to class in a timely manner during the passing period, something that they did not do before she was suspended. Her specific incident speaks to the history of Black organizers being watched and labeled after they had decided to speak against certain policies and practices that are implemented that disenfranchised Black people. Ultimately, across the narratives is a pattern of

hyper-surveillance to control the everyday lives of the participants. Danielle's recount of her story and the story of a Black lesbian couple speaks to the queer identity being seen as deviant and as something that needs to be corrected and controlled so her school officials would convince her that those behaviors are not normal nor are they allowed. Jessica's narrative explains just how cynical adultification bias can be. To reiterate, Jessica's Spanish teacher clearly treated her differently than her peers, as the teacher asserts that Jessica should have known better in comparison to her peers, and therefore had been the only one negatively sanctioned because she still engaged in disruptive behavior while her peers were granted impunity.

### ***Theme 3: LGBTQ negligence & identity concealment***

The last theme evident in the narratives of my participants was LGBTQ negligence and identity concealment. Persistent among the student narratives was a need to suppress their queer identities as a direct result of school policies and practices. When students engaged in behaviors that challenged heterosexist beliefs, they were met with discipline, and, ultimately, to finish their high school education, they would suppress their identity, which played a huge role in the way they viewed themselves and the social world around them. Danielle, a trans student that did not feel safe staying in the male-assigned dorms, talked about their experience and how the treatment and policies of their boarding high school pertaining to bathrooms and dorms is the reason why they only were interested in colleges that had co-ed dorms. Danielle states:

I remember 2 teachers made it a very big deal that I would use the girls bathroom and I would always have very awkward conversations with them like they would say you can't be in here like da da da, and I would tell them constantly, like all the time i'll be like I don't even identify as a boy, like I don't feel comfortable in the boys bathroom. So I guess I say that to say my experience there kind of influenced how I view the education system as like very-gendered in terms of the binary like boy, girl-oriented. And so this was also why I was interested in college like [REDACTED], where there is co-ed dorms and stuff like that because I didn't want to be in another place where, like i when you feel like I can't be myself or people have rules as to what I can and can't do based off my gender.



Danielle's frustration stemmed from the fact that as much as she would tell school officials that she identified as trans, they constantly enforced strict rules on policies that were gender focused, like the girls' dorms and girls' bathrooms. Thus, Danielle talks about how she only wanted to go to a college that had co-ed dorms because she felt like she couldn't be herself due to the rules and treatment from teachers and other school officials.

Amari had a similar experience, after being called "too flamboyant" and "too much" the ambiguous language, which he was sure that what they really meant was that he was "too gay" played a huge role in his self-esteem and his pride in his identity. He details:

I had to stop looking for validation from people that will never accept me just like you can't force someone to like you, like no matter what you do. You can be the nicest person ever. You can be the skinniest person ever. You know If someone doesn't like you because of the way you look, or because of the way you are, you can't find happiness from that you know, and for a long time I tried to find happiness. I was like, I don't know, like, maybe because I go to all black school. Maybe my queerness won't matter, but it sure did. It definitely separated me from the others, you know. and it's still, like now I refuse to find validation from the any one anymore. But I didn't have that mindset in high school, back then I just wanted to be acknowledged. So like I feel like when I was thinking about college, I definitely wanted to go far away like I wanted to go far away, one because I just need a space to discover myself and two I just felt like the like, I feel like I wouldn't be the person I am today. I feel like I wouldn't have unlocked the person I am today If I was still in New York surrounded by the type of people in my high school, because I felt so trapped there, I felt like I was so invalidated, physically, emotionally, you know, sexuality wise like like just so many ways that I just felt like, if I stayed in New York I wouldn't have went anywhere in life. and so that's what I was thinking.

After I asked Amari about how his high school experience shaped the way he views the education system, he shared how he learned that because of his identities, he will never be validated or accepted. He details how his queer identity separated him, and therefore he felt that to fully discover himself and his identity he had to attend a college far away from his high school, as he described feeling trapped there. Sky had a similar experience at both of her high schools. She first discussed how two of her Black lesbian friends were targeted for public displays of affection (PDA) and how a student was not allowed to present on a gay artist.

I would say like at both schools there was an issue it of like. whether it was like students, or like teachers like blatant, like discrimination and homophobia that would like go unpunished or like not, on like unrecognized, for my friends who identified as like Lesbian, and we're like a couple at (first high school) They left like a semester before I did, because it was just like too much like the school when they started dating in like our freshman year, I would say, like a couple of weeks later, our school really starts to crack

down on like pda. It was not like coincidental, in my opinion, because, like now you're getting on people for holding hands like it. Wasn't like that before, and you could like tell, it was because now queer people start doing it and it was like . So that was like really weird when that happened I was like what? What's the problem like now? You can't walk in the hallway, holding hands, or whatever. And then for example, in my art history class someone wanted to do or like was going to do like a presentation about a gay artist and then the teacher was like, this is not okay in my classroom like this is not a place to for you to like show different beliefs and someone was like this is not beliefs like we're talking about sexuality but the whole interaction just spoke volumes.

Sky goes on to share the queer experiences at her second high school after being pushed-out of her first high school. She details the everyday homophobia and discrimination her and other queer kids had to deal with. When asked to elaborate on her experience she said:

And then at [REDACTED] the white people there were like very, extremely homophobic, and the parents banded together to dismantle the GSA (Gay Straight Alliance) at the school. So yeah, the parents wrote up a letter to the school admin, and they basically told the school no more GSA. So the GSA was done, and then, like you would hear like slurs in the hallway all the time and there was only one teacher at [REDACTED] that was like anything close to being like a safe space for students, or where we could be out and comfortable and so like you would just like see a bunch of queer students in her classroom. because it was just too much like who like people are like like literally like you could hear in the hallway people would be like, Get that gay shit out of here and like Nobody would do anything you know. And so a lot of people I know including myself, didn't come out until after high school, because that was just like not a place where being out was safe, you know. And yeah, so like a lot of people like myself didn't come out till after high school, because it was just not the place for it, it was especially if you were like black and queer like it just wasn't it.

At Sky's second school the GSA was disbanded, leaving queer students no true safe space to go when they were experiencing everyday hate in the school. She detailed her experience as a Black queer woman that could not fully come out until after high school because of how unsafe it was for queer students as this was a common sentiment shared among Sky, Amari, and Danielle.

### **Analysis of Theme Three**

The last theme presented through the narratives of my participants was identity concealment and LGBTQ negligence. Danielle's trans identity was constantly being dismissed by school officials when she attempted to use the girl's bathroom or when she wanted to enter the girl dorms causing her to only look at colleges that allowed co-ed dorms because she did not like how gendered the rules were at her current school. Amari's experience, although different, still had the same effect on him whereas he felt that moving as far away as possible from his high

school was necessary so that he could heal from the trauma that they caused him throughout his time there. Amari felt separated, and was “othered” by his school officials because of his identity and openness, which led to him suppressing his identity and wanting to discover himself elsewhere. In Sky’s experience, she had seen firsthand at her first school how her queer students were not welcomed when they enforced the policy against PDA. Now, the no PDA rule could have very much been a policy at her school, but as Sky pointed out, it was no coincidence that it was not enforced until a lesbian couple had done it. And it had not been applied to any couples besides the lesbian couple. Moreover, more harmful was the everyday reminder that queer people were not welcomed at her second high school. Although she identified as queer in high school, Sky did not feel comfortable coming out due to her safety being at risk and therefore did not come out as openly queer until she left that space. Many studies suggest that individuals may conceal their identity in response to persistent stigmatization of non-cisgender and non-heterosexual gender and sexual identities (Savin-Williams, 2009; Meyer, 2003). Sky, Amari, and Jessica each saw how persistent their school officials were about disciplining and punishing LGBTQ students when they engaged in behaviors that stemmed from their heterosexuality. In order to survive at their schools, socially and physically in some cases, they were forced to conceal their queer identity as a way to protect themselves against the external and environmental threats of their educational spaces (Mohr & Kendra, 2011).

Being open with their queer identities meant social opprobrium for the students. Therefore, to mitigate the negative experiences they already had been experiencing in schools, they felt that they had to conceal their queer identity. Now in relation to LGBTQ negligence, for Danielle, the negligence was built into the very infrastructure of her school with their lack of gender-neutral bathrooms. Although she notified school officials of her trans identity and

explained her discomfort with using the boy's bathroom, she was not allowed in the girl's bathrooms or the girl's dorms. The lack of care on the part of the school administration, demonstrated to Danielle that her trans identity was not one they recognized. Amari had to deal with the negligence while being othered by school officials through their use of phrases like “too flamboyant,” while Sky dealt with negligence in more explicit ways as the GSA was disbanded as a group and in her everyday experience, she would hear constant hateful slurs spewed towards LGBTQ folks. My participants confirm that the maltreatment of Black LGTBQ students has caused them to suffer in schools and conceal their identities in hopes of better once they leave their high schools.

### *Implications for Theory*

Chapter three detailed information on the two guiding frameworks used for my thesis, which were BlackCrit and Quare Theory. My frameworks complimented each other, and together they assisted me in highlighting the lived experiences of Black LGBTQ students within this study.

#### **BlackCrit relevance**

BlackCrit, as one of my guiding lenses, contributed to how I conducted my research and analyzed my themes. Specifically, I was not researching whether anti-blackness against Black LGBTQ students existed, but rather how Black LGBTQ students' experiences were influenced because of its existence. Therefore, this thesis provided a foundational description of anti-blackness to situate its existence within the context of Black LGBTQ students in educational spaces. As stated, BlackCrit argues that anti-blackness is endemic and central to society, and Black humanity is threatened and disdained by our social, political, and education systems. BlackCrit provided me with the language and tools to identify anti-blackness across narratives but it also gave me the opportunity to center Blackness and engage in conversation around what

they call 'Black liberatory fantasies. My participants' fantasies and recommendations can be found in the forthcoming chapter.

### **Quare Theory relevance**

Quare Theory spoke to the specificity of the Black LGBTQ experience. As they argue that the queer experience is not monolithic and encourages us to focus on how identity and survival function differently for queer people of color. This framework guided all of the themes presented, specifically themes two and three. Although common themes were drawn, as Quare's theory explains, the queer experiences are not monolithic, and that was evident in the narratives of my participants. Quare theory then guided me in my analysis of those narratives, as they each had very distinct experiences in relation to their interlocking identities of blackness and queerness. Furthermore, this study promoted the utilization of quare theory for studies that are interested in focusing on Black LGBTQ individuals, specifically for future studies to consider using this framework in examining educational spaces. Quare theory, along with BlackCrit

## Chapter 5: DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The disproportionately applied disciplinary policies and punitive practices used to control and intimidate Black LGBTQ youth directly impact how they navigate their Queerness and Blackness in educational spaces. This thesis conceptualizes how Black LGBTQ youth have disparate experiences with school discipline policies and practices that create a hostile environment and, as Carruthers (2018) states, “kill the Black imagination” (p.47). Through BlackCrit’s articulation of *Black liberatory fantasies*, I draw from the fantasies that were common among my participants during the interviews. Common fantasies included pedagogical practices incorporating Black & queer histories, creating a space where Black queer students could feel safe and supported, and active, open dialogue that allowed them to share their testimonies and experiences to come up with ways to address their negative experiences. Upon analyzing the themes among the fantasies of my participants, I offer recommendations for educators, administrators, and researchers to address the unique experiences Black LGBTQ youth have with school discipline. Through these recommendations, I hope they will remedy these youth's negative experiences.

### ***Pedagogical Redress***

Exclusionary practices start with policy implementation. However, we must be aware that educators usually enforce these policies, and therefore they get to decide to whom they apply these rules. As Skiba et al. (2010) find that Black boys were overrepresented in every disciplinary category, they also recognize that educators in the classroom have the authority to punish and discipline all students. Still, they choose to punish Black boys at a higher rate. Through BlackCrit theorization of anti-Blackness, I can conceptualize how much Blackness is tethered to criminality. Moreover, because anti-Blackness continues to be pervasive and systemic

in society, it seeps into the very infrastructure of our institutions and informs policies that are harmful to Black queer students.

To combat the harm Black queer students experience, educators must deconstruct not only racism in the classroom but also extend that and deconstruct anti-Blackness in the classrooms. Anti-Blackness in classrooms manifests in myriad ways, from educators not utilizing any Black authors in the classroom literature, ignoring the experiences and contributions of Black people, having Black students be native informants in the classroom (which assumes that all Black people have monolithic experiences), and by not allowing Black students to share their experiences to classroom activities; these are just a few examples of how anti-Blackness takes form inside of classes. I recommend educators engage in critical pedagogy as it helps foster a safer and more inclusive learning environment for Black LGBTQ students. In *Deconstructing Power, Privilege, and Silence in the Classroom*, Ochoa and Pineda (2008) discuss how traditional classrooms and pedagogies in America limit student participation and tend to disregard personal experiences and the significance of one's social location, which plays a vital role in learning. Anti-Blackness is a driving force in traditional classrooms and pedagogies as they do not humanize or liberate Black students and their realities. Thus, critical pedagogy creates an equal opportunity for learning inside the classroom, where students can participate and relate the topics in class to their own lives. As Ochoa and Pineda suggest, one way to combat this is by educators being able to actively address classroom dynamics and work to have inclusive multicultural classrooms.

Additionally, in *Teaching to Transgress*, bell hooks (1994), argues that traditional education taught that experiences learned in the classroom were universal; however, this is a false reality, especially for Black students. When educators use pedagogies that completely

ignore and misinterpret the experiences of Black LGBTQ students, it creates a sense of exclusion for them which may contribute to them “acting out” or “misbehaving.” As Kosciw (2017) found, Black LGBTQ students who were taught positive representation about LGBTQ people, history, or events at school felt more connected and safe at school, not only regarding their LGBTQ identity but also their racial identity. Therefore, educators should be cognizant of how they teach and actively communicate with their students instead of disciplining them when they are not contributing to the classroom. Such inclusive pedagogies would help all Black students find a sense of liberation in their experiences and help them feel more included and safe in educational spaces.

### ***Creation of a Homeplace for Black LGBTQ Students***

We must ask ourselves the question, how can we transform our schools into a safe space for Black LGBTQ students where historically, both of their intersecting oppressive identities have been neglected, criminalized, and dehumanized? To answer this question, administrators must be aware of how both identities of Blackness and Queerness inform the experiences Black LGBTQ students have in education spaces and that it is not just a question of Blackness or Queerness but a question of both. As Crenshaw (1991) states, women of color are marginalized by both their race and gender; this same statement can be applied to Black LGBTQ youth as they are marginalized by their race, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Using such an intersectional lens yields many benefits, as it will further the understanding of the schooling experiences of Black LGBTQ youth and their relationship with school discipline. Through a BlackCrit theorization of anti-Blackness and Queer theory theorization of Queerness compounded with a raced body, I recommend that administrators invest in creating *Black Gay Straight Alliance spaces*. Both Snapp et al. (2015) and Kosciw (2008) support the idea that Gay Straight Alliances



hold tremendous promise as organizations that support the safety and the development of queer youth in schools; however, recent studies have suggested that queer youth of color have difficulty starting, accessing, and finding support in their schools' GSA spaces. In McCready's (2004) study of challenges queer youth of color face in urban high schools, they find that students of color report that they felt "excluded" and "alienated," one student calling the group "a select group of White girls...just teatime for a few lesbians and their friends...It wasn't doing anything for me. There's nothing there for me" (p.45). This finding suggests that Gay-Straight Alliances' failure to encompass the material realities of racial and class identities is what Johnson's (2001) Quare theory argues about the abstract and dehumanizing nature of Queer theory and Queer spaces in general. Through Queer theory theorization of queer identities being attached to a race body with unique, individual experiences, we can conceptualize how a *Black Gay Straight Alliance* space can be seen as a homeplace for Black LGBTQ students. Furthermore, BlackCrit provides us with the knowledge of how anti-Blackness seeps into school clubs as it does not recognize the Black experience and instead continues not to acknowledge how these spaces are not prepared to address anti-Blackness and how it may intersect with other identities Black people may occupy. Therefore, through BlackCrit and Quare Theory, I can conceptualize how a *Black GSA* will benefit all Black students in a school. By having a Black GSA space, Black students can combat anti-Blackness in their schools by using their Black imagination to organize, protect, and liberate themselves. Black GSA spaces will additionally create a space where all Black students that may occupy other identities can come together and have deep conversations to understand and uplift one another because of that shared experience of Blackness and the experience of navigating the suffocating nature of anti-Blackness.

### ***Inclusion of Students' Input in Policy Implementation***

Historically, many researchers have published work that has neglected, ignored, misunderstood, and dehumanized LGBTQ and Black people, which has been used to justify the treatment of those folks. Educational researchers must use theories that value the intersectional identities of the contributors to their studies (specifically their participants). The fatalistic impact of school discipline on LGBTQ youth underscores and does not directly speak to the different experiences Black LGBTQ youth have, which causes their experiences to be assumed the same as Black heterosexual youth and the same as all LGBTQ youth. Qualitative studies that use frameworks that speak to their participants' realities, as BlackCrit and Quare theory does in this paper, bring Black LGBTQ voices and perspectives to the center and will help transform how discipline policies are implemented in schools. Centering these students and allowing them to use their own voice to express how their Blackness and Queerness impact their experiences will produce and inform more policies that acknowledge their existence instead of criminalizing it. Through this recommendation, Researchers should take a more critical approach using Youth-led participatory action research (YPAR).

YPAR is an innovative approach to research in which young people are trained to conduct systematic research to improve their lives, their communities, and the institutions intended to serve them. YPAR allows the Black LGBTQ youth to be a part of the research process as they can identify what they feel are direct problems that are affecting them and therefore come up with questions and have a voice as to how to address those problems. When researching marginalized populations such as Black and LGBTQ youth, YPAR benefits them because it values them in the research process instead of exploiting their stories just for the benefit of research.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This thesis began with a series of research questions about what Black LGBTQ students' schooling experiences would reveal about school discipline and punishment. Based on the findings of this study, school discipline, and punishment affects Black LGBTQ students' experiences in a myriad of ways but most saliently in that: school officials played a central role in Black suffering; hyper-surveillance was weaponized as a form of social control; and LGBTQ identities were neglected, concealed, or suppressed. By exposing the negative impacts school discipline and punishment have on Black LGBTQ students' schooling experiences, educational practitioners and policymakers can use my research findings to ensure that they are not complicit in anti-Black violence in educational spaces.

The findings from my thesis force us to meditate on the everyday suffering Black LGBTQ students must endure, and therefore encourages us to mitigate that suffering through pedagogical transformation, creating safe spaces for Black LGBTQ students, and including them in conversations around policies that directly impact them. Furthermore, my thesis calls for future researchers to include their contributors [participants] as active agents in their own change through youth-participatory action research. Collaborating with Black LGBTQ youth in Sociology and Education research provides them the agency to speak their truths authentically on Blackness and Queerness and on the ways school discipline affects how they navigate their identities in schools. Lastly, this study points to the importance of understanding interlocking identities and how they engender different experiences for youth in educational spaces.

I encourage future sociologists and education researchers to build on this study by conducting fieldnotes in the high schools of the participants to fully grasp the social aspects of the experiences and the physical aspects. Despite the limited scope of the study, as well as the

inherent drawbacks of relying on personal memories of events that occurred, at least over a year ago the study provides a much needed intervention within the discourse of discipline and punishment of Black youth. Future research should consider the experiences of students who attend community colleges or choose not to matriculate to college given their negative experiences in high school. Conducting research that is grounded in liberatory methodological frameworks allows us to delight in the fantasies of radical action and change, in hopes of improving the experiences of Black LGBTQ youth in educational spaces.

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## APPENDIX

### Interview Guide

#### **A.BACKGROUND AND SCHOOLING EXPERIENCE**

- Could you tell me a bit about your hometown, city, or suburb?
- What high school did you attend? Do you remember the racial makeup of your high school?
- Could you talk about the social experience in hs? Did you do any extracurriculars etc.
- How do you feel about your academic exp? (academically, socially, did this affect your comfortability in your school?)
- How do you think you were perceived by other students of different identities? And by school officials?

#### **B. DISCIPLINE AND PUNISHMENTS**

- What kinds of disciplinary practices did you view at your school? Why do you think those were the most common?
- What behaviors and/or activities were you disciplined or punished for in high school?
- How did you feel about these punishments?
- Who was more likely to punish you—teachers or administrators? Why do you think that's the case?
- What forms of discipline and punishment did you experience?
- What happened to you OR others after you were disciplined?
- What consequences did you face after being disciplined?
- Did school officials treat you differently after being disciplined? In what ways did the treatment change?

#### **C. PERCEPTIONS AND BLACK LIBERATORY FANTASIES (BLACKCRIT)**

- How did your experience in high school shape the way you view the education system?
- How do you think your experience in high school shaped the way you think of yourself?
- In what ways did you see or perceive sexual and racial identities influencing the types and forms of discipline students received?
- What could have made your high school experience different? How do you envision this looking? How do you imagine this feeling?
- Describe how you would describe a good educational experience. What would be present? What would not be present?