Embedding Diversity Into The Curriculum: Facilitating Challenging Conversations

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EMBEDDING DIVERSITY INTO THE CURRICULUM: FACILITATING

CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS

Chimille E. Dillard

Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements of

Doctor of Education

In the Foster G. McGaw Graduate School

National College of Education

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This document was created as one part of the three-part dissertation requirement of the National Louis University (NLU) Educational Leadership (EDL) Doctoral Program. The National Louis Educational Leadership EdD is a professional practice degree program (Shulman et al., 2006). For the dissertation requirement, doctoral candidates are required to plan, research, and implement three major projects, one each year, within their school or district with a focus on professional practice. The three projects are:

Program Evaluation Change Leadership Plan Policy Advocacy Document

For the Program Evaluation candidates are required to identify and evaluate a program or practice within their school or district. The “program” can be a current initiative; a grant project; a common practice; or a movement. Focused on utilization, the evaluation can be formative, summative, or developmental (Patton, 2008). The candidate must demonstrate how the evaluation directly relates to student learning.

In the Change Leadership Plan candidates develop a plan that considers organizational possibilities for renewal. The plan for organizational change may be at the building or district level. It must be related to an area in need of improvement, and have a clear target in mind. The candidate must be able to identify noticeable and feasible differences that should exist as a result of the change plan (Wagner et al., 2006).

In the Policy Advocacy Document candidates develop and advocate for a policy at the local, state or national level using reflective practice and research as a means for supporting and promoting reforms in education. Policy advocacy dissertations use critical theory to address moral and ethical issues of policy formation and administrative decision making (i.e., what ought to be). The purpose is to develop reflective, humane and social critics, moral leaders, and competent professionals, guided by a critical practical rational model (Browder, 1995).

Works Cited
6.20.16
A THREE-PART DISSERTATION:

AN EXAMINATION OF A SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING PROGRAM AND IMPLICATIONS FOR DIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT

EMBEDDING DIVERSITY INTO THE CURRICULUM: FACILITATING CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS

EMBEDDING RACIAL AND GENDER DIVERSITY IN STATE MANDATED COMMON ASSESSMENTS: A POLICY ADVOCACY DOCUMENT

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July 27, 2018
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This work is dedicated with love to

my heartbeats,

Kamille Briana

and

Kennedy Marina.

I love you both to the moon and back!
ABSTRACT

Wagner, Kegan, Lahey, Lemons, Garnier, Helsing, and Rasmussen’s (2006) four C’s, consisting of competency, conditions, culture, and context, were used to think systemically when looking at the current (As-Is) and projected (To-Be) in the Galaxy School district. This paper focused on the need to embed past and current racial and gender diversity issues into the everyday curriculum in an effort to have a positive impact on students’ social-emotional learning skills. The current curriculum has limited racial and no gender diversity. Students can go from Kindergarten to eighth grade being taught very little history and current events that are racially and gender diverse. Semistructured interviews were conducted and survey responses collected from a survey administered to teachers and parents in the Galaxy school district. The findings demonstrated that teachers need to be trained on how to become culturally proficient and intentionally embed racial and gender diversity into their everyday curriculum.
Lessons learned and key takeaways in year two of my coursework centered around change and adaptive leadership. These components were used to analyze Wagner et al.’s (2006) four C’s (competency, conditions, culture, context); build a collaborative culture (Fullan, 2011); and implement the three key elements of resonant leadership (mindfulness, hope, compassion; Boyatzis and McKee, 2005) when implementing this change leadership plan. These takeaways fall under practicing the principles and theories of adaptive leadership (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009).

The lessons learned from year two of my coursework analyzing Wagner et al’s (2006) four C’s, fostering a collaborative culture, being a resonant leader, and utilizing the principles of adaptive leadership are helpful when tying professional practices to student learning, promoting community involvement, and promoting organizational capacity. Since my change plan emphasizes embedding racial and gender diversity into the everyday curriculum, my plan directly impacts student learning, along with a shift in professional practices. The four C’s address my overall vision of learning and best practices to student learning, while simultaneously forcing me to think about counter-organized resistance and community resources in my district. Being an adaptive leader by keeping Wagner’s four C’s and a collaborative culture at the forefront of my change plan will promote the necessary organizational capacity in my district.
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SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

Problem

This researcher discovered, from her program evaluation research, that racial and gender diversity are not addressed in the Galaxy school district’s social and emotional learning program, Second Step. Based on these findings, the Galaxy school district needs to embed racial and gender (LGBTQ—lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer. The terms LGBTQ and gender diverse are used interchangeably throughout this change leadership plan) diversity into the curriculum to foster students’ social and emotional learning skills and expose them to more than a White, heterosexual culture. The current curriculum has limited racial and no gender diversity. Students can go from Kindergarten to eighth grade being taught very little history and current events that are racially and gender diverse. Although many of the students are well-travelled around the country and world, providing a rich, racial and gender diverse curriculum is vital to a predominantly White affluent school district because the majority of students lack proximity to racial and gender diverse communities. Students in this district are not regularly exposed to the positive contributions racial and gender diverse people have made to improve society and everyday lives. A nondiverse curriculum can lead to believing inaccurate and negative stereotypes about racial and gender diverse people.

Having a racial and gender diverse curriculum provides Galaxy school district students with the ability to be empathetic, open-minded, and inclusive throughout their educational career and adult life (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2015). It will also have a positive impact on their social-emotional learning skills. Within the past three years, new research has been published on White racial illiteracy and the adverse effects of White privilege—which impact students in both behavior and academic success. The work of
Robin DiAngelo (2012) explained the factors contributing to White racial illiteracy, which can help Galaxy school district to learn more about how well it is equipping its White affluent students with the racial and gender diversity awareness needed to truly be inclusive members of society throughout the remainder of their educational career and beyond.

The consequences of successfully initiating this change plan will foster open-minded and unbiased students who are equipped with the social and emotional tools needed to be accepting and appropriately interact with one another and minorities who do not look like them and/or live in the same manner they live. Wormeli (2016) stated, “Part of our job as educators is to secure a nonracist future, so our response to racism in our schools must be clear and compassionate. Settling for indifference exacerbates the problem” (p. 22). Schools should be responsible for explicitly educating children about racial and gender diversity during lessons taught in the classroom.

Curriculum in the schools should be immersed in learning experiences that will cultivate conversations about race and gender diversity. Lack of awareness about racial and gender diversity leads to misunderstandings, limited sharing, hurt feelings, biases, and stereotypes. In Gurung and Prieto’s (2009), Getting Culture: Incorporating Diversity across the curriculum, Cone-Uemura stated, “Incorporating multicultural awareness and diversity education into the curriculum is crucial to creating a solid foundation from which further teaching and learning can occur” (p. 259). The following quote was in Teaching Tolerance (2016), Critical Practices for Anti-Bias Education, “Start by educating about the differences between sex assigned at birth, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. As the knowledge base in your school grows, the tensions will subside” (p. 9). Embedding racial and gender diversity into the
curriculum cultivates the ability for students to have thoughtful, productive, and challenging conversations when interacting with people.

**Rationale**

Students who are educated about racial and gender diverse issues in the classroom are more adept to interacting respectfully, being inclusive, and demonstrating empathy toward people of other races and members of the LGBTQ community. As you continue reading, you will understand why this change plan is important to improving the Galaxy district’s educational environment.

In Gurung and Prieto’s (2009), *Getting Culture: Incorporating Diversity across the curriculum*, Abrahamson discussed the daunting challenge for people to see beyond their individual perspective because people naturally connect their experiences and culture to what is learned in the classroom. He explained that teachers in any discipline or content area can and should adapt their lessons, assignments, and projects to provide all students with diverse experiences. Storytelling interwoven into lessons can help students relate to and learn about diverse experiences. Cross-cultural enrichment opportunities, such as community service projects or field trips, can expose students to hands-on aspects of racial and gender diversity. Infusing things these types of opportunities into the curriculum provides an opportunity to integrate racial and gender diversity into students’ understanding of course content, while concurrently fostering their social and emotional skills.

In her *Washington Post* commentary, Strauss (2015) shared how a White, fifth grade English language arts and social studies teacher, Emily Smith, started integrating diversity into her curriculum. When she realized her Whiteness was driving the curriculum, Smith implemented literature, documents, videos, discussions, and images that embodied racial and
gender diversity. She and her students analyzed diverse literature and history from the lens of both historical and current events. Smith commented that all teachers can change the way they teach in efforts of instilling empathy and understanding in the hearts of all students (Dillard, 2016).

Textbooks, television shows, and movies depict this country to be the home of the free where everyone has the opportunity to do and be anything they desire. Although the United States is considered a melting pot, it is a country with deep-rooted diversity and superiority issues that directly impact how people interact with others, even individuals as early as four- to five-years old (Derman-Sparks, Higa, & Sparks, 1980).

As an African American woman who was born and raised in the United States, my personal and professional experiences living in this country do not embody the melting pot and home of the free slogans. I live in Chicago where the city and surrounding suburbs are overtly racially segregated and some areas segregated based on sexual orientation. Furthermore, Chicago has been in the national news for the blatant racism, brutality, and murders toward African American citizens, at the hands of the Chicago Police Department (Madhani, 2017).

Being a resident of Chicago and living in a predominantly White neighborhood consisting primarily of Chicago police officers, firefighters, and teachers, this researcher knows her neighbors intentionally send their children to predominantly White, public or private schools because she has heard them say they don’t want their children around those Chicago Public School thugs. The researcher also hears how freely these individuals use the word nigger on warm days or nights when her windows are open or when she is reading some of the racist comments and posts on neighbors’ Facebook pages—whom have either forgotten or simply don’t care she is their Facebook friend.
As the researcher’s children (and the neighborhood children) got older, she watched them grow apart and only have friends with the same racial background. She listened to her daughter share that some of the White neighborhood girls act as if they are superior and make condescending racist comments to her. Many of the girls’ comments are very similar to the comments this researcher has read on Facebook from the neighborhood parent’s pages. These examples show why it is important to embed racial and gender diversity in the curriculum.

This researcher was an active member of the Galaxy school district’s Community Review Committee (CRC), which allowed her to work directly with teachers, administrators, parents, and school board members. According to Fullan (2011), “The political dimension involves forums for communication, such as working tables that consist of stakeholders engaged in the give-and-take discussion of goals and strategies” (p. 104). The CRC serves as advisors to the Galaxy School Board by researching specific topics leading to improvements in teaching, learning, and/or managing the district’s operations. In the 2016–2017 school year, the Galaxy school district identified school climate as its topic, with two subcommittees: interpersonal relationships and safety. In addition to working on the CRC, the researcher is one of the administrators who helps with chairing the equity committee within the Galaxy school district. The equity committee consists of administrators and teachers who volunteered to participate on the committee in an effort to address areas of inequity in the building.

The CRC is in the process of researching that current practices within the Galaxy school district (pertaining to diversity, racial, and gender diversity) are included. Members of the equity committee started the first meeting with a White privilege survey and brief discussion about unconscious biases. The White privilege survey was reproduced from a Pacific Education Group training that the building principal attended. Each committee member used a Likert score to rate
whether or not statements about their race were seldom, sometimes, or often true for them. Upon completion of the survey, each member totaled their score and shared it with the entire committee.

All of the equity committee members have expressed the need in receiving professional development about making the curriculum more racially and gender diverse. The researcher, being the only minority committee member on both committees, knows there are some advantages to this. Although not intending to speak for all minorities, she shares her perspectives and experiences as an African American woman.

According to Fullan (2011), to build a collaborative culture, one must “focus on collective capacity building by extending power to other members of the organization” (p. 92). Collaborative cultures often foster trust and a teamwork mentality, which makes members of the organization receptive to an open dialogue and ultimately creates buy-in. Collaborative districts usually work more efficiently and effectively than noncollaborative districts because, “core ideas are pursued collectively, day after day, they generate deeper, consistent practices across the organization. Shared depth of understanding and corresponding skills are the result” (Fullan, 2011, p. 94).

**Goals**

The goal involves moving the Galaxy school district in the direction of embedding racial and gender diversity in all areas of the curriculum: core classes and specials. An analysis to identify gaps regarding racial and gender diversity in the lessons taught in classrooms should lead to valuable additions, deletions, or modifications to the school district’s curriculum. This analysis will also expose any curricular gaps regarding gender diversity and race in the classroom. Highlighting curricular gaps show where the Galaxy school district needs to
intentionally find ways of infusing the topics of gender diversity and race into the curriculum so Galaxy school district can create a platform to ensure its students become socially aware of biases and gain the knowledge that leads to more successful social interactions in the future.

Academic and social-emotional learning can be attained simultaneously with an antibias curriculum that implements culturally responsive pedagogy. The Galaxy school district,

Can bring anti-bias curriculum to life by creating classroom environments that reflect diversity, equity, and justice; encouraging students to speak out against bias and injustice; and using instructional strategies that support diverse learning styles and allow for deep exploration of anti-bias themes. (Teaching Tolerance, 2015, p. 2)

An antibias curriculum affords students the opportunity to connect what they learn in the classroom to their individual lives and the world outside of their homogenous community.

According to Teaching Tolerance (2015), “Teachers must bring both cultural understanding and self-awareness to their work” (p. 19). This researcher believes this will address the problem of racial and gender diversity not being addressed in the Galaxy school district’s social and emotional learning program, Second Step.

**Setting**

The researcher is an assistant principal within the Galaxy school district. The teacher demographics consist of: 96.4% White, 1.1% Hispanic, 1.1% Asian, 0.4% people of two or more races, and 1.1% not reported, which demonstrates nominal diversity among the staff. The student demographics of the district consist of 76.2% White, 0.9% Black, 5.1% Hispanic, 10.8% Asian, 6.9% people of two or more races, with 3.4% from families with low income, and 1% English Language Learners. The school district has approximately 3,600 students between four, Grades K–8 buildings; one, middle school building with Grades 5–6; and one, junior high building with
Grades 7–8. According to the Illinois Report Card (2016), 71% of the students in the Galaxy school district meet and exceed state standards for English Language Arts and math—whereas the state average for students meeting and exceeding in ELA and math is 33%. The district has 0% homeless students and 3% students from families with low income (Illinois Report Card, 2016).

The students are accustomed to being around White people who typically come from a family structure consisting of a mother and father. The demographics of their community is 84.65% White, 12.4% Asian, 1.49% mixed race, 1.12% Black, 0.08% American Indian, and 0.26% people from other races (U.S. Census, 2010); there are 0.4% homosexual households (City-Data, 2016). Demographics of neighboring communities with similar socioeconomic backgrounds to the community my students reside are 94.8 - 97.41% white, 1.3 - 3.3% Asian, 0.88 – 1.2% mixed race, 0.28 - 0.3% Black, 0.08 - 0.1% American Indian, and 1.63 - 2.2% Hispanic (U.S. Census, 2010). What many of them perceive as normal, White and heterosexual is not representative of the United States of America or the city of Chicago, which is less than 10 miles from where their community. According to the 2010 census, demographics for Chicago are 45% White, 32.9% Black, 28.9% Hispanic, 0.5% American Indian, 5.5% Asian, 13.4%, and 2.7% two or more races.
SECTION TWO: ASSESSING THE 4 Cs

Below is an analysis of Wagner et al’s (2006) four C’s (context, culture, conditions, and competency), for embedding racial and gender diversity in the curriculum to strengthen students’ social and emotional learning skills when in diverse settings.

Context refers to “Skill demands all students must meet to succeed as providers, learners, and citizens and the particular aspirations, needs, and concerns of the families and community that the school or district serves” (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 104).

Culture is defined as the “Shared values, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and behaviors related to students and learning, teachers and teaching, instructional leadership, and the quality of relationships within and beyond the school” (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 102).

Conditions are defined as the “External architecture surrounding student learning, the tangible arrangements of time, space, and resources” (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 101).

Competencies are defined as the “Repertoire of skills and knowledge that influences student learning” (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 99).

Context

The context is families need diversity education, and the Galaxy district’s CRC focuses on diversity and inclusivity in each of its schools because it doesn’t think these issues are being addressed. The CRC serves as advisors to the Galaxy District Board of Education by researching specific topics that will lead to improvements in teaching, learning, or managing the District’s operations. During the 2016–2017 school year, the CRC identified school climate as its topic of focus.

The CRC began by conducting an information seeking phase of research where the committee reached out to staff, parents, and students in Grades 5–8 to gather information about
their views on the climate at their school and/or within the district. One of the themes that emerged from the online CRC survey given to parents was that the school district should help parents understand why it is promoting an improved school climate and give parents the tools needed to support their children in this endeavor. In addition, committee members gathered information from other districts with respect to best practices in Interpersonal Relationships (Diversity/Inclusion). Committee members researched other district websites to learn what other schools were doing to cultivate diverse and inclusive environments.

**Culture**

The culture is that the community is not very diverse. One of the social workers interviewed said the following:

I think that it’s almost part of our job to prepare these kids for the outside world and diversity is a huge part of it. When they go to college, even though the Galaxy school district is very limited in their diversity, when they go to college, they’re going to experience diversity.

However, the Galaxy school district is beginning to address the need for a focus on diversity, empathy, and inclusivity. With the current mindset held by America’s current president and his administration, along with other people in the United States who share these mindsets, the Galaxy school district wants to ensure its students are empathetic, inclusive, and open to diversity. Based on the amount of support community members displayed when the high school diversity seminar day became controversial, it appears as if the vast majority of community members are ready for the race and diversity issues to be addressed. The high school brought in speakers from the *Black Lives Matter* movement as well as Congressman John Lewis and hosted different sessions for the students about race and White privilege. Although the high school’s
seminar day was met with some resistance from a small group of community members (a few right-wing conservatives who called news reporters), the seminar day received overwhelming support from the majority. The abundant display of support proved that the Galaxy school district community was ready and willing to embrace this change plan.

**Conditions**

The conditions in the Galaxy school district are that current racial and gender diversity issues are not addressed by the majority of teachers. With so few minority students, specifically Black students, in the schools, many of the teachers are dismissive when those students report being called racist names. This also happens to several male students when they are called derogatory names such as *gay* and *queer* by other male students who claim they are playing. Some staff members in the district are open and receptive to discussing the racial and gender diversity issues impacting students in the schools while other staff members continue turning a blind eye. Staff members who don’t address the racial and/or gender diversity issues have reported being uncomfortable in doing so for fear of offending others or saying the *wrong thing*.

Themes that materialized from the semistructured interviews with administrators, social workers, and teachers were:

- It is important for racial and gender diversity to be embedded in the everyday curriculum.
- The current everyday curriculum includes little to no racial and gender diversity.
- Students would benefit from a curriculum that has racial and gender diversity embedded within it.
- Embedding racial and gender diversity in the everyday curriculum will positively impact the social and emotional skills students need when they are faced with gender and racial issues in the United States.
**Competencies**

The competencies center around most teachers being uncomfortable with facilitating challenging conversations about diversity issues. Many of the teachers lack knowledge about racial and gender diversity nor know how to utilize instructional strategies to embed diversity in their lessons. All four classroom teachers who were interviewed stressed the importance of racial and gender diversity being embedded in their curriculum. However, although they look for opportunities on their own, the teachers have found it challenging to embed diversity in the curriculum given to them by the district to follow. As a building leader, the researcher’s goal involved focusing change efforts on embedding diversity into the existing curriculum through professional development and training using various instructional strategies.
SECTION THREE: METHODOLOGY

Research Design Overview

A change leadership plan, prior to implementation, needs to be supported and backed with research when presented to school district stakeholders. Because different stakeholders can have different perspectives on the type of change necessary in a school district, many times, the change leader will need to understand the context, culture, conditions, and competencies of the district (Wagner et al., 2006). As Patton (2008) stated, “Implementation is how people translate vision into practice” (p. 308). A methodology approach was used in order to garner trust and support from stakeholders so they would be open to the implementation of the change leadership plan.

When gathering data for the change leadership plan, a mixed methodology approach was used and both qualitative and quantitative data collected. The qualitative data collection approach helped support the change leadership plan because it allowed the opportunity to explore individuals through relationships and describe trends in context using semistructured interviews as a data source (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Conducting semistructured interviews allowed the participants to expand on their answers to the interview questions. Participants were also able to provide their experiences and insights pertaining to how the delivered curriculum and lessons impact the students in the Galaxy school district. This approach was useful because the focus of the change leadership plan regarded making curricular modifications.

Quantitative data was collected from responses from a survey administered to teachers and parents in the Galaxy school district, administered by the CRC as part of their school climate research. Although neither paradigm—qualitative or quantitative data collection—is more valid than the other for a change leadership plan (Patton, 2008, p. 425), the additional quantitative data
is important because it would support and work synergistically with the qualitative data collected. Since the quantitative data involved parents in the community and was collected by the Galaxy District CRC, the data from the survey would be viewed as unbiased and valid.

According to Patton (2008), “From a utilization-focused evaluation perspective, both qualitative and quantitative data can contribute to all aspects of evaluative inquiries” (p. 438). Using both qualitative and quantitative data strengthens the rationale for implementing the proposed change leadership plan.

**Participants**

Qualitative data was gathered from specific staff members who voluntarily participated in the change plan data collection. Patton (2008) noted, “Qualitative inquiry involves small purposeful samples of information-rich cases” (p. 458). Patton defined rich as being able to garner an abundant amount of information from a few credible participants. The researcher, as the leader of the change plan, solicited participants working with students from Grades 5–8 who had experienced racial and gender diversity issues in their classes and observed the students everyday social and emotional skills and interaction with their peers.

Data was gathered from the following key participants:

- Two administrators
- Two social workers
- Four classroom teachers (who taught and interacted with male and female Grades 5–8 on a daily basis)

This group of participants was chosen because of their diverse responsibilities and perspectives within the Galaxy school district (Patton, 2008). For example, the two administrators were selected because they were the primary disciplinarians in their buildings and received all
information about racial and gender diversity concerns. The school social workers were selected because they regularly are faced with handling social and emotional issues the Galaxy school district students struggle with—which puts them in a unique position to share their anecdotal data about the effectiveness of embedding diversity into the everyday curriculum. The classroom teachers, since they were on the front line and interacted with the students on a regular basis, brought an interesting perspective regarding how they thought embedding diversity into the everyday curriculum would impact racial and gender diversity issues.

It was also important to dive deep and find out if the classroom teachers sincerely believed that embedding diversity into the curriculum would impact students’ abilities to interact respectfully, be inclusive, and demonstrate empathy toward people of other races and members of the LGBTQ community. The plan involved gaining insight surrounding whether or not a revised curriculum would assist Galaxy school district’s fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grade male and female students during their interactions with students of different races and part of the LGBTQ community. I planned to learn whether or not teachers believed that modifying the curriculum would increase students’ level of empathy and inclusivity when faced with racial and gender diversity issues.
Data Collection Techniques

Quantitative and qualitative data was gathered by utilizing surveys and semistructured interviews.

Quantitative

Permission was received from the Galaxy school district superintendent to use the survey data collected by the CRC. The CRC administered an online survey to Grades 5–8 teachers during April 2017. The CRC also provided an online survey to all parents who had students currently attending any school in the Galaxy school district. The surveys had two statements and a Likert scale for participants to choose their response to each statement.

Qualitative

When discussing instrumentation, Patton (2008) shared the importance of the interviewer remaining neutral throughout the interview process so the interviewee feels comfortable expressing how he or she really feels and thinks when answering the questions. Semistructured interviews were conducted with administrators, social workers, and classroom teachers working in the middle- and junior-high buildings. The interviews were semistructured in order to provide the interviewees an opportunity to expand on their answers. This allowed themes to be uncovered that may not have been discovered if the interview was completely structured. In addition, this allowed for the analysis of both qualitative (see Appendices E–G) and quantitative data (see Section five). Patton (2008) stated the, “Details of data collection are a distinct part of the framework: they must be attended to, but they shouldn’t clutter the focused outcome statement” (p. 249). Data that was useful to this researcher’s change plan was intentionally chosen (Patton, 2008). Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative data
improved the study and findings by ensuring the limitations of one type of data are balanced by the strengths of the other.

**Interviews**

Interview questions (see Appendix D) were formulated and tailored to each participant’s role in the school, while remaining focused on the information being researched for the change plan. For this type of research, semistructured interviews were vital to the overall data collection because research information focused on how human beings reacted toward the various societal situations they encountered on a daily basis with their peers. Semistructured interviews also kept the researcher focused on her change leadership plan. As Patton (2008) said, “Staying focused on the purpose of the interview is critical to gathering high-quality data” (p. 170).

Interviews with the two administrators, two social workers, and four classroom teachers were no longer than 60 minutes in length. The interviews focused on the interviewee’s perspective of how embedding diversity in the everyday curriculum could increase the students’ empathy and abilities of being more inclusive. The interview questions were tailored to each interviewee’s role in the school and their interactions with students specifically about racial and gender diversity. In an effort to remember the interviewees’ responses, interviews were recorded to enable the ability to rewind and replay full interviews (once the data was transcribed), so thorough and accurate data could be collected.
Survey

The Galaxy school district’s CRC, comprised of district administrators, teachers, and parents, created the survey in efforts of gathering some information about teacher and parent views on the climate at individual schools and/or within the district. Glen (2017) commented that, “Surveys usually involve a representative sample of the population and are easy to administer in theory. A questionnaire is given to each member of the sample and used to infer characteristics of the whole population” (p. 6). To develop the survey, members of the committee met once each month throughout the 2016–2017 school year. The committee solicited feedback from the Galaxy school district’s administrative team when organizing the final draft of the survey prior to administering it to teachers and parents. Knowing that answers to survey questions can often come with an explanation from the individual completing the survey, optional text boxes were included so participants could expand on their selection from the Likert scale, if desired. The committee wanted to ensure as many of the explanations as possible were heard so the data collection could be thorough and comprehensive. The surveys were utilized because they afforded the CRC the opportunity to collect data from a large sampling of individuals in a very short amount of time.

Data Analysis Techniques

Coding is used when the evaluator analyzes the quantitative and/or qualitative data collected and when sorting the findings into themes or patterns. Inductive and deductive are the two main types of coding.

The purposes for using an inductive approach are to (a) condense raw textual data into a brief, summary format; (b) establish clear links between the evaluation or research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data; and (c) develop a
framework of the underlying structure of experiences or processes that are evident in the raw data. (Thomas, 2006, p. 238)

This approach allows the change leader to analyze the qualitative data and garner reliable and valid findings (Thomas, 2006). Deductive coding is theory-driven and based on finding themes or patterns from the research findings and one’s experiences. A hybrid approach was used where “the process of deductive thematic analysis will allow for themes to emerge direct from the data using inductive coding” (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006, p. 83).

The data was analyzed by coding the interviews, looking for themes, and dissecting the descriptive statistics from the surveys submitted. Recorded interviews were replayed and then transcribed so symbols and abbreviations could be created to store concrete examples that fell into the coding categories created by underlining relevant words and phrases from the interviews. This allowed the results of each interview to be summarized by showing the frequency that each category of responses was given. The coded information from the interviews and observations was used to look for common themes. When looking for themes, the transcribed interviews were analyzed for common language centering around racial and gender diversity in the everyday curriculum. Also examined were language focusing on the impact that racial and gender diversity have on social and emotional learning skills.
SECTION FOUR: RELEVANT LITERATURE

This section analyzes the various types of literature focusing on the importance of diversity issues being addressed in school and social and emotional learning programs. With the daily curriculum having the greatest impact on social and emotional learning (Gurung & Prieto, 2009), the importance for school communities was also examined to intentionally create opportunities for dialogue about racial and gender diversity to organically occur within the everyday curriculum. Finally, various types of literature focused on teaching empathy, sensitivity, and tolerance toward minorities and members of the LGBTQ community was examined.

Racial and Gender Diversity in the Curriculum

As more and more emphasis is placed on standardized test scores and teacher accountability, there seems to be very little emphasis placed on cultivating relationships and the social-emotional learning skills students need as they interact within diverse settings. Teaching Tolerance (2015) offers “practical strategies for creating a space where academic and social-emotional goals are accomplished side by side” in the critical practices for antibias education guide (p. 2). For teachers to embed diversity into their curriculum, they must be given the necessary professional development and tools “to design and differentiate instruction by matching meaningful and diverse texts with standards-based literacy tools” (Teaching Tolerance, 2015, p. 2).

It is imperative for administrators and teachers to buy into the movement of embedding diversity into the curriculum. According to Hunter (2015), “Movements are forces of collective energy, channeling deep emotions like anger and love and mobilized by hopes and dreams for large-scale change” (p. 6). Administrators can support teachers when implementing culturally
responsive pedagogy by focusing on the goal of embedding diversity into the curriculum. Having a goal of embedding diversity into the curriculum and working toward achieving this goal strengthens education (Hunter, 2015).

Embedding diversity into the curriculum is the beginning of a systemic change versus a nominal number of teachers doing it individually, which allows schools to address racial and gender diversity in the larger sense (Davis, 2016). Antibias values can lay the foundation for antibias education, attitudes, and behavior, which cultivate students’ social-emotional-learning skills. As former President Barack Obama stated in his commencement speech at Morehouse University on May 20, 2013, “racism and discrimination still exist in the United States of America” (Obama, 2016, p. 7). Knowing this, school districts have the responsibility to educate all children about racial and gender diversity, as early as kindergarten and continuing through high school, to ensure students become socially aware of biases and to gain knowledge leading to more successful social interactions in the future. “We live in a thoroughly racist society, so it should not be surprising that people have racist ideas. The more important question is under what circumstances those ideas can change. People’s consciousness can change” (Taylor, 2016, p. 213). Embedding racial and gender diversity in the curriculum from Grades K–12 will foster the social and emotional learning skills students need to interact in diverse settings. Furthermore, it will dismantle many of the stereotypes and prejudices students have based on what they see and hear on social media and television. Taylor (2016) stated, “The prevailing ideology in a given society consists of the ideas that influence how we understand the world and help us make sense of our lives—through news, entertainment, education, and more” (p. 212).

Elements of a Social and Emotional Learning Program/Curriculum
Both CASEL (2015) and Elias (2003) feel that life-skills promoting academic and social and emotional learning must be explicitly taught in every grade level. A key component of their research focuses on appreciating diversity. They stated the importance of students explicitly being taught to understand that differences amongst individuals are complementary and make the world in which we live stronger and greater.

In his research findings, Elias (2003), discussed that social and emotional programming should not be taught in isolation from the general academic curriculum because children are less likely to retain what was presented. Social and emotional learning that is integrated across all subject areas and experiences outside of school are extremely valuable and impactful for children. There is also a vast benefit from including historical and current events in daily lessons so students can focus on different perspectives of individuals and the problem-solving strategies they used or should have used. This provides students with practical social and emotional problem-solving strategies they can apply to their everyday life.

**Racial and Gender Diversity Issues in the Curriculum**

Coates (2015) shared, “Schools did not reveal truths, they concealed them. I sensed the schools were hiding something, drugging us with false morality so that we would not see, so that we did not ask” (pp. 26–27). With more than half of the schools in the United States not having a single minority teacher on staff, many students will matriculate from Kindergarten thru high school being taught by White men and women only (Picower, 2009). Being in a position where they are colorblind and unable to see and understand the negative impact of not educating White students about racial and gender diversity issues, those teachers continue concealing the truths Coates referenced. All in all, teachers are perpetuating the cycle of these inequalities and cultivating the status quo of White being normal via the gaps in their curricula.
As Savage-Williams shared in her *Beyond Diversity* presentation, schools are putting White students at a huge disadvantage when these students leave their homogeneous communities and go to college. She talked about countless students who came back to her Chicago north suburban high school upset that the school never provided them with the necessary social and emotional skills to be successful in diverse settings. Students felt as though their high school needed a curriculum that addressed the social and emotional skills required to successfully assimilate into heterogeneous communities.

Gurung and Prieto (2009) stated that the world is more diverse than it has ever been in the history of humankind, which is why it is imperative for students to be educated about racial and gender diversity regardless of their background. They firmly believes racial and gender diversity should be infused into the curriculum, so students have the required social and emotional skills to interact in diverse environments. Gurung and Prieto (2009) seven key items to keep in mind when including racial and gender diversity into the curriculum:

1. Make it explicit—Do not avoid the truth and uncomfortable facts.
2. Make it safe—Set ground rules for class discussion and provide alternatives to raising one’s hand.
3. Model appropriate behavior—Be prepared to respond to inappropriate statements and comments.
4. Make it relevant—Use current events in conjunction with historical information.
5. Make it credible—Use video clips or guest speakers, if you only have secondhand experience.
6. Make it active and experiential—Get students actively involved in their learning and provide them with ways to directly engage with racial and gender-diversity information.

7. Make it count—Vital to monitor students’ receptivity to diversity changes from before they were taught about diversity to after they learned about diversity. (Gurung & Prieto, pp. 18–19)

**Colorblindness**

As Mellody Hobson discussed in her 2014 TED Talk, *Color Blind or Color Brave*, White children are generally taught to be *colorblind* versus being *color brave*. Hobson (2014) defines colorblind as very dangerous and ignoring the problem of racial inequities by remaining silent and color brave as being willing to have proactive conversations about race—especially with White children. DiAngelo (2012) stated that although most White parents and teachers believe White children are colorblind, this untrue belief keeps them from having conversations about racism with white children. White children internalize the implicit and explicit messages regarding race from their environment—especially in their classrooms and the classroom resources. “It is repeatedly argued that the absence of racial insult means that racial discrimination is not at play” (Taylor, 2016, p. 72). Thus, children are not exposed to the social and emotional skills needed to appropriately interact with people from diverse backgrounds.

These children internalize the implicit and explicit messages regarding race from their environment—especially in their classrooms and the classroom resources. Nondiverse curriculum omits explicitly teaching students about how people of color and those in the LGBTQ community have played vital roles throughout history in this country. This omission allows members of the dominant group—straight and White—to still feel a connection to the curriculum.
and history in the United States (Lindsey, Nuri Robins, & Terrell, 2009). “As a result, students of color and LGBT students gain a sense of invisibility in history and literature due to the omissions, distortions, and fallacious assumptions being taught in school” (Lindsey et al., 2009, p. 79).

Movement

With the heightened awareness about White privilege, entitlement, and race and gender diversity—a long with the increased number of protests throughout the United States centered around inclusivity, race, and gender diversity—it is time to embed diversity into the everyday curriculum. Taylor (2016) commented, “Every movement needs a catalyst, an event that captures people’s experiences and draws them out from their isolation into a collective force with the power to transform social conditions” (p. 153). The continued rallies and protests around the country about overt racism, along with entitled tweets from the Oval Office, have directly impacted students and schools in the United States. According to Lindsey et al. (2009), “Entitlement is the accrual of benefits solely because of membership in a dominant group” (p. 75). Lindsey et al. (2009) stated:

If examined on a continuum, entitlement is the end at which some people—chiefly heterosexual white men—predominate and have great power and control because of their membership in the dominant cultural group; institutionalized oppression is the other end, at which people—chiefly people of color and LGBTQ people—are more sparsely represented and, therefore, have relatively little institutionalized power and control. (p. 75)

School administrators need to work toward ensuring all of their teachers, as well as themselves, are culturally proficient to move in the direction of embedding diversity into the
everyday curriculum. “As a culturally proficient leader, you can guide teachers to learn, understand, and teach a diverse curriculum” (Lindsey et al., 2009, p. 79). Lindsey et al. stated there are six main points on the continuum of cultural proficiency:

1. Cultural destructiveness
2. Cultural incapacity
3. Cultural blindness
4. Cultural precompetence
5. Cultural competence
6. Cultural proficiency

Cultural destructiveness, cultural incapacity, and cultural blindness (the first three listed) are barriers to embedding diversity into the curriculum and represent education in schools today. The next three points on the continuum (cultural precompetence, cultural competence, and cultural proficiency) move toward diversity being part of daily education in schools.
SECTION FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

When analyzing the data, two sets of themes emerged. The CRC served as advisors to the Galaxy School Board by researching specific topics that leading to improvements in teaching, learning, or managing the Galaxy school district’s operations. Quantitative data was revealed from the Galaxy school district’s CRC online teacher and parent survey. Descriptive statistics from the survey responses were dissected, patterns sought, and information categorized and inserted into some of the themes and subthemes. Additional themes and subthemes were created, if needed. The themes that emerged from the online CRC survey follow:

- Galaxy school district should identify areas of difference that exist in its student body and develop ways to promote how these differences can be respected and celebrated by students, parents, and teachers.
- Galaxy school district should assess the effectiveness of all areas where social-emotional learning is taught—including Second Step—and research other programs that support students in social-emotional learning. In addition, the district should assess whether any of its current classroom practices are having the unintended effect of making children feel excluded and promote more sensitive alternatives instead.
- Galaxy school district should help parents understand why it is promoting an improved school climate and give parents the tools needed to support their children in this endeavor.

The qualitative data was revealed from the semistructured interviews. Themes also emerged from the qualitative data collected. The themes that materialized from the semistructured interviews follow:
• It is important for racial and gender diversity to be embedded in the everyday curriculum.

• The current everyday curriculum includes little to no racial and gender diversity.

• Students would benefit from a curriculum that has racial and gender diversity embedded within it.

• Embedding racial and gender diversity in the everyday curriculum will positively impact the social and emotional skills students need when faced with gender and racial issues in the United States.

**Online Survey Data**

Out of 118, Grades 5–8 teachers, 53 (45%) agreed to participate in the online survey. All of the teachers work in the Galaxy school district in the middle school and/or junior high school building. The middle school building has Grades 5–6 students while the junior high school building has Grades 7–8. The online CRC survey was given to the teachers during April 2017 and had two statements and a Likert scale for participants to choose their responses to each statement. The following tables exhibit the survey statements, response choices, and percent of responses for each choice.
Table 1

Teacher Survey Statement 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My students feel included in the school community. Responses</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
<td>24.52%</td>
<td>18.87%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 1, more than half of the respondents disagreed that their students feel included in the school community. This information confirms the need to make some changes so all students feel included in school. This researcher believes inclusion begins with the everyday curriculum.

Table 2

Teacher Survey Statement 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students of different backgrounds, opinions, learning styles feel included in our school community. Responses</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
<td>24.52%</td>
<td>18.87%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows a vast majority of the respondents disagreed that students of different backgrounds, opinions, and learning styles feel included in the school community. As previously stated, embedding racial and gender diversity in the curriculum provides an excellent starting point for all children feeling included and part of the school community.

The analysis consists of 1,070 households divided among different family types. Most families have either one or two children—435 and 448 respectively. There are less families with three children (166), four children households are only 19, and only two cases with five or more
children in the district. The highest concentration of survey responses is for Grades K–4 students representing 54% of the sample—whereas, Grades 5–6 and 7–8 are equally represented (23%). White students form about 83% of the sample, with the next category being multiracial (8%) and Asian (6%).

Table 3

Parent Survey Statement 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My child feels included in the school community.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>5.98%</td>
<td>45.98%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>18.04%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost half of the respondents in Table 3 disagreed that their child felt included in the school community.

Table 4

Parent Survey Statement 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People of different backgrounds/opinions, learning styles feel included at my child’s school.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>18.04%</td>
<td>58.04%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>14.39%</td>
<td>9.53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in Table 4 shows that more than half of the respondents disagreed that people of different backgrounds, opinions, and learning styles feel included at their child’s school.
Table 5

Parent Survey Statement 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students of different racial backgrounds feel:</th>
<th>Not Included</th>
<th>Occasionally Included</th>
<th>Included Most of the Time</th>
<th>Highly Included</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>5.85%</td>
<td>41.21%</td>
<td>47.10%</td>
<td>5.85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 displays that almost half of the respondents think students of different racial backgrounds feel included most of the time.

Table 6

Parent Survey Statement 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A vast</th>
<th>Students who identify as LGBTQ feel:</th>
<th>Not Included</th>
<th>Occasionally Included</th>
<th>Included Most of the Time</th>
<th>Highly Included</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.85%</td>
<td>64.67%</td>
<td>29.44%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An examination of current and best practices on the subject of school climate and the results of surveys given to all Galaxy school district parents and teachers in Grades 5–8 caused the CRC to reach the following conclusions:

1. Galaxy school district could do more to help students of various diverse groups feel included and safe in their school communities and to be bullied less.

2. An assessment of the effectiveness of current Galaxy school district practices and research into additional programs in the area of social-emotional learning is warranted, as is an assessment of practices which may have the unintended effect of making students feel excluded.
Administrator Interviews

The researcher did not know exactly how the interviewees would respond to the interview questions and therefore, wasn’t sure what themes would evolve from the coded information. Once the themes were identified, she delved deeper and identified any subthemes that developed from the interviews.

Themes 1 and 3

The first theme, *It is important for racial and gender diversity to be embedded in the everyday curriculum*, and the third theme, *Students would benefit from a curriculum that has racial and gender diversity embedded within it*, were evident during both administrator interviews. Both administrators clearly stated they believe racial and gender diversity should be embedded in the everyday curriculum. Administrator one shared the following:

I think it’s important that all diversity is embedded into the curriculum, gender diversity, racial diversity, religious diversity. But as far as gender and racial diversity, I think it’s more important today than ever before because of what’s happening in society. Our goal is to make well-rounded, global, competent citizens, so we can’t do that unless diversity plays a key role. So, uh, I think it’s very important.

Administrator two felt the same way, and shared the following:

Well I think that that is a positive, I have every reason to believe that it is the right thing to do and certainly advocate for any opportunity to integrate that within existing or future curriculum. I think that uh as much exposure uh to different cultures, different viewpoints, different races for any student is a positive and will make them a more well-rounded person as they go through the education system. So, I would think that any
missed opportunity for a district to include that um is a disservice to the student population.

During their interviews, both administrators stated that some teachers do a better job than their colleagues when it comes to finding ways to embed diversity into the curriculum. They also stated that it is the responsibility of administrators and districts to provide professional development, so teachers know how to appropriately embed diversity into their everyday curriculum. The transcribed interviews can be found in Appendix G.

Social Worker Interviews

Similar to the administrator interviews, the researcher discovered three themes after analyzing the social worker interviews. Two of the three themes from the social worker interviews were the same as the two themes found from the administrator interviews.

Theme 4

The social worker interviews highlighted the fourth theme, *Embedding racial and gender diversity in the everyday curriculum will positively impact the social and emotional skills students need when they are faced with gender and racial issues in the United States*. The first social worker stated the following:

When they get there, and they have the opportunity to meet different people of races and colors and religions, that they are not only accepting of that, but part of that accepting comes with knowledge. If they are given that early enough, they will be able to handle that better when they get to that point.

Similarly, the second social worker said the following during her interview:

Absolutely! That will give them the tools I think without having the opportunity or privilege to maybe be around that will somewhat you know, the population here is
predominately Caucasian so I think um we have to embed it in a lot of ways because these kids aren’t lucky enough to go to school with people who look different. So, I think it will give them the tools.

**Themes 1 and 3**

The first theme, *It is important for racial and gender diversity to be embedded in the everyday curriculum*, and the third theme, *Students would benefit from a curriculum that has racial and gender diversity embedded within it*, were also evident during both social worker interviews. The following was shared from social worker one:

I think it’s really important, especially in the areas that really don’t have the diversity that some other schools have especially when you’re educating the kids on every single aspect of life, that should be included in that it gets the kids out of their comfort zone or what they’re used to in order to understand that there are different cultures and different religious beliefs and things like that so that they do not become bubble kids that think that the world is exactly like the Galaxy school district is and there’s nothing else out there. The understanding that there is something else out there, but I’m much more comfortable in my own group, that bubble needs to be popped a little bit. Including that into the curriculum is a great way to support that.

Similarly, social worker two stated:

I always think we can do better, and we can embed even more instead of just a couple of units here and there. I wish it was something that was discussed more frequently especially because of like the community that we live in. We’re fortunate to live in such a high social economic status area, but unfortunately, it’s not extremely diverse um
racially, ethnically, or things like that. So, I think kids can always benefit from more education and things like that.

Both social workers shared they believe making racial and gender diversity part of the everyday curriculum will cultivate students’ social and emotional learning skills. They think this will benefit students in the Galaxy school district when they leave their homogenous, affluent community and interact with diverse populations. The transcribed social worker interviews can be found in Appendix F.

Classroom Teacher Interviews

After analyzing the classroom teacher interviews, themes one and two materialized again. Pertaining to themes one and two, all interviewees were unanimous in their beliefs about Galaxy school district.

Theme 1

This first theme, *It is important for racial and gender diversity to be embedded in the everyday curriculum*, was evident throughout all of the classroom teacher interviews. One of the teachers commented, “I think that racial and gender diversity should be embedded into my everyday curriculum—I don’t know that it is at the level that it needs to be now.” Another teacher said:

I think it’s great, um I think that it’s needed especially with the gender stuff, I think that there’s so much more changing with social media and with the awareness of gender diversity, so that’s huge. I think race, it’s definitely important to bring up because I think there’s a lot of kids that it’s not taught to at home, so I think that’s really important especially in a district like this where there’s not a lot of diversity. So, the kids, I kind of
think they live in like an alternate world and they think because when we teach it in social studies, they’re like surprised and don’t think that there is racism, and there is.

**Theme 2**

The second theme, *The current everyday curriculum includes little to no racial and gender diversity*, was also evident throughout all of the classroom teacher interviews. Classroom teacher one stated, “No, [chuckles] no, I feel like as an individual teacher, I have sought out opportunities and materials to use, but no they are not a part of our curriculum either racial or gender.” Classroom teacher three shared the following:

I try to bring in some racial and gender diversity, however, typically with the curriculum that I have, it doesn’t align itself directly to it. I always try to bring in historical facts and talk about where the science came from, but none of the resources that I have or the material that were provided from the books actually directly relate to the diversity.

Classroom teacher four commented:

Not gender diversity, not at all, I would say the only time it’s brought up is if we have like current events, and I think that that has been a nice way to have it. The racial diversity, definitely in our curriculum, we talk about civil disobedience in the 1960s and I think the kids are so surprised about what happened and I think it’s really important and also last year when we did the whole Bryan Stevenson,* so I had read his book already so I feel like I know a lot about it, and I brought that into my teaching as well just because I think being a white female, I’m not aware of it in my everyday life and I think it really brought it to the front of my mind, I guess, when I started to think about it. I think that my teaching has changed because of that, because of my awareness.
All four classroom teachers stressed the importance of racial and gender diversity being embedded in their curriculum. However, although they look for opportunities on their own, they have found it to be challenging to embed diversity in the curriculum they were given by the district to follow. The teachers were open to receiving professional development, so they would be able to successfully embed racial and gender diversity into their curriculum because they think it will benefit all of their students. The transcribed classroom teacher interviews can be found in Appendix E.

**Interpretations**

The Galaxy school district should identify areas of difference that exist in its student body and develop ways to promote how these differences can be respected and celebrated by students, parents, and teachers. The district should assess the effectiveness of all areas where social-emotional learning is currently taught, including Second Step.

*Bryan Stevenson is the founder and Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Alabama. Stevenson is a Black attorney who has dedicated his career to helping the poor, the incarcerated, and the condemned. He is also the author of the book, *Just Mercy*.**
and research other programs that will support students in social-emotional learning. In addition, the district should assess whether any of its current classroom practices are having the unintended effect of making children feel excluded and promote more sensitive alternatives instead. The district should also help parents understand why it is promoting an improved school climate and give parents the tools they need to support their children in this endeavor.

My findings have proven that gender diversity and racial issues are not explicitly addressed in the everyday curriculum. The online survey responses from the teachers and parents indicated that the Galaxy school district should identify areas of difference that exists in its’ student body and develop ways to promote how these differences can be respected and celebrated. The findings from the semistructured interviews indicated that it is important for racial and gender diversity to be embedded in the everyday curriculum and that the current curriculum included little to no racial and gender diversity.

I hypothesize that this is because these issues are not considered necessary components for a solid academic curriculum which is void of a social and emotional learning program. As I stated in my review of literature, the position that people stand, in relation to others in society, directly impacts what they can see and understand versus what they cannot see and understand. As Lindsey et al. (2009) stated, “When one’s environment is in alignment with one’s perception of reality, there is no need to question or change the status quo” (p. 75).

Heifetz et al. (2009) described the balcony perspective as “gaining the distanced perspective you need to see what is really happening” versus staying on the dance floor (p. 7). For example, the White mother of a White transgender student told me (the researcher) that now she understands the true meaning behind the Black Lives Matter movement. She shared that having a transgender child opened her eyes to the racial biases and discrimination all Black
people encounter in the United States because of the gender diversity biases she and her child deal with. Would this mother have the same level of empathy and awareness about racial biases if she weren’t in the position of being a mother with a transgender child?

Overall the results from the online survey, classroom teacher interviews, social worker interviews, and administrator interviews, demonstrate that the everyday curriculum does not encompass the racial and gender diversity needed for students to develop the social and emotional skills needed to interact in settings outside of their community. Style (1996) commented, “Curriculum needs to function both as window and as mirror, in order to reflect and reveal most accurately both a multicultural world and the student herself or himself” (p. 1). This does not mean there are not aspects of the curriculum that address racial and gender diversity issues that are helpful to students’ social and emotional development. It simply means the everyday curriculum doesn’t address racial and gender diversity issues and how they directly impact the social and emotional learning skills students need to possess when in diverse settings. According to Style (1996):

It is limiting and inaccurate to only educate our children provincially when they must live their lives in a global context, facing vast differences and awesome similarities. They must learn early and often about the valid framing of both windows and mirrors or a balanced, ecological sense of their place(s) in the world. (p. 5).

SECTION SIX: A VISION OF SUCCESS (TO BE)

Context

Based on the data collected from parents and teachers, the Galaxy school district’s CRC would recognize that the foundation needed for all students to feel included in their school community comes from the everyday curriculum. Knowing this, they would strongly recommend
to the district school board that the curriculum and instruction department create committees for each subject area or grade level to begin working on explicitly embedding racial and gender diversity into the curriculum given to teachers. Additionally, the CRC would recommend racial and gender diversity training for all staff—beginning with building administrators.

In an effort to provide families within the Galaxy school district racial and gender diversity education, CRC would host a plethora of workshops and sessions for parents throughout the school year. Peggy McIntosh (2009) stated, “Very ordinary, everyday sharing of racial and other kinds of power can have a tremendous emotional and social payoff. It can make the world seem less insecure and more meaningful. It can create a sense of community” (p. 8). Sessions that highlight various racial and gender diversity issues would be available to parents during the school day and after school on a monthly basis. All of the sessions would include tips for parents to implement at home with their children as a way to continue cultivating the social and emotional skills students need when they interact with different people.
Culture

The Galaxy school district administration and school board actively focuses on racial and gender diversity issues as much as they focus on student growth and standardized testing data. Knowing that embedding racial and gender diversity in the curriculum cultivates social and emotional learning skills students need, the district school board and administration remain literate about current racial and gender diversity issues. McIntosh (2009) stated,

Discussions of race and privilege can help form an invaluable ability to recognize systems of power, both around us and within us. This knowledge can empower us all to know better where we came from, who and where we are, and what we can do. (p. 8)

With ongoing opportunities for parents to become versed about racial and gender diversity issues, the community within the Galaxy school district is also knowledgeable about racial and gender diversity issues. Parents are given tools to continue cultivating the social and emotional skills students need outside of school when they interact with different people.

Conditions

Current racial and gender diversity issues in the United States are acknowledged and embedded in the curriculum at all grade levels and all content areas. The curriculum and instruction committees developed to embed racial and gender diversity into the curriculum will ensure there is flexibility to include current racial and gender diversity issues that arise throughout the school year.

All staff are receptive to teaching racial and gender diversity in their curriculum and acknowledge that their personal biases impact how they teach racial and gender diversity. Style (1996) explained,
In fact, there are still American educators who pride themselves on being ‘color-blind,’ thinking that ignoring ‘accidental’ differences of race or gender or region or class creates the best classroom climate. Promoting such partial seeing is highly problematic for the creation of curriculum which will serve all students adequately. (p. 3)

Knowing that the classroom teacher has the greatest impact on students, the Galaxy school district will regularly ensure all staff are on board and receptive to having racial and gender diversity as part of their everyday curriculum. Staff will also reflect on how their personal biases are impacting the manner in which they approach racial and gender diversity with their students.

**Competencies**

Due to the ongoing professional development provided by the school district, teachers are knowledgeable about and comfortable discussing racial and gender diversity issues. Style stated (1996),

All students deserve a curriculum which mirrors their own experience back to them, upon occasion—thus validating it in the public world of the school. But curriculum must also insist upon the fresh air of windows into the experience of others—who also need and deserve the public validation of the school curriculum. (p. 5)

They are also skilled at embedding racial and gender diversity in their curriculum and daily lessons—specifically adapting their lessons to include current racial and gender diversity issues that arise throughout the school year.
SECTION SEVEN: STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS FOR CHANGE

This section bridges the As-Is and To-Be concepts with a series of strategies and actions based on professional development, leadership strategies, and communication strategies. The change leadership plan has the necessary components for sustainable change:

1. Vision that explains why it is needed.
2. Incentives for all stakeholders.
3. Resources that will be provided.
4. Strategies and actions that provide direction.

As the last piece of this work, the policy advocacy paper was birthed from this change leadership plan.

Table 7
Future Strategies and Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Building Level</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train teachers on how to become culturally proficient and embed diversity into their everyday curriculum</td>
<td>Structure time for teachers to collaborate</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>District Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Become compliant with state mandated training</td>
<td>Mandatory inservice for certified staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public relations department work with building administrators on community engagement plan</td>
<td>Create an inclusivity committee</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop a district inclusivity statement</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>adopted by the school board</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborate with outside agencies to facilitate forums for community members</td>
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</table>
Table 7 outlines suggested strategies and action. For example, teachers need to be trained on how to become culturally proficient and intentionally embed racial and gender diversity into their everyday curriculum. The district should ensure teachers are compliant with the new state mandate by ensuring all certified staff and those who work with students have *Cultural Competency and Racial Bias* training (regarding Illinois School Code). The inservice training is required for school personnel to include training to develop cultural competency—including understanding and reducing implicit racial bias (to include affective, behavioral, and cognitive bias).

Building administration should structure time each week for teachers to specifically collaborate about how they are moving along the continuum of cultural proficiency and embedding racial and gender diversity in their lessons. Research has shown that teachers learning from other teachers helps them grow as professionals. Building administrators should also host book studies throughout the school year with their teachers that assist teachers in their cultural proficiency professional learning plan.

The public relations department can collaborate with building administrators to develop a community engagement plan. Racial and gender diversity forums can be hosted in the evenings where community members are given the opportunity to learn, safely ask questions, and get answers from professionals in those fields. The district can collaborate with outside agencies such as, but not limited to, the Holocaust Museum and Family Action Network to bring in professional speakers to facilitate the racial and gender diversity forums for community members.

Galaxy district administration can ensure the curriculum and instruction department embeds equity and diversity in the district culture and curriculum when revising curriculum that
is under review. This can also be done by collaborating with PTO (parent teacher organization that works collaboratively with the administration to plan, fund, and execute educational field trips and/or classroom experiences for students) and teachers to plan enrichment opportunities for students focused on racial and gender diversity education and issues. A district Inclusivity Committee can be created and work to develop a district inclusivity statement that will be adopted by the school board and become part of the Galaxy district culture.
REFERENCES


http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1098214005283748


APPENDIX A: AS IS 4 Cs ANALYSIS

"As Is" 4 C’s Analysis for embedding racial and gender diversity in the curriculum

- Context
  - Families need diversity education
  - District CRC is focusing on this

- Culture

- Conditions
APPENDIX B: BASELINE 4 CS ANALYSIS

Baseline 4 C’s Analysis for embedding racial and gender diversity in the curriculum

Context
- Diversity education available for families
- District CRC recommends racial and gender diversity be embedded in curriculum

Culture
- District is actively focusing on racial and gender diversity
- Community is knowledgeable about racial and gender diversity issues

Conditions
- Current racial and gender diversity issues are acknowledged
- Ample racial and gender diversity in daily curriculum
- All staff are receptive to teaching racial and gender diversity
- All staff acknowledge that their personal biases impact how they teach racial and gender diversity

Racial and gender diversity will be embedded in the everyday curriculum along with current diversity issues

Competencies
- Teachers are comfortable discussing racial and gender diversity issues
- Teachers are skilled with embedding racial and gender diversity in their curriculum and daily lessons
- Teachers are knowledgeable about racial and gender diversity issues
## APPENDIX C:
### SYSTEM FOR MONITORING IMPACT OF DIVERSITY CURRICULUM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Efforts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teachers</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Educate teachers on how to intentionally embed diversity into their everyday curriculum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create a professional learning plan</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Community</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop a community engagement plan</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>District</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Embed equity and diversity in the district culture and curriculum</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Action</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Structure time for teachers to collaborate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Host a book study with teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host a diversity forum where community members can safely ask questions and get them answered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate with PTO and teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create an equity committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a district equity and diversity statement that will be adopted by the school board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plan enrichment opportunities for students that focus on diversity education and issues</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Big Assumption and Actionable Tests

I assume that if people in the district view me as the angry Black woman trying to force embedding racial and gender diversity in the classroom to foster challenging conversations and discussions because I’m Black, then I will lose credibility and respect as a good administrator and instructional leader.

- Begin with a presentation to my teachers about Anti-Bias Curriculum & Challenging Conversations
- Organically use informal conversations with teachers to educate about my culture, so it’s not viewed as negative
- Take advantage of opportunities that arise and ideas from teachers to support my curricular initiative and get feedback from teachers
- Have one of my teachers co-present with me when I share this with the entire staff
APPENDIX D:
CLASSROOM TEACHERS, SOCIAL WORKERS, ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Classroom Teacher Interview Questions

• What are your thoughts about racial and gender diversity being embedded in your everyday curriculum?

• Do you feel your curriculum addresses racial and gender diversity? Explain.

Social Worker Interview Questions

• What are your thoughts about racial and gender diversity being embedded in the everyday curriculum?

• Do you think embedding racial and gender diversity in the everyday curriculum will impact the social and emotional skills students’ need when they are faced with race and gender diversity issues in this country? Explain.

Administrator Interview Questions

• What are your thoughts about racial and gender diversity being embedded in the everyday curriculum?

• Do you feel the curriculum being taught addresses racial and gender diversity? Explain.

• In what ways has racial and gender diversity had an impact on inclusivity and empathy in your school?
APPENDIX E: CLASSROOM TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Classroom Teacher Interview 1

**Interviewer:** “What are your thoughts about racial & gender diversity being embedded in your everyday curriculum?”

**Female:** “Hmm, that’s a complicated question. Umm, I would like the . . . I like the idea of it, um obviously I’m open to it, however how does one do that? As an ELA teacher, there’s lots of stories we can read, discussions we can have, obviously reflective writing the kids can do... in social studies you can get into that as well with social issues and what not, but to have those resources where do you get them? How do you know they’re appropriate for your class that is constantly changing? And of course, there is always the stigma that goes with it, and you want to make sure you’re not offending anyone or any particular group, or individual, so it’s complicated, but I would embrace it wholeheartedly. “

**Interviewer:** “Alright question #2, do you feel your curriculum addresses racial and/or gender diversity? Please explain.”

**Female:** “No, *chuckles* no, I feel like as an individual teacher, I have sought out opportunities and materials to use, but no they are not a part of our curriculum either racial or gender.”

**Interviewer:** “Okay, that’s it.”
Classroom Teacher Interview 2

**Interviewer:** “What are your thoughts about racial & gender diversity being embedded in your everyday curriculum?”

**Female:** “Um, I think that uh racial & gender diversity should be embedded into my everyday curriculum um I don’t know that it is at the level that it needs to be now. Um I think that . . . well it’s hard because I teach science so there’s not a lot of like . . . humanness that comes up in that like. So that is one thing that I would like to work on is talking about you know the people behind some of the things that we’re talking about and how we can incorporate those story lines. I think as many opportunities as the students have to see different people doing those things is helpful, um social studies seems like an easy place for it to fit, but again I feel like our social studies curriculum is very much um like research based in looking at um particular parts of culture and isolation, and not so much focusing on individuals. Um, I think the third unit on civic engagement would be a really good opportunity um to focus in on some of those issues of racial diversity or gender diversity or how um people have kind of fought for those rights and what that conflict looks like today and sort of what people are doing to work towards it. But again, I think it’s not quite there yet. Um, but just in general I think it’s important for students to feel comfortable talking about those issues, which especially in an area here where they don’t see it as obvious um it doesn’t feel like a necessity or doesn’t feel as urgent as it may in other places, but I think in the end if students aren’t comfortable having those conversations or understanding like “what is ok to say?” and “what’s not ok to say?” and “is just commenting on it appropriate?” can end up doing them a disservice later in life. **Interviewer:** “Do you feel your curriculum addresses racial and/or gender diversity? Please explain.”
Female: “Um no, like I said, it’s hard in science because we don’t really talk about people um so that is one thing that I’m hoping to sort of look at more, there’s definitely a lot there um, but at least the way the curriculum standards are written I guess require me to talk about scientists as people or um you know how different groups and individuals have been treated as scientists and how different people’s research and discoveries um sort of get attention or don’t and how racial or gender diversity kind of plays into that um which I think is a great opportunity um and the dame thing like I said, in social studies it fits there naturally, but I think we could be a little more intentional about introducing some of those issues.”

Interviewer: “Thank you.”

Classroom Teacher Interview 3

Interviewer: “What are your thoughts about racial & gender diversity being embedded in your everyday curriculum?”

Female: “I think it is important to embed racial and ethnic and gender diversity in the classroom. Uh, a lot of times we tend to teach the history and the math of our own western culture, but I’ve been recently taking a history and math class, and we’ve been actually focusing on how eastern culture has actually developed a lot in math, and it took a few hundred years for it to then pop up in western cultures. Like, negative numbers, showed up 2,200 years ago in China, but it took all the way until the 1800s for the western culture to actually understand negative numbers. I often feel like sometimes they’re overlooked because they’re not something that we identify with as much.

Interviewer: “Do you feel your curriculum addresses racial and/or gender diversity? Please explain.”
Female: “Um, I try to bring in some racial and gender diversity, however, typically with the curriculum that I have, it doesn’t align itself directly to it. I always try to bring in historical facts and talk about where the science came from, but none of the resources that I have or the material that were provided from the books actually directly relate to the diversity.”

Interviewer: “Thanks!”

Classroom Teacher Interview 4

Interviewer: “What are your thoughts about racial and gender diversity being embedded in the everyday curriculum?”

Female: “I think it’s great, um I think that it’s needed especially with the gender stuff, I think that there’s so much more changing with social media and with the awareness of gender diversity, so that’s huge. I think race it’s definitely important to bring up because I think there’s a lot of kids that it’s not taught to at home, so I think that’s really really important especially in a district like this where there’s not a lot of diversity. So, the kids, I kind of think they live in like an alternate world and they think because when we teach it in social studies, they’re like surprised and don’t think that there is racism, and there is.

Interviewer: “Do you feel your curriculum addresses racial and/or gender diversity? Please explain.”

Female: “Not gender diversity, not at all um . . . I would say the only time it’s brought up is if we have like current events, and I think that that has been a nice way to have it. I think kids are drawn to that, and I know that um . . . can I talk about like when I tutor? (yes) I tutor older kids, so they’re in 7th grade, so I think that in 5th grade it’s still hard because the kids are so immature and they don’t know and I don’t think that they have as much background knowledge or
understanding about it as a 7th grader that I’ve tutored, when she’s given the opportunity to talk about like gender or mostly gender. I don’t know if she’s just interested in it because of social media or the TV shows she watches, but um she definitely gravitates towards it, and it’s so interesting to kind of see her insight on it compared to maybe somebody in my generation and I’m obviously in my 30s, and it’s totally different from what we talked about. The racial diversity, definitely in our curriculum, we talk about civil disobedience in the 1960s, and I think the kids are so surprised. So, surprised about what happened and I think it’s really important and also last year when we did the whole Bryan Stevenson, so I had read his book already so I feel like I know a lot about it, and I brought that into my teaching as well just because I think being a white female, I’m not aware of it in my everyday life and I think it really brought it to the front of my mind I guess when I started to think about it. I think my teaching has changed because of that, because of my awareness.”

Interviewer: “Thank you!”

APPENDIX F: SOCIAL WORKER INTERVIEWS

Social Worker Interview One

Interviewer: “What are your thoughts about racial & gender diversity being embedded in the everyday curriculum?”

Male: “I think it’s really important, especially in the areas that really don’t have the diversity that some other schools have especially when you’re educating the kids on every single aspect of
life, that should be included in that it gets the kids out of their comfort zone or what they’re used to in order to understand that there are different cultures and different religious beliefs and things like that so that they do not become bubble kids that think that the world is exactly like the Galaxy school district is and there’s nothing else out there. The understanding that there is something else out there, but I’m much more comfortable in my own group, that bubble needs to be popped a little bit. Including that into the curriculum is a great way to support that.”

**Interviewer:** “Do you think embedding racial and gender diversity in the everyday curriculum will impact the social and emotional skills students need when they are faced with gender & racial issues in the United States? Please explain.”

**Male:** “Absolutely, I think that it’s almost part of our job to prepare these kids for the outside world and that is a huge part of it. When they go to college, even though the Galaxy school district is very limited in their diversity, when they go to college, they’re
going to experience that. When they get there, and they have the opportunity to meet different people of races and colors and religions, that they are not only accepting of that, but part of that accepting comes with knowledge. If they are given that early enough, they will be able to handle that better when they get to that point.”

**Interviewer:** “Thank you!”

Social Worker Interview 2

**Interviewer:** “What are your thoughts about racial and gender diversity being embedded in the everyday curriculum?”

**Female:** “Well I am learning that this year in 5th grade, it is embedded, like especially in social studies which I think is wonderful. I feel like the curriculum has shifted since I started here, it’s gotten harder and um I think that’s with common core and that’s just in all of the classes, and science & ELA and I do feel it is embedded in the reading as well for ELA. I always think we can do better, and we can embed even more instead of just a couple of units here and there. I wish it was something that was discussed more frequently especially because of like the community that we live in. We’re fortunate to live in such a high social economic status area, but unfortunately, it’s not extremely diverse um racially, ethnically, or things like that. So, I think kids can always benefit from more education and things like that.”

**Interviewer:** “Do you think embedding racial and gender diversity in the everyday curriculum will impact the social and emotional skills students need when they are faced with gender & racial issues in the United States? Please explain.”

**Female:** “Absolutely! That will give them the tools I think without having the opportunity or privilege to maybe be around that will somewhat you know, the population here is predominately
Caucasian so I think um we have to embed it in a lot of ways because these kids aren’t lucky enough to go to school with people who look different. So, I think it will give them the tools.”

Interviewer: “Thank you!”
Interviewer: “What are your thoughts about racial and gender diversity being embedded in the everyday curriculum?”

Male: “I think it’s important that all diversity is embedded into the curriculum, gender diversity, racial diversity, religious diversity. But as far as gender and racial diversity, I think it’s more important today than ever before because of what’s happening in society. Our goal is to make well-rounded, global, competent citizens, so we can’t do that unless diversity plays a key role. So, uh, I think it’s very important.”

Interviewer: “Do you feel the curriculum being taught addresses racial and/or gender diversity? Please explain”

Male: “I think there’s parts of the curriculum that do teach that. I think uh certain teachers do a much better job of engaging in those real conversations and bringing in real life examples um, I think there’s probably a lot of room for improvement in the curriculum, but I do think there are elements of the particular topic that do discuss this probably more so in the racial than the gender diversity.

Interviewer: “Last question, in what ways do you feel racial and gender diversity have an impact on inclusivity and empathy in your school?”

Male: “I think it’s been huge because some situations help realize the idea of more inclusivity, the idea of helping people be more aware of their surroundings and be more
empathetic. It brings it to the forefront, not that empathy hasn’t always been important, but you have to do a better job of intentionally talking about it, of training our teachers, of helping further create that inclusivity in the classroom and the school community.”

**Interviewer:** “Thank you!”

**Administrator Interview 2**

**Interviewer:** “What are your thoughts about racial & gender diversity being embedded in the everyday curriculum?”

**Male:** “Well I think that that is a positive, I have every reason to believe that it is the right thing to do and certainly advocate for any opportunity to integrate that within existing or future curriculum. I think that uh as much exposure uh to different cultures, different viewpoints, different races for any student is a positive and will make them a more well-rounded person as they go through the education system. So, I would think that any missed opportunity for a district to include that um is a disservice to the student population.”

**Interviewer:** “Do you feel the curriculum being taught addresses racial and/or gender diversity?”

**Male:** “I would say it does to a certain degree, but I think there could definitely be probably more opportunities for um publishers and curriculum developers to include that to help support teachers to maybe have more conversations with students, or to have more activities provided to them to make them feel more confident in their delivery knowing that they’ve got some approved curriculum to implement with the kids that’s school board approved, and that they know is okay for them to use versus them maybe supplementing the materials we may be more
nervous or shying away from a particular topic. So yes, I think that um I would like to see more of that and I would say we probably don’t have enough.”

**Interviewer:** “In what ways do you feel racial and gender diversity have an impact on inclusivity and empathy in your school?”

**Male:** “Well, it’s going to have an impact the more diverse the student population becomes. While I think we do have an increasingly diverse population, I think we’re still in relative terms to say in the country, probably not as diverse as your typical public school would be. So, as we address concerns of race and equality within our schools, the more diverse the population, the more viewpoints we’ll have, and I think the richer discussions between the students as I think again, they are introduced to different genders and races throughout their years in our district.”

**Interviewer:** “Thanks!”