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The role of colorblind racism and white fragility in maintaining racist bullying in middle school

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Abstract

The present study sought to understand how colorblind racism (CBR) and white fragility (WF) influence the presence and perpetration of racist bullying in a middle school setting. Five focus groups and one interview ($n = 20$) were conducted with school administrators, teachers, and racially and ethnically diverse students to elicit their experiences and perspectives concerning racist bullying. Focus groups were analyzed using template analysis. Racist bullying was a common experience among racial and ethnic minoritized students. CBR and WF were evident as white students and teachers claimed students had similar experiences regardless of race, they minimized the impact of racist bullying, and silenced discussions of race and racism. CBR and WF were critical drivers of the maintenance of racist bullying in this middle school, and thus important to address in efforts to prevent racist bullying.

KEYWORDS

bullying prevention, colorblind racism, racial and ethnic minoritized students, racist bullying, white fragility

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1 | INTRODUCTION

The violence associated with racism is evident throughout the history of the United States (US), and ranges from the abhorrent practices of slavery, the colonization of Native land, the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, and the ongoing persecution and exploitation of Latinx populations (Alexander, 2020; Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017). Numerous racist attitudes, beliefs, and practices that underwrote this legacy persist today, and are deeply embedded in our education system (Alexander, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2006). Even though overt acts of racism are increasingly viewed as unacceptable or tend to be viewed as politically incorrect, the occurrence of overtly racist behavior is still prevalent (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). However, colorblind racism (CBR) (i.e., claiming “not to see race”; Bonilla-Silva, 2003) is ever-present in American society. This form of racism allows for and entrenches racist beliefs into systems by ignoring the very real experiences of ongoing racial discrimination and denying the existence of systemic oppression, which can dissuade people from acknowledging and examining their own biases as a result. One critical way that CBR is enacted and maintained is through white fragility (WF), which is defined by DiAngelo (2011) as the “state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves... [which] function to reinstate white racial equilibrium” (p. 54).

As a result of racism in its many forms (e.g., overt, colorblind) within the education system, racial and ethnic minoritized (REM) students, on average, attend fundamentally unequal, lower-resourced schools (Ladson-Billings, 2006), are subjected to racism in how discipline is implemented (Skiba et al., 2002, 2018), are more likely to be tracked into special education, and are less likely to be tracked into advanced classes (Carter et al., 2017). From an ecological perspective, it is important to note that all actors within a social context—in this case, students and staff—influence and are influenced by social norms within the system. Consequently, racism within school settings can be produced and co-created by students and staff. A critical manifestation of racism in schools today also comes in the form of race-based or *racist* bullying. We intentionally use the term *racist bullying* here to make clear that the underlying motivation of this form of bullying is racism.

Bullying, in general, is characterized as intentional, repetitive harm and based on a power imbalance between the perpetrator and targeted person (Olweus, 1993). As such, racist bullying is defined as the intentional harm of others based on their racial or ethnic background. We assert that the power imbalance here is in large part based on how racism is enacted via systems of oppression that relegate REM students to inferior positions in society. Racist bullying includes both direct behaviors (e.g., verbal taunts, slurs, and physical threats or disparaging remarks about cultural customs, foods, and clothing) and indirect acts (e.g., social exclusion because one's cultural background or identity) of aggression (McKenney et al., 2006) with racist name-calling and social exclusion on the basis of race as the most common (Qureshi, 2013). The context in which racist bullying occurs in schools is likely to include the internalization and resulting displays of racist attitudes and implicit biases toward REM students, which are enacted and maintained through CBR (Bonilla-Silva, 2003) and WF (DiAngelo, 2018). As such, the present study uses focus group data with school staff and students to explore the ways in which CBR and WF contribute to the maintenance and persistence of racist bullying in a middle school setting.

2 | UNDERSTANDING BULLYING AND RACIST BULLYING

Bullying is one of the more common negative events that youth experience during childhood and adolescence. Prevalence estimates suggest that up to 60% of children in elementary school (Cooley et al., 2018; Kochenderfer-Ladd & Wardrop, 2001; Ladd et al., 2017) and between 24% and 29% of adolescents in middle school (US Department of Education 2019; Wang et al., 2009) are exposed to bullying victimization. In particular, REM youth, LBGTQ + youth, foreign-born or first-generation youth, and youth with disabilities frequently experience bullying victimization (Earnshaw et al., 2018). Recent evidence suggests that about one in six youth experience bias-based bullying, with verbal taunts, slurs, and threats as the most common form (Jones et al., 2018). As a result, those

exposed to bias-based bullying may experience the greatest risk for negative mental health impacts, including suicidal ideation and attempts (Sinclair et al., 2012). Although evidence on the effects of racist bullying remains limited (Sapouna et al., 2022), recent studies do suggest that this form of bias-based bullying contributes to unique risk for negative consequences for REM students, including increased poor mental and physical health (Rosenthal et al., 2015), higher risk for drug use (Earnshaw et al., 2018) and delinquent behavior as well as academic challenges (Sapouna et al., 2022). This is especially true for students of color with intersecting marginalized identities, although research is particularly limited in this area of the racist bullying literature (Sapouna et al., 2022). However, racist bullying is likely underreported as the bullying incidents are not directly tied to race or racism (Qureshi, 2013).

Notably, biases, discriminatory attitudes, and negative stereotypes among students and educators contribute to increased risk for racist bullying victimization (Sapouna et al., 2022). In addition, these biases and attitudes can interfere with educators' responses to racist bullying incidents, which in turn can be retraumatizing to those targeted (Qureshi, 2013). On the other hand, Earnshaw et al. (2014) found that teacher involvement buffered risk for smoking initiation following exposure to racist bullying, suggesting that effective teacher responses can serve as an important protective mechanism for REM students.

Bullying, in general, can lead to a range of negative consequences. For example, youth who are victimized by their peers often experience increased rates of depressive and anxiety symptoms, academic difficulties, substance use, and behavioral issues (Card & Hodges, 2008; Reijntjes et al., 2010, 2011). Similarly, perpetration of bullying can contribute to elevated levels of delinquent behavior, substance use, problems with school, and medical issues (Vernberg & Biggs, 2010; Vernberg et al., 2011). Furthermore, youth who experience bias-based bullying due to multiple, intersecting identities may experience further negative impacts as compared to those experiencing other forms of bullying as well as those experiencing only one type of bias-based bullying (Mulvey et al., 2018; Sapouna et al., 2022). As a result, scholars have called for bullying prevention efforts that move beyond the conceptualization of bullying as solely a relationship-based problem to a view that considers the role of the societal and structural contexts that shape the lives of marginalized youth (Haines-Saah et al., 2016; Hawley & Williford, 2015; Qureshi, 2013). Taking the structural context of racism into account when considering bullying leads to a focus on systemic racism and how it manifests within the school walls. Thus, it is crucial that systems of oppression, especially racism, are considered as a cause of the power imbalance motivating bullying behaviors, as well as how they contribute to understanding how oppression magnifies the consequences of bullying (Haines-Saah et al., 2016). However, much of the bullying literature fails to acknowledge how broader societal and ecological factors, such as racism, influence power structures, hierarchies, and dominance patterns within children's interpersonal relationships (Wiseman et al., 2019).

As most bullying takes place on school grounds (US Department of Education 2019), school personnel are often considered one of the most important resources in bullying prevention efforts (Hunter et al., 2004; Newman, 2003). However, there are several factors that may limit the overall success of adult intervention. First, oftentimes, teachers are unaware of bullying incidents among students, yet evidence suggests that when teachers are aware of these events they are more likely to take action (Fekkes 2004; J. Yoon & Bauman, 2014). Second, when teachers believe that bullying is normal they are less likely to intervene (Hektner & Swenson, 2012; Kochenderfer-Ladd & Pelletier, 2008; Troop-Gordon & Ladd, 2015). Finally, school personnel are less likely to intervene when they perceive victims as responsible for their own harassment or alternatively in need of protection (Mishna et al., 2005; Yoon, 2004). This evidence is especially troubling, given how colorblind attitudes are pervasive among white adults (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017), and that the majority of the teaching workforce is white (US Department of Education, 2016a, 2016b).

General attitudes about bullying among school personnel have received considerable attention in the literature as potential barriers for successful prevention and intervention efforts. It is theorized that problematic attitudes (e.g., bullying is normative) among school personnel may undermine their ability to effectively intervene (Hawley & Williford, 2015). However, less is understood about how systemic racism and racial bias (implicit and explicit) among school staff shape their response to bullying and peer victimization (McKenney et al., 2006). Notably, few studies

have investigated the ways in which the actions or inactions of school personnel contribute to racist bullying in schools.

In addition, students are also critical actors within the school environment. Their action or inaction can deter or perpetuate bullying behavior among classmates. Decades of research has investigated the roles that peers play in bullying largely based on the seminal work of Salmivalli et al. (1996). Salmivalli et al. identified participant roles beyond the bully and their target (i.e., “victim”), including students who actively assist the bully (assistants), students who reinforce the bully by encouraging the behavior (reinforcers), students who are present during the bullying yet do nothing to encourage or discourage the behavior (outsiders), and students who actively defend the person targeted (defenders). Many antibullying interventions (e.g., KiVa; Salmivalli et al., 2009) seek to engage students in active defending as doing so cannot only stop the incident but also can provide tangible benefits to the student targeted (Sainio et al., 2011). In a recent review, empathy for the “victim” was noted as the most consistently noted correlate of defending behavior among peers (Lambe et al., 2019). However, whether a peer is empathetic to a peer's harassment and thus their willingness to defend is influenced by peer group norms and expectations (Smith, 2016). If racist attitudes and beliefs are present among students, it is likely they may engage, assist or reinforce racist bullying rather than defend against it. Yet no research on defending behavior among peers in relation to racist bullying was identified in the literature.

To this end, the purpose of the present study is to investigate the nature of racist bullying in a middle school setting to understand how CBR and WF influence staffs' and students' abilities to effectively intervene when instances of racist bullying occur. Given the evidence that the attitudes of school personnel and students may undermine their intervention efforts, it is important to consider the ways in which staff and students internalize racist attitudes and implicit biases that may interfere with their ability and/or willingness to identify and effectively intervene with racially motivated acts of bullying. We argue that CBR and WF among school personnel and students perpetuate racist bullying in school settings and interfere with a school's ability to address racist bullying. CBR and WF are defined in turn.

3 | COLORBLIND RACISM

Colorblind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2003) is the new racial ideology that has replaced the racial ideas of Jim Crow. Claiming to “not see race” ignores the enduring presence and impact of racial discrimination and systemic oppression, which results in dissuading or limiting people from acknowledging and examining their own biases. There are four frames of CBR that shape how people interpret information regarding race, including naturalization, cultural racism, minimization, and abstract liberalism.

Naturalization adopts the frame that race differences result from biological differences (i.e., people of color are inherently different from white people). *Cultural racism* allows for culturally-based arguments, similar to stereotypes, to explain the positions of minorities within society. One example of cultural racism is the popularization of the term “welfare queen” which accuses Black women of abusing government assistance for self-benefit. *Minimization* claims that the current state of race relations has improved (Bonilla-Silva, 2003) and posits that race is no longer a factor that affects the way people are treated within the United States. Minimization further identifies racism as overtly racist acts toward people of color. This frame functions to diminish the role of race in shaping individual and institutional experiences.

Resulting from a long history of American individualism, *abstract liberalism* is linked to the prevailing value system in the United States wherein the belief that all Americans have equal opportunity to succeed is widely accepted. This frame allows white people to acknowledge racism exists yet invoke notions of equality, rooted in liberal values, to dismiss their role in maintaining racist systems and thus the actions necessary to dismantle these systems of oppression (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017). As a result, colorblind racist attitudes, even among those with liberal values or a theoretical understanding of racism (Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017), allow

white people to uphold their positive sense of self (Cabrera, 2014). In turn, these attitudes protect white people against the discomfort of recognizing that they are complicit in contributing to and maintaining racist systems and shield them from having to acknowledge the benefits that they receive from these systems through the privileging of whiteness. However, when white people experience discomfort, or racialized vulnerability (Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017), they may seek to minimize their discomfort through actions (e.g., anger, guilt, or shame) that have been characterized as WF (DiAngelo, 2011) or the inability to contend with the stress that comes from acknowledging racism and their complicity in it. By enacting the four frames of CBR, white people can preserve their own comfort, hold themselves in positive self-regard, and avoid WF thus maintaining white supremacy (Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017).

4 | WF

As a result of living in and being socialized in a society where racism permeates every facet of our lives, without specific antiracist efforts and learning, all Americans inevitably absorb a racist worldview and racist patterns. For white individuals, an acceptance of racism and white superiority can manifest in overt and covert ways. Colorblindness, as described above, is one of the covert ways White people defend racist ideas. By ignoring race as a central factor in our social interactions, systems, and structures, we maintain the associated benefits and privileges of whiteness. This defense of whiteness can be partially explained by the idea of WF as a defensive response to racial stress (DiAngelo, 2011). The defensiveness that characterizes WF includes expressions of anger, fear and guilt, silence and withdrawal, and a deep defensive reactivity when discussing race, especially when assumptions about race are challenged. Ford et al. (2022) argue that these emotional or affective responses (e.g., anger and guilt) to white individuals' considering their role in maintaining racism and racist systems are triggered when white people feel as if their fundamental goal of being "good" or not causing/contributing to harm is challenged. In turn, white individuals may attempt to regulate these emotional reactions by engaging in avoidance, rationalizing, and/or silence. white people have been socialized to believe that they are entitled to racial comfort. As white people are largely considered to be raceless, an explicit discussion of their race, and even race in general and racism specifically, can trigger intense discomfort, and a desire to return to the status quo (DiAngelo, 2011; Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017) via the enactment of "emotional, cognitive, and behavioral strategies used to restore white racial comfort" (Langrehr et al., 2021, p. 405) like avoidance and silence.

WF flows from the theory of CBR (Bonilla-Silva, 2003) and relies on CBR to perpetuate it as a reaction to racial stress among white people. In the post-Civil Rights era, racism adapted by becoming covert, or colorblind. Yet, the narrative has persisted that racism is an individual, intentional, and conscious act. Therefore, calling attention to any racially problematic behavior or system places white people on the "bad" side of what DiAngelo (2018) terms the good-bad binary. This supposed questioning of moral character becomes the focus, rather than the racial transgression that occurred. Rather than listen, reflect upon, and repair their actions, white individuals are more likely to employ one of the four frames of CBR to prove that they are indeed good and moral. In this way, WF functions to exempt people from further engagement in recognizing and eradicating racism and racist behaviors. WF is therefore a powerful tool to maintain systemic and interpersonal racism. It plays a role in the perpetuation and maintenance of race-based bullying because it exempts white individuals from grappling with how they are implicated in the problem. A colorblind ideology can prevent white individuals from seeing their role in and perpetration of racism in the first place. If racism is acknowledged, WF can shut down any sort of productive engagement (DiAngelo, 2011; Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017).

5 | PRESENT STUDY

CBR and its four frames allow for the continuation and maintenance of institutionalized racism. WF protects and insulates white people from needing to confront or recognize this cycle. Prior evidence indicates that CBR is pervasive in schools and allows educators to ignore the salience of race for REM students and the presence of racism within schools (Castro-Atwater, 2016). As a result, colorblind racist attitudes can elicit bias from educators and in turn negatively impact student success (Castro-Atwater, 2016). In the context of school discipline disparities, a critical barrier to achieving racial equity is the presence of CBR and WF in schools that obscure the racialized experience of students of color and the racialized nature of the problem at hand (Wilson et al., 2020). While there is significant research on CBR in schools, the present study aims to fill the gap of applying this lens to racist bullying in middle schools.

In the context of the present study, analyzing how CBR is enacted within the schools, and exploring the mechanisms of WF in school administrators, teachers, and students advances our understanding of how racist bullying is maintained within schools. A focus on middle school racist bullying is warranted, as middle schools are often characterized by a pervasive culture of bullying (Evans et al., 2014) where over one-third of students experience bullying (Hicks et al., 2018). Middle school is also the time where racial disparities in students' experiences of school and educational outcomes begin to widen (T. M. Jones et al., 2021).

A key ingredient for the successful prevention of racist bullying is adult and peer intervention, yet studies suggest that problematic attitudes can consciously or unconsciously undermine their ability and willingness to intervene (Hektner & Swenson, 2012; Kochenderfer-Ladd & Pelletier, 2008; Smith, 2016). In an effort to understand potential barriers for effective adult and peer intervention in racist bullying incidents, this qualitative study applies two interrelated theoretical frameworks—CBR and WF—to consider the ways in which students and school staff discuss the presence, perpetuation, and maintenance of racist bullying in a middle school setting. The present study aims to answer the following research question: How do CBR and WF contribute to and perpetuate racist bullying in the middle school context?

6 | METHODS

6.1 | Setting

This project is embedded in a larger research-practice partnership within a school district in the Pacific Northwest (Herrenkohl et al., 2020). The project took place at one racially and ethnically diverse middle school of 820 students that are 35% white, 28% Asian, 23% Hispanic or Latino, 8% Multiracial, 6% Black, and 1% Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander or Native American/Alaskan Native, roughly representative of the school district at large. Additionally, 37% of students met criteria for free and reduced-price lunch, compared with 49% of the whole school district. The school has a program for students needing additional support related to potential Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD). The school estimates that approximately 75%–90% of those with EBD are REM students, mostly students who identify as Black. Similar to the demographics of teachers nationally, approximately 85% of the 96 school staff were white. School leaders volunteered to work with our team as a case study. We first met with the leadership team at one school interested in learning more about their school climate survey and the high rates of bullying reported by their students. The research team co-created the research plan with the four members of the administrative team at the school. Our initial research plan focused on three topic areas: school climate, bullying, and race relations. This paper represents a deep dive into the bullying part of the project, with specific attention to the role and influence of CBR and WF on racist bullying.

6.2 | Procedures and sample

We conducted a series of five focus groups with administrators, teachers, and students separately in addition to one interview with a teacher. All focus groups and interviews lasted approximately one hour and were held in a conference room in person at the school. Our sampling frame was largely one of convenience but included purposive sampling criteria around the race of the student participants. The entire administrative team participated in two focus groups. The administrative team then invited all teachers at the school to participate by email. School staff invited students to participate largely based on schedule convenience from advisory classes so that students would not miss core subjects during the focus group time and selecting for student race. The administrative team identified as two white women, one Black male, and one white male. Four teachers participated and identified as three white women and one white male. Twelve students participated in total; five students in the focus groups with only REM students, one student identified as Latino, and the others as Black; all were male. Seven students attended the mixed-race group, which consisted of two Black females, one mixed-race male, one Native American female, one white male, and two white females. Participant demographics are also reported in Table 1.

All focus groups used semistructured interview protocols and included questions about each group's perceptions of school climate, the definitions and experiences of racial equity and inequity, and perceptions and definitions of bullying, and what contributes to and prevents bullying. Focus group sessions were conducted by the first, third, and fourth authors, and were recorded and professionally transcribed; all identifying information was then removed. Administrators were our main contact at the school and coordinated all study functions in the Spring of the 2018–2019 school year. The administrators also participated in two planning meetings before the commencement of the study, two formal focus groups, and two meetings following all the focus groups to review the data and decide on the next steps. All procedures were reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of the sponsoring university. Informed written consent was obtained by all adult participants and parents of students, verbal assent was obtained from all students.

The focus groups for the team of administrators took place during the school day. Because of the timing, members of the team came and went as issues arose in the school that needed their attention. All four members were present during the two focus groups for at least 75% of the time. All teachers at the school were invited to focus groups by an email sent from administrators. Two teacher focus group sessions were planned after school. For one session, only one teacher attended and it became an interview. We conducted two focus groups with students, one was entirely REM students, one with students from a variety of racial backgrounds. Focus groups

TABLE 1 Participant demographics.

	Race	Gender
Administrators (<i>n</i> = 4)	75% white	50% male
	25% Black	50% female
Teachers (<i>n</i> = 4; focus group 1: <i>n</i> = 3; 1 interview)	100% white	75% female
		25% male
Students (focus group 1: <i>n</i> = 5)	20% Latino	100% male
	80% Black	
Students (focus group 2: <i>n</i> = 7)	29% Black	29% male
	14% Mixed race	71% female
	14% Native American	
	43% white	

were conducted during a period at school determined by school staff to be the least disruptive to their learning. Students' parents consented to their participation, and students were asked to verbally assent to participate in the focus group session. No incentives were provided at the request of the school since not all students were invited to participate.

6.3 | Analysis

Template analysis (Brooks et al., 2015), a subset of thematic content analysis, was conducted using CBR and WF as the analytic frames with which to apply to the data. Template analysis allows for both the use of a priori themes and inductive themes to form a template to apply to the data. Each of the four frames of CBR was a starting code that was used as an a priori code. Codes and example quotes are reported in Table 2. For WF, a priori codes were developed based on common ways that WF manifests, including closing off self-reflection, silencing the discussion of race, and minimizing the role of race and racism. The first, second, fifth, and sixth authors all read one transcript to examine the usefulness and applicability of the template and to develop a codebook that also included emergent themes. Examples of emergent codes within the abstract liberalism frame of CBR included the ways "equality" among racial groups was highlighted; an example of an emergent code for WF included attributing racial bias in the school solely to system factors. The first, fifth, and sixth authors then coded the rest of the transcripts using a revised codebook that was continually refined in weekly analysis meetings. Coders memoed throughout the process of coding, including memos on reasons for applying codes. These memos were incorporated into the process of writing analytic memos, which summarized the main themes and included areas where negative examples of themes emerged. Peer debriefing of analytic memos was used as a method to establish trustworthiness, as was triangulation by observation, where we compared student, administrator, and teacher perspectives on themes (Lietz et al., 2006).

6.4 | Reflexivity and positionality

The positionality of researchers and authors is a critical component of the process and analysis of qualitative data. It is especially crucial in a paper on racist bullying and how CBR and WF may play a role in its maintenance. We write about our positionalities here in an effort to be transparent and reflexive about how these positionalities influence our point of view for analysis and relationships with participants. During the data collection process, it was important to consider how the race and background of each author influenced the relationships with school staff and students, and how differences in our identities may have influenced the research process. The study procedure was co-designed by two Black university researchers, two white university researchers, two white school administrators, and one Black school administrator. During data collection, it was important to ensure that a Black facilitator (fourth author) led the focus groups because REM students were asked to discuss their experiences of racism, racist bullying, and unequal treatment, and for mixed-race student focus groups. We also considered the positionality of focus group leaders for the white administrative team and teachers, with the white first and third authors leading these groups.

All authors contributed substantially to the analysis presented here. The first, second, third, fifth, and sixth authors identify as cisgender white females and are from various socioeconomic backgrounds. The fourth author identifies as a Black female and the seventh author as a cisgender Black man. Because our positionalities impact our analytic lens, we engaged in a number of steps to ensure rigor and trustworthiness in our analysis: (1) the authors who identified as white wrote memos about their experience of looking for WF and CBR, and shared these with the research team to obtain feedback on coding excerpts and developing themes; (2) we had ongoing discussions with our research team about how positionality creates bias that impacts our analysis, inferences, and conclusions.

TABLE 2 Codebook with the template applied to all transcripts.

Code	Definition	Example quote
Bullying		
Definitions of bullying	How students, teachers, and administrators defined bullying. Subcodes include administrator, teachers, and student perspectives.	Teacher: "I define bullying as repetitive, abusive behavior where there is a power dynamic or someone who is more powerful in one way or the other than another student."
Manifestations and stories of racist bullying	Stories of what racist bullying looks like. Subcodes include administrator, teacher, white student, and student of color perspectives.	Administrator: "They get all kinds of microaggressions and all kinds of things that they ignore, like people touching their hair. Like being asked questions like, 'The N-word is okay right?'"
School staff responses to racist bullying	What actions have school staff taken following an incident of bullying.	Teacher: "But there are times when it's just like, 'I cannot deal with this.' I'm going to go in and pretend I didn't see those kids doing that."
	Includes student and staff perspectives of responses	Teacher: "We're also doing, trying to do restorative practices."
Colorblind racism		
Abstract liberalism	The assumption of equal opportunity and individual choices. Ignoring the salience of race in how school shapes opportunities.	Teacher: "Well, for me, we're all human beings."
Naturalization	Claims that it is natural for racialized systems to exist, especially with regard to segregation or supposed biological differences.	Administrator: "But one of the things I really like about this school is, again, if you look down you'll see children, they're really divided by racial lines."
Cultural racism	Using culture to explain away racial differences or describe situations where culture could be the reason differences in treatment are tolerated.	Student: "Some people call you, if you're a Black person, they call you the N-word. People are giving out passes in school. The N-word pass. People get treated differently."
Minimization of racism	Instances of racism are tolerated, are not identified as racist, or are discussed as not being a big deal.	Student: "The worst I've heard is Black person calling a Black person a burnt chicken nugget. There's nothing really racist going around in the school, I think we're equal."
White fragility		
Closing off self-reflection	Not taking personal responsibility or taking the time to reflect on one's role in why racial disparities exist in the school.	Administrator: "I guess what I am saying, there are hurdles. I can't just snap my fingers like Thanos and change half the population into being African-American teachers."
Taking race off the table	In discussing issues where there are racial disparities or instances of racism, bringing up other potential factors to avoid discussing race. Often this arises by focusing on socioeconomic issues.	Teacher: "When I think of racial equity, I think of really how can I meet that child's needs? Like what does this child need differently than this child's needs... I definitely have my Hispanic students

(Continues)

TABLE 2 (Continued)

Code	Definition	Example quote
Hijacking the conversation	Abrupt topic switches away from race and racism, often to focus on other forms of oppression.	struggle with math. But again, it comes alot to money. Most of my white students have tutors." Teacher: "I mean, I get bullied more than I see anybody else get bullied. But I see extreme behaviors all the time so I'm almost kind of numb to that, to regular bullying."

7 | RESULTS

The findings illuminate that students, teachers, and administrators of all races at this middle school reported witnessing or being subject to various incidents of racist bullying. We first report on what racist bullying looked like at this middle school and how students and the administrator of color report experiencing its effects. We then describe the ways that the four frames of CBR manifested. Within these frames, we discuss how WF was a reaction to discussing race. As WF is a response to or enactment of CBR, themes of how WF manifested are integrated throughout the discussion of the frames of CBR.

7.1 | Racist bullying and its impact

Name-calling and racialized insults appeared to be the most commonly reported forms of racist bullying, noted in each focus group and acknowledged to be a problem by administration, teachers, and students alike. Racial slurs were commonly reported by REM students in the focus groups, including the use of the N-word, calling students “beaners,” and seeing students being made fun of for wearing hijab. One administrator noted, “I had an Asian student one-time making fun of other Asian students. He pulled his eyes.” Students giving the “N-card,” or a “pass” for students who do not identify as Black was also common, though many of the REM students expressed their dismay about the N-card, saying that regardless of whether a Black student gave them “permission” to say the N-word, it “still doesn't mean they can say it.” The use of the N-word and the N-card are examples of how the power imbalance between REM students and white students was enacted suggesting an intentional and repetitive pattern of racist bullying in the school. Furthermore, racist bullying appeared to have become normalized such that administrators, teachers, and students all expressed that it was inevitable. One participant who was an administrator and identified as Black explained the effect this had on REM students:

They get all kinds of microaggressions and all kinds of things that they ignore, like people touching their hair. Like being asked questions and like the N-word is okay, right? There's all kinds of things.... It is absolutely a different experience for them, and because of their small numbers, it can't be the same. Or it can't feel like the right kind of course because they don't ever get to feel, in my experience, as comfortable in their own skin because they're always having to think about something. They've always got to be constantly aware of the room that they're in.

Despite the vigilance that these incidents require for REM students to navigate school, REM students stated that incidents of racist bullying were rarely addressed by staff. REM students expressed little faith that racist bullying would be taken seriously or that school staff would intervene in ways to prevent bullying altogether. In fact, REM

students reported that they expected school staff would also contribute to racializing them, where they offered numerous examples of ways they were treated differently due to their race. For example, one student explained how he was held back from lunch because the teacher assumed he didn't turn in his homework, he said "I'm basically the only Black person in there, and she let everybody else go but I stayed back, and she talked to me, basically half of my lunch," until the teacher realized he had turned in his homework. The student felt the teacher was biased in her assumptions and her treatment of him. We now turn to examine how CBR and WF appeared to function in maintaining racist bullying by limiting school staff's ability to see it as a problem and to respond accordingly.

7.2 | CBR

7.2.1 | Abstract liberalism

Abstract liberalism is the most essential of the four frames of CBR and is characterized by the assumption of equal opportunity and ignorance of the role of systemic racism in patterning the lives of REM students. We saw this frame manifest in the way that students, teachers, and sometimes administrators talked about the sameness of students, regardless of race. One white teacher said, "We're all human beings. Our cultures are what should define us and not the color of our eyes, the color of our skin, the texture of our hair, the sound of our voices, the accents, those type of things." While they tacitly acknowledge culture as being something that shapes our experience, the white teacher suppresses the real experiences of racism by over-emphasizing a shared experience as "human beings." This suggests that one mechanism of maintaining a system of oppression for REM students is through CBR, manifested through abstract liberalism, which in turn reinforces the power imbalance between REM students and white students.

When discussing how the school handles incidents of bullying, one white administrator said, "And I think that does go back to the adage of treat people how you want to be treated." This sentiment assumes that individual choice drives our outcomes, and in doing so ignores power and prejudice. Even when teachers were asked specifically about how they approach racial equity in their classrooms and how they see the school engaging in efforts to improve racial disparities in discipline and academics, their narratives maintained a stance that race was not a critical factor influencing what REM students experience in school. Similar notions were repeated by white students who said, "Everyone is pretty much fair to each other" and "I feel everyone treats everyone equally." This indicates that white students are less aware of prejudicial attitudes and discrimination that is happening among their peers.

While claiming that students are treated equally, students in both focus groups also reported on their perceptions of how students with "bad reputations" are treated differently. One white student explained, "I think some students who haven't made the best decisions in the past get a bad reputation because some teachers know what they did. They might think, oh this student just is not going to do well. They'll just get mad at them more easily than other students if they make the same mistake. They probably would get less of a penalty." This example stands in contrast to the perspectives of REM students, who shared many examples of how they were treated differently or singled out because of their race. One REM student explained, "Some teachers don't really care about other students, even when the students are trying to be good. That's what I think." Another REM student expressed, "Let's say, someone else is talking, and then... Let's say, the whole class is talking, you open your mouth for a second. You're the one that gets blamed." Another REM student stated,

Yeah, well, racism and favoritism. "Cause I know a few teachers that act racist. ... All right, yeah, it's time to do work." And this other [white] kid in our classroom, he'd be on his like, tablet all the time and I just get on my phone because I got a notification. I just check it. And [the teacher] be like, "Put your phone away, put your phone away." And send me down to the office and stuff. I'd be like, "So, what about [white student], he's still playing on his tablet." And [the teacher] be like, "Well, it's okay. Just let him play on the tablet, he's new here." I was like, "Same rules apply."

These examples illustrate how the liberal idea of meritocracy, or reward by merit and behavior, is driving white students' perceptions of unequal treatment in schools and their lack of awareness of their peers of colors' experiences. Implicit in white students' comments is a mislabeling of how racial bias is implicated in obtaining the "problem student" label. Meanwhile, the coded label of being "a problem student," appeared to feel impossible to overcome by REM students.

A white administrator reflected on the thought process that leads to some of the negative interactions discussed by the REM students:

Like I could be standing, I've said this how many times this year I could be standing in the cafeteria with 300 kids in the room and I'm like just randomly scanning the room, hoping not to see any issues. I will say why is it that I already know... this is like the bias, but it's the bias based on experience, which is part of our human DNA too, it's like a schema. It's like you train yourself based on yesterday, what am I going to see today? Why is it I already know that no matter what I do looking around this room, I'm probably going to see [a student of color], or somebody come popping up and run off over here or do something, that's going to get on my radar.

This administrator appears to acknowledge that a student's race may literally color the way in which behavior is perceived or even expected. This suggests that (even despite some awareness), this administrator may still ignore manifestations of racist bullying by expecting REM students to act out, which in turn may limit their ability to see white students perpetrate racist bullying or to take these acts seriously. Further, the perception that teachers view REM students as problem students, and in need of punishment for even minor infractions, may dissuade REM students from reaching out in response to being targeted by or witnessing racist bullying, which may then contribute to its maintenance in this school.

The example of an administrator choosing whether or not to intervene in situations of minor disciplinary issues stands in contrast to the ways in which school administrators named systemic barriers to racial equity. A white administrator explained, "The average person looking at the school system, probably thinks that we have a lot more power than we actually do. Like there's the teacher's contract that would get in the way. Or there's the transportation schedule, the busing that will get in the way. That's life. You always run into barriers and all that." While system-level pressures within schools undeniably exist, in these instances, they appeared to serve as a scapegoat for not addressing issues of racial injustice. In turn, this perceived inability to act may allow individuals to remain exempt from personal reflection as to how their own behaviors influence the system or the ways they are complicit within it. In strategizing ways to effectively intervene with racist bullying, in the absence of self-reflection, blaming systemic forces renders these efforts futile. Another white administrator stated, "there are hurdles. I can't just snap my fingers [...] and change half the population into being African-American teachers." Similarly, when asked for areas of improvement, one teacher cited system-level changes rather than acknowledging any personal responsibility in responding to such incidents. This type of thinking can reinforce denying how individuals and individual attitudes/behaviors impact the larger system. In this instance, WF may have contributed to the perception that racism is something "out of our control."

7.2.2 | Cultural racism

Teachers displayed cultural racism in covert ways by attributing their perceptions of students' behaviors to characterize traits, rather than capturing potential bias. This sentiment was an implicit assumption as to why REM students and particularly Black students were overrepresented in the EBD program. One white teacher said, "My students, they're constantly insulting each other. But that's just what it is in an EBD program." This statement assumes that the insults are a normal part of interaction for REM students, who constitute most of the students in

the EBD program in this school, which may result in this teacher unintentionally allowing these insults to go unchecked. In another instance, the same teacher said, "And as far as the N-word is concerned, it's not like overt racism. It's a student, like these two, playing basketball and be like, "Get off me, N-word" or something like that. So I don't, it's not... Does that make sense?" This statement seems to imply that because REM students say it to each other, it is not something that this teacher needs to address, even when the N-word is clearly used as an intentional racial slur in other instances. The ignoring or denial of the racist undertones of the N-word serves to reinforce the power differential between REM students and white students.

On the other hand, WF functions to excuse white teachers from having to engage with, learn about, or teach about cultures other than their own. One teacher expressed her discomfort in talking about race, saying, "So, I mean, it'd be hard for, frankly, this is going to sound awful, but I'm just going to go ahead and say it, like a middle-aged to an older white woman talking about struggles of Black men, and young Black men and women, right? That would be a tough sell, I think." Her comment that she is essentially unqualified to teach about the experiences of REM people may create a dynamic where only the struggles of white individuals could possibly be taught in her class. While she acknowledged that this is a problematic viewpoint, the comment suggests that white educators cannot address issues of race, likely shutting down further conversation about race, or self-reflection on the teacher's role in inadvertently perpetuating racism by feeling incapable of teaching Black history. It also suggests that this teacher may ignore or fail to recognize the role of white people in Black history, from the ownership of slaves among whites to the experiences of white civil rights leaders.

7.2.3 | Minimization

The frame of minimization relies on the argument that race is no longer a relevant factor affecting people of color or the position of status they obtain. Most white teachers and students minimized the importance of the N-word and the N-card. A white student explained, "Most people aren't racist about it...They do the N-word passes. They don't do that to people. They just do that because they're mad at this person." This statement minimizes the impact that using the N-word could have on a student of color, by failing to understand the differential impact of the N-word on REM students and does not acknowledge using the N-word as a racist act. As such, failing to recognize the harmful impact of the N-word only reinforces a power differential between REM students and white students and maintains systemic racism by making such statements normal. In the same focus group of students, a white student reported, "I've never actually seen any bullying that's happened that was racist, but I've just seen people being rude to each other." Another said, "I feel like it wasn't about race," and another said, "If anybody is getting bullied, it's usually the way they look or the way they act, but not usually by their skin color." These statements are a direct contradiction to the experiences reported by REM students. A REM student in the mixed-race focus group explained how sometimes REM students have to play racist bullying off as a joke, when in fact it does hurt them, "Some students, they would say something racist to them but they would mean it as a joke but the person that took it. They didn't like it, they felt sad about it." Speaking of a similar incident, a white teacher explained,

I see, like this [white student] out here, for example, he breaks people's balls all the time, but he's never super awful and mean about it. And it's always kind of surface-level stuff. But then there's one [student of color] in my class who is friends with him who kind of is the beta to his alpha, who he is constantly breaking this kid's balls. And I guess it could be considered bullying, but the other kid just brushes it off and it doesn't bother him. At least that's how I see it. I don't see him... he doesn't complain about it. He's not ever outwardly expressing his... Does that make sense? It doesn't seem like it bothers him. It might when he goes home. I don't know. He might go home and cry every night, but he doesn't tell me that and his mom doesn't, so I don't know.

There is an important contrast in how the teacher reads a student's reaction that he is fine, while the student color explains how incidents of racist bullying do hurt. The assumption that race and racism are no longer issues by white students and teachers is evident in these examples and appears to prevent them from being able to see racist bullying as a problem. In fact, teachers reported on times when they walked by groups of students using the N-word, pretending to not hear it, to avoid a confrontation and adding to their already overwhelming list of things to do. To further the point, one teacher explained his thoughts on bullying in general, saying, "I don't really feel like bullying is that big of a problem. I've worked in a middle school for 10 years and I've never really thought that bullying was that big of a problem." These statements from teachers suggest that not only may incidents of racist bullying be minimized as they are not attributed to a student's race, but bullying, in general, may also be seen as normative and therefore not in need of intervention.

Minimizing racism was a common expression of WF. Several white students and one white teacher either denied outright or downplayed the existence of racism at the school. White students' discomfort when asked whether REM students have different experiences than they do in school manifested most clearly in students' resistance to this discussion. White students in the mixed-race focus group talked over each other to say that REM students were not treated differently. Notably, one student began by expressing that "a small percentage" of sixth-graders engage in racist behavior but then changed his answer to say that students of different races are not "really treated differently" when his peers strongly disagreed. At first, this student broke the racial solidarity with his white classmates and the ensuing discomfort was palpable. However, it appeared that the discomfort led him to change his perspective to restore white solidarity and the racial order. Students also told stories of outright racist behaviors but were quick to say it was just a joke and "[REM students] don't take it offensive." One student said, "The worst that people would say is not racist. They just call people burnt chicken nuggets or burnt Lunchables. I don't know why." The facilitator further probed and another white student explained, "I feel like it wasn't about race." White students determining how REM students perceive these statements trivializes the reality of racism.

All school staff members who identified as white demonstrated an attitude of minimizing racism and WF around discussing race and racist bullying. A teacher explained that race relations are better now, saying, "I do think our school, I can only compare it to when I was in high school. I grew up and went to a high school that was probably 90% white. And I don't think my teachers at least, and this was probably me because I didn't have to think about it, but I don't think my teachers gave much consideration at all to the experiences of students who didn't look like me. I think that is very different now." On one hand this teacher acknowledges that they were in a predominantly white school and that they "didn't have to think about" race, but at the same time they assume that their own teaching practice, and the practice of their peers, are more racially equitable than their predecessors. This assumption stands in contrast to the experiences reported by REM students. Nonetheless, teachers use a "things are better now" mentality to minimize experiences of racism and justify their lack of effective intervention. Yet, when teachers and administrators were asked to talk about and reflect upon their own deficits, participants grew uncomfortable and silent. This manifested through hesitation in their voice (hemming and hawing), trailing off, and interrupting one another to make points about all the good things they are doing. Two teachers explained their efforts to increase the representation of authors of color in reading assignments and history specific to communities of color such as the Great Migration. At the same time, they acknowledged, "We haven't done a lot this year with equity."

7.2.4 | Naturalization

Naturalization allows for white people to explain and justify racially-based occurrences by suggesting that the instances are part of a natural order. Here, it is used to explain the divisions among students. Teachers discussed how students coming from two different feeder schools were very different demographically. Students from the majority white feeder school told a white teacher, "I don't like it here. I want to go back to [white feeder school]."

That's where I felt at home.' So I'm just wondering how much of that is really that they don't see themselves as a part of this community." This teacher may assume that it would be natural for a white student to feel uncomfortable in a more diverse school. Teachers also pointed out a division between groups using coded language that avoided race such as, "I feel something about students is, soon as they divide themselves into groups. So sometimes there's like, a girl group, there's sometimes like, this group, there's that group. So yeah, that's, there's a lot of... Yeah." A white student attributed the racial divide to the demographics of the school, "Because the population of our school is mostly white people so that's why." This suggests that it is simply natural to want to associate with others from similar racial and ethnic backgrounds.

8 | DISCUSSION

The present study sought to understand how CBR and WF contribute to and perpetuate racist bullying in a middle school setting. Effective adult and peer intervention has long been considered a necessary and critical component of successful bullying prevention efforts. However, research has shown that underlying staff (Hawley & Williford, 2015) and student (Smith, 2016) attitudes and affective responses to race and racism (Ford et al., 2022; Langrehr et al., 2021) can undermine the success of intervention efforts. In this study, we explored how CBR and WF manifested in the school. Our findings suggest that these manifestations limit white staff and students' ability to recognize the role of racism in bullying incidents and undermine REM students' trust in staff to intervene with racist bullying—thus reinforcing a system of oppression in the school. These findings are consistent with prior evidence that has shown that discriminatory attitudes among students and staff can not only increase risk for racist bullying victimization (Sapouna et al., 2022) but can also interfere with student and staff responses to this form of bias-based bullying (Qureshi, 2013).

Furthermore, we find evidence of racist bullying in the school based on Olweus's definition that includes three fundamental characteristics (1993): intentional harm, repetition, and a power imbalance between the "victim" and "bully." Here we argue that the power imbalance is largely based on how racism is enacted in the school via systems of oppression that are rooted in CBR and WF that relegate REM students to inferior positions in the school. There is an inherent power differential based on these systems of oppression between REM students and white educators and students present in society and thus enacted in the school. The intentionality of harm (a fundamental characteristic of aggression) is seen in multiple ways through the behaviors of white staff and students, from ignoring racial slurs intended to harm and marginalize REM students to the minimization, if not outright denial, of race and racism in structuring the experiences of REM students in the school. The behaviors of white educators and students that maintain (and perpetuate) racist bullying are persistent suggesting a repetitive pattern. Thus, our findings suggest the presence and perpetration of racist bullying seen through the repetitive, intentional harm of REM students, which in turn reinforces a power differential between these students and White educators and peers.

By applying the theoretical frames of CBR and WF, our intent was to better understand how these implicit attitudes and emotional/affective responses (e.g., white guilt) may underlie and maintain racist bullying. Our results suggest that racist bullying was present in the school as it was reported broadly by REM students yet was minimized, normalized, or often ignored by white students and staff. In failing to acknowledge bullying acts as racially motivated, CBR and WF appeared to operate in several key ways that limited staff and students' abilities to effectively intervene and interrupt harmful racist interactions. Our results suggest that a complex affective process may underlie the ignoring, minimizing, and silencing of REM students' experiences with racist bullying. Indeed, racist bullying may be mischaracterized as general bullying, if seen at all, as White educators and students may not attribute it to race and racism. Whether this is caused by WF spurred by White guilt or another affective response is unknown, but emerging evidence suggests that these factors can be captured by robust measurement tools (see Langrehr et al., 2021). Thus, future research using quantitative survey methods may be useful to test causal models

whereby affective factors, such as white guilt, can be considered as contributors to WF and in turn may limit white educators' and students' perceptions of and responses to racist bullying. These kinds of measures would be useful to explore the relationship between WF and the four frames of CBR where temporal precedence could be examined; for example, does WF, via white guilt or shame, trigger colorblind racist frames as a means to reduce or avoid discomfort among White students and staff? In addition, it may be particularly useful to employ study designs that allow for the triangulation of REM student reports of racist bullying and white educators' and students' perceptions of and responses to these incidents. In prior studies assessing educators' responses to general bullying via the use of vignettes (Yoon & Kerber, 2003), certain acts of bullying have been perceived as less serious, if perceived as bullying at all, and therefore less in need of an immediate intervention by educators. This kind of research may be useful to replicate using incidents of racist bullying.

Most striking in the comments of white students and staff was their minimization of the role of race in the experiences REM students had in the school and their inability to discuss, thus identify, racism. Implicit in their statements was the sentiment that race should and does not affect their thinking and behavior. These findings are especially concerning in light of the recent backlash against teaching about race or racism in some states. Staff and students used many of the frames of CBR to justify these views; for example, ignoring the salience of race yet simultaneously explaining the use of the N-word as normal and expected, even when used as a put-down. On the other hand, WF emerged when pressed about issues of race and racism, such as by deflecting the conversation away from race to discuss other factors that may account for any perceived differences in student experiences. In many instances, white students and teachers appeared to explain away instances of racist bullying, and as such, the experiences of REM students were further marginalized, and their hurt was not seen. Another key consequence of the inability of adults to see racist bullying as problematic is that they model for students' social interactions that maintain CBR and WF. Schools serve as a primary site for the socialization of young people. Not only are students seeing adults fail to intervene in instances of racist bullying, they see adults avoiding critical conversations on race, and prioritizing intervening in other types of bullying over racist bullying. In this way, systems of oppression are perpetuated and thus a power differential between REM students and white educators and peers is reinforced, which in turn further entrenches racism in the school. Consequently, adults and students who do not perceive the importance of racist bullying are not able to intervene. Curbing schools' ability to talk about race directly, as is currently happening in some states, may serve to increase the incidence of racist bullying, as CBR and WF are re-entrenched by these efforts (Golden, 2023)

8.1 | Implications for practice in schools

Often, bullying prevention programming provides little training to staff beyond the mechanics of implementing activities in the classroom (Hawley & Williford, 2015). As a result, underlying attitudes and biases are not addressed. In addition, specific content on bias-based bullying remains limited in common bullying prevention approaches; thus, students' and teachers' discriminatory attitudes likely remain unchallenged. The results of this investigation suggest that identifying implicit attitudes and biases related to CBR and WF may be a useful approach for preparing white staff (and students) to see race as a salient factor that influences the experiences of REM students, and in turn may be a factor motivating racist bullying perpetration. Our findings motivate the critical need for teaching on the ways that schools are racialized and how racism manifests in schools. This is at odds with the recent push to ban books, remove Black history from curricula, and outlawing any mention of critical race theory in schools. Schools need to continue to find ways to promote racial justice despite these concerning bans. For example, targeting white guilt, an affective state that does not necessarily have to lead to WF, may be useful in addressing race, racism, and racist bullying in school settings. For example, Langrehr et al. argue that "white racial affect" might elicit empathy and/or remorse in response to racism, thus supporting white educators' and students' abilities to address racial injustice, such as racist bullying (2021, p. 405).

9 | LIMITATIONS

There are a number of limitations to note within our study. Our study was conducted with one school limiting the study's generalizability to other school contexts. In addition, broader school climate factors (e.g., staff-student relationships, school belonging among white and REM students) could have also influenced our findings that were not assessed in this study. Due to the nature of our partnership with the school, we were limited to convenience sampling that was facilitated by school personnel. Teachers were not compensated for their time due to budget constraints, therefore only teachers who were motivated to come on their own time attended focus groups. Our sampling strategy likely biased our sample, which may have impacted the conclusions we are able to draw from the data. For students, our sample may also have been biased by which parents were willing to return permission slips and which students school staff selected to invite. It is likely that teachers more motivated and interested to talk about race would be more likely to attend the focus groups. Social desirability bias also likely influenced teachers to talk about their efforts to stem racist bullying in a more positive light, suggesting our conclusions likely hold, given that CBR and WF were still found amidst this bias. Another important limitation is that we were not able to connect with parents as part of this project due to the time constraints of the school year. It is also critical that the bulk of the analysis of data was conducted by white members of our team, and though we attempted to increase the trustworthiness of our findings through team meetings and reflexive memoing, our analysis is inherently limited. Despite these important limitations, our findings are still able to demonstrate the tacit assumptions about the importance of racist bullying. Future research is needed with richer qualitative data to further unpack the ways in which colorblindness and WF are related to systemic forms of racism.

10 | CONCLUSIONS

The present study revealed ways in which racist bullying may be maintained in a middle school setting, with CBR and WF appearing to contribute to its presence and persistence. Consequently, it is important that bullying prevention efforts in schools consider forms of bias-based bullying, such as racist bullying, and explicitly challenge problematic attitudes among students and staff. In doing so, not only may acts of racist bullying be reduced, such content may also contribute to educators' and students' abilities to recognize the salient role of race in REM students' lives and create space in schools to discuss race and racism directly.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Research data are not available to be shared due to the agreement in place with the school district to protect participant confidentiality.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

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