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“No Excuse” Citizens: A Case Study of Citizenship in an Urban Charter Network

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“No Excuse” Citizens: A Case Study of Citizenship in an Urban Charter Network

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Division of Educational Studies

Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia

An abstract of a dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy, Division of Educational Studies, Emory University.

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Abstract

In this study I reveal how four charter schools prepare low-income minority students for citizenship using the "no excuse" model. I explored the relationship among the ethos of the schools, citizenship education in social studies classes, and students' depictions of themselves as citizens of their schools and the nation. Using a mixed methods approach, I collected data on students' classroom and out-of-school experiences, as well as on students' political and civic behaviors and attitudes, as they matriculated through an eighth grade social studies course. I analyzed data collected from student surveys, classroom and school observations, and interviews with principals, teachers, and students to address the following research questions:

1. How do "no excuse" charter schools prepare students for democratic citizenship? How does the "no excuse" approach vary in different schools?
2. How does the intended, implemented, and received curriculum in social studies classes prepare students for citizenship?
3. How do students attending "no excuse" charter middle schools conceive of and enact their roles as current citizens and imagine their roles as future citizens? What are students' civic and political attitudes, and current and projected civic/political behaviors? How do those attitudes and behaviors vary by gender, socio-economic status, and school?

The first major finding of this study is that "no excuse" charter schools belonging to the same network vary in their approach to and implementation of the national network model. Second, civic education was not an explicit goal of the four "no excuse" schools in this study as schools were most focused on preparation for standardized tests. Although teachers were somewhat committed to preparing students as future citizens, these commitments only occurred in ways that supported national and state curriculum standards. Third, enrolled students showed varied political attitudes. Students showed low levels of political trust as a result of uncertainty about the United States' ability to care for their communities. Yet, students were efficacious and reported that they were able to understand political events and felt most efficacious when acting with others. Although most findings were similar for students enrolled at different schools, females and students of higher socio-economic status (SES) had more positive attitudes toward the nation than did males and lower SES students. Finally, students supported voting as the most important civic action in a democracy and almost all expected to vote as adults.

“No Excuse” Citizens: A Case Study of Citizenship in an Urban Charter Network

By

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Division of Educational Studies

2016

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"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. …Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another… No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us….God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love… Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister."

Amended version of 1 John 4:7-21

As I journey toward living in love and taking full responsibility for creating love in my life, I find that education opened my mind to the possibility of the very thing I seek most: love. To teach someone to question, imagine, create, and think critically has been the ultimate act of love that has propelled me to realize love while living in a world that is confused about its realities and afraid of its healing powers. Paulo Friere wrote, "The teacher is of course an artist, but being an artist does not mean that he or she can make the profile, can shape the students. What the educator does in teaching is to make it possible for the students to become themselves." Education has been my catalyst.

I would start with thanking my teachers. Mommie, thank you for teaching me how to be a woman and grounding me in some good "home training." Your lessons on how to present-well, speak-up, and wear the right undergarments have made a huge difference in my life as it gave me the self-esteem needed to feel worthy of all that is possible. Thank you for sharing with me and being painfully honest about your journey, it has helped me avoid many pitfalls and to better understand my journey. Daddy, your life has propelled me to be intentional about "doing my work" and healing. I am breaking chains. Michael, thank you for stepping in. Cameron and Julian, you were the most intimate spectators to my childhood, as I was to yours; what a powerful bond to share! Let's always hold hands, just like we used to do in the back seat of the car on the way home from church. Even when we were going along for their crazy ride, we made it through because we held hands. I have two strong men supporting me throughout my journey. Thanks for always telling me I am beautiful. I love you so much.

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Chapter I. Statement of the Problem

More than 50 years after the landmark Supreme Court case, *Brown v. Board of Education*, which legally desegregated schools in the United States, Black, Hispanic, and poor children throughout the nation attend defacto-segregated schools en mass (Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley, & Wang, 2010). This is particularly true of public schools in urban metropolises. Further, many of these all-minority schools have been labeled as "failing," according to the language of No Child Left Behind Act, because their students score poorly on standardized tests. These schools are often given fewer resources, hire scantly trained teachers, are marred with constant administration and policy changes, and are often abandoned by the families with the resources to help improve the school (Darling-Hammond, 2010). In the midst of this situation, charter schools have emerged, offering a few families an alternative to traditional public schools. In the last decade there has been a rapid increase in the number of charter schools in urban areas (Frankenberg, et al., 2010). Many of them use a similar model, the "no excuse" model, in order to convey to students that no matter what they encounter in their personal lives outside of school, there are no excuses for poor performance in school, failure to follow rules, or not attending college. The "no excuse" approach is implemented in many of the nation's largest charter school networks serving minority and low-income students including the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP), Success Academies, Uncommon Schools, and Achievement First. Many "no excuse" charter schools are praised by proponents of education reform through school choice as model schools for improving behavior and academic outcomes for students; however, little is known about the civic effects of learning in an environment that uses the "no excuse" model.

This study is timely and necessary to better understand how charter schools are preparing minority and low-income youth for active citizenship for the following reasons: (1) Charter

schools are generally under-researched yet are growing in number; (2) Charter schools are increasingly serving Black, Latino, and low-income students and are operating at high levels of racial, class, and linguistic isolation; (3) Black, Latino, and low-income students in charter schools must be prepared for citizenship as well as for taking high stakes tests; however, there is little information about how charter schools are meeting this expectation; and, (4) The "civic empowerment gap" (Levinson, 2012a) necessitates increased attention to the political socialization of politically marginalized communities.

First, the number of schools operating under charter school laws has soared over the last decade. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2012), from 2000 to 2010, the number of students enrolled in public charter schools more than quadrupled from 300,000 to 1.6 million students. In addition to increases in numbers of charter-enrolled students, there is also an increase in the size of charter schools. In the early years of charter schools, most were small schools serving fewer than 200 students; in ten years, the percentage of charter schools with enrollments of 300–499 students increased from 12 to 21; the percentage with 500–999 students, from 9 to 14 percent; and the percentage with 1,000 students or more, from 2 to 4 percent. In New Orleans the traditional public school system was practically replaced by charter schools, which by 2012 enrolled over 78% of the city's students (The state of public education in New Orleans 2012 Report, 2012). As of 2012, six percent of all U.S. schools were charter schools, and charter networks account for about one-fifth of that total (NCES, 2012). Charter schools are very likely to continue to rise in number, as both of the last two presidential administrations avidly supported charter schools. Presidents' George W. Bush and Barack Obama both offered states financial incentives for allowing the creation of charter schools (Frankenberg & Lee, 2003; White, 2009). Further, states' ability to receive Race to the Top funds has been somewhat tied to

their willingness to approve charter schools at the state level (White, 2009). As of 2012, 42 states passed legislation authorizing charter schools (Cerf, 2012). As charter schools grow in number and in size, more research needs to be conducted on how students are being prepared as citizens in these schools.

Second, an increasing number of charter schools are serving low-income minority students in urban metropolises. Nationally, the percentage of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, a proxy for low-income families, attending charter schools is on the rise. In 2000, only 13 percent of students living in poverty attended charter schools but that number almost tripled to over 33 percent by 2012 (NCES, 2012). Additionally, many students of color attend charter schools. In 2010, 30% of Black and 26% of Hispanic students throughout the nation attended charter schools (NCES, 2012). Four of the five states with the largest numbers of charter schools -- California, Texas, Arizona, and Florida – are similar in their high concentration of Hispanics attending charter schools (Lazarin & Ortiz-Licon, 2010; NCES, 2012).

Charter schools in many urban areas, such as New York City and New Orleans, enroll significant numbers of low-income Black students (Grady & Bielick, 2010; The state of public, 2012). In New York City, charter school applicants are much more likely to be Black than Asian or White and are more likely to be poor when compared to the average student in New York City's public schools (Hoxby, Murarka, & Kang, 2009). Ninety percent of charter school students in New Orleans are Black and 85 percent are eligible for free or reduced priced lunch (The state of public, 2012). The same is true of Detroit charter schools, which enroll over 70% of poor students and 57% Black students (Charter school performance in Michigan, 2013). In many Southern states, like Georgia, which permits whole school systems, like Decatur, to become

"charter districts," more White students than Black and Hispanic students are in "charters;" however, start-up, or new, charter schools in those states serve a higher proportion of Black students. In such start-up charter schools in Georgia, 51% of students were eligible for free or reduced price lunch (Barge, 2012). The rise in charter schools serving Hispanic, Black, and poor communities necessitates increased attention to the civic outcomes of institutions serving politically marginalized communities.

Additionally, charter schools tend to operate in greater racial, class, and linguistic isolation than traditional public schools. The high levels of de facto segregation for charter school students is particularly noticeable for Black students, who are overwhelmingly the most likely to attend racially isolated minority charter schools. In 2008, 70 percent of Black charter school students attended 90-100% minority schools. Black charter school students were twice as likely as Black students in traditional public schools to attend schools with less than a tenth of White students (Frankenberg, et al., 2010).

Scholars who are concerned with students' preparation for shaping our democracy agree that diverse classroom settings can promote tolerance and help students have the ability to deliberate with others across difference (Hess, 2009; Parker, 2003). Opportunities to interact and converse with those of varied ethnic and class backgrounds decrease once students complete their secondary schooling, as most Americans self-segregate in social settings (Wells, Holme, Revilla, & Atanda, 2009). If schools in the United States continue to resegregate and the society continues to self-segregate, then low-income minority students will not have the opportunity to be exposed to varied opinions and lifestyles, nor will students from the dominant culture have the opportunity to learn from students of other backgrounds. This type of isolation can hinder the civic empowerment of young citizens as it can lead some students to feel isolated and separated

from the nation, and may not help them realize their role in improving their nation (Levinson, 2012). Public schools have the potential to remedy this predicament by using diversity as an asset in schools and classrooms; however, charter schools may find it increasingly difficult to meet this expectation.

Third, Black, Latino, and low-income students in charter schools, like all youth, must be prepared for citizenship, yet there is little information about how charter schools are meeting this expectation. As "no excuse" charter schools aim to serve minority and low-income communities, researchers have found that such populations are least likely to receive high-quality civic education (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008; Levinson, 2012). On the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Civics assessment, class and race were related to civic knowledge. White, affluent students were four to six times as likely as Hispanic or Black students who come from low-income households to meet or exceed the "proficient" level (All together now, 2013). The NAEP Civics Assessment also showed that civic knowledge was overall similar for students in charter and traditional schools (2011). However, Hispanic eighth graders in charter schools scored significantly higher in civic knowledge than those in traditional schools; no significant differences were found between Black and low-income eighth graders in charter schools and their peers. Additionally, the NAEP Civics Assessment under-sampled charter schools and does not disaggregate data by charter school-type. Furthermore, the relatively small sampling of charter school students offers little information on the overall civic performance gains in "no excuse" charter schools serving minority and low-income students although many such schools have civic goals explicitly stated in their chartering missions.

Finally, the lack of civic and political participation of "minority" adults stemming from inequitable education has come to be known as the "civic empowerment gap" (Levinson, 2012a).

Like the well-known "achievement gap," the civic empowerment gap is closely tied to a long history of racism and unequal education that continues today (Levinson, 2012a; 2012b; Perry, 2010). Examples of a continuing legacy of racism in schools are school policies that lead to inequitable resource distribution, high attendance in low-performing schools, policing policies, and suspension rates (Fine & Ruglis, 2009; Levinson, 2012; Mizell, 2010). As a result of these inequalities some minority and low-income Americans have found it increasingly difficult to complete high school, access institutions of higher learning, and secure jobs, all of which correspond with political activity (All together now, 2013). Educational attainment and economic power correlate with adult political activity and interest; therefore, the inability to access either can contribute to the perpetuation of the civic empowerment gap.

Race and class continue to be defining factors in the political lives of many Americans. According to Levinson (2012a), race and ethnicity are identifiable markers of the civic empowerment gap, and are discernible from other demographic characteristics such as income and educational attainment. Segregated schools, differential offerings for students of differing backgrounds, and a history of racialized school policies are part of the problem; therefore, collective action by educational institutions is necessary to alleviate the civic empowerment gap (Levinson, 2012a). Schools emerge as an ideal and necessary space to help minority and low-income students understand the historic and current challenges facing their citizenship status; in particular, charter schools have the curricular freedom to reduce the civic empowerment gap in important ways.

Purpose

In this study, I examine the ways in which students are prepared for democratic citizenship in a "no excuse" charter school network. I uncover how the overall context of school

and lessons learned in social studies classrooms influence students' perceptions of citizenship. In particular, I used the theoretical framework depicted in the IEA Octagon Model to analyze the messages conveyed in schools. In this research I sought to gain insight into the factors that may influence students' civic and political attitudes and their current and projected civic/political behaviors.

Research Questions

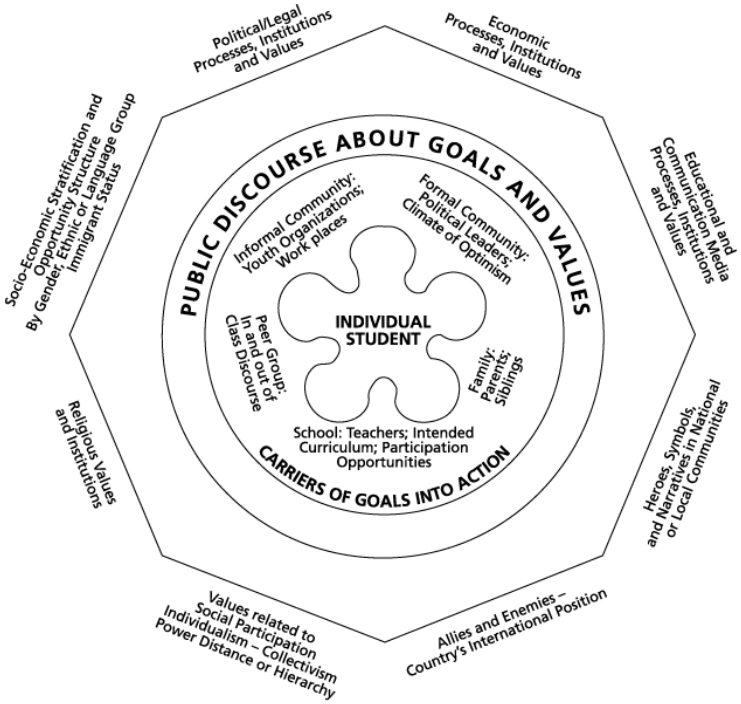
My goal was to investigate the ways that students are prepared for democratic citizenship in a sample of charter schools within the same network. I explored the extent to which what happens in a social studies classroom may impact students' commitment to civic participation in selected schools. I developed the research questions to understand how students learn to see themselves as citizens of their school and the nation while learning in a "no excuse" charter school, how social studies classes in these schools prepare students for citizenship, and how students conceptualize their roles as citizens. The following questions guided the study:

1. How do "no excuse" charter schools prepare students for democratic citizenship? How does the "no excuse" approach vary in different schools?
2. How does the intended, implemented, and received curriculum in social studies classes prepare students for citizenship?
3. How do students attending "no excuse" charter middle schools conceive of and enact their roles as current citizens and imagine their roles as future citizens? What are students' civic and political attitudes, and current and projected civic/political behaviors? How do those attitudes and behaviors vary by gender, socio-economic status, and school?

Theoretical Framework: The IEA Octagon Model

In examining the relationship among school ethos, social studies classes, and civic outcomes, I used the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement's (IEA) Octagon Model as a theoretical framework (Figure 1). The Octagon Model for the IEA Civic Education Study (CivEd) provides a graphic model of the ways in which the everyday experiences of youth serve as a context for the ways that young people think and act in the sociopolitical environments in which they live and learn (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001). Utilizing the psychological theories of Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) and the situated cognition theories of Lave and Wenger (1991), this theoretical model places the individual student at its center, with the student interacting with agents of socialization, such as peers, family, and schools. The agents of socialization also interact with and reflect public discourse about societal goals and values. Public discourse, in turn, is influenced by many factors including religious values, political processes, socio-economic stratification, and national narratives. The Octagon Model is based on the postulation that students' civic education is not limited to formal classroom instruction wherein youth learn about their rights and duties. Rather, they construct meaning about the civic-political realm in a complex ecology of experiences (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). I draw on this model in describing the role of schooling in charter school students' civic and political development.

Figure 1. The IEA Octagon Model



(Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001).

Definition of Terms

The following are operational definitions for terms that I use frequently in this paper:

Charter schools. In the United States, charter schools are innovative public schools that receive public money and additional private funds. Charter schools are subject to many of the rules, regulations, and statutes that apply to other public schools, but generally have more flexibility in choosing how to implement rules and regulations than traditional public schools. Charter schools are given such autonomy because they are expected to produce certain results and specifically meet the goals outlined in their governing charter (Bulkley & Fisler, 2002). Charter schools use varied approaches. I focus on only one type--those using the no excuse model.

"No excuse" approach. The "no excuse" approach suggests to students that no matter what they are dealing with outside of school or where they have come from, there are no excuses

for not succeeding in school or following school rules. This approach also posits that there is also no excuse for not attending college.

Citizenship education. This aspect of education provides students with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that they need to function as active citizens in a democracy. On a basic level, citizenship education teaches students the structures and functions of government, the laws of the land, and the importance of staying up-to-date on current events, voting, petitioning, and engaging in other political and civic acts. It provides students with the knowledge, skills, and understanding to act as informed citizens, who are critical thinkers aware of their rights, duties, and responsibilities in their communities, nation, and the world (Banks, 2004).

Civic empowerment gap. Defined by Levinson (2012a), the civic empowerment gap recognizes that political power is unevenly distributed among U.S. citizens. The term derives from the popular phrase "achievement gap;" the achievement gap recognizes the difference in math and reading scores among racial and class groups and the civic empowerment gap acknowledges the difference in civic participation and empowerment among racial and class groups.

Intended curriculum. The recommended curricular goals articulated in the national, state, local, and school policies (Cornbleth, 1985). This also includes practices recommended by professional organizations, such as the National Council for the Social Studies. The intended curriculum includes teachers' goals, lesson plans, textbooks, and national and state standards.

Implemented curriculum. The curriculum the teacher delivers to students in the classroom (Cornbleth, 1985). The implemented curriculum refers to the observed lessons, or what actually occurs when the intended lesson is executed in the classroom.

Received curriculum. The ways in which students understand or construct personal meaning of the curriculum delivered in the classroom (Cornbleth, 1985). The received curriculum indicates what students take away from lessons, or how they made sense of the implemented curriculum.

Political attitudes. According to social psychologists Breckler and Wiggins (1992), an attitude is an evaluation of an entity ranging from very negative to very positive. Most contemporary definitions of attitudes acknowledge that people can also be divided or ambivalent toward an entity by simultaneously holding both positive and negative attitudes toward the same object (Wood, 2000). Using this definition as a basis, I define political attitudes as an evaluation of a political or government entity or issue based on personal or vicarious experiences and perceptions. I examined civic beliefs and attitudes toward the nation, equal rights, and democracy. I also measured students' political efficacy including external, internal, and collective efficacy and political trust.

Political efficacy was originally defined as "the feeling that individual political action does have, or can have, an impact upon the political process" (Campbell, Gurin, & Miller, 1954, p. 187). Many researchers today consider this definition one-dimensional and prefer to separate political efficacy in terms of external and internal political efficacy. I employ measures of both internal and external efficacy, as well as a third concept, collective efficacy.

External political efficacy describes how people feel their government responds to their needs and how well the political system and government reflect their needs and concerns. External efficacy measures the degree to which people feel the government cares about them and the needs of the community with which they identify (Balch, 1974; Rodgers, 1974; Sullivan &

Riedel, 2001). It also encompasses the belief that the public can influence governmental decisions and actions (Levy, 2013).

Internal political efficacy is the extent to which people feel that their knowledge, abilities, and skills enable them to have an effect on the political system. It often indicates the likelihood of a person to vote or become politically active if he or she feels what he or she has to offer can have an impact on the political system (Balch, 1974; Rodgers, 1974; Sullivan & Riedel, 2001).

Collective political efficacy is a sense of situational political efficacy. It is defined as the feeling that individuals can work together to make changes in their condition within a circumscribed area of the political realm (Bandura, 2000; Billings, 1970).

Political trust is a belief about whether or not the government is functioning and producing outputs in accord with an individual's expectations of his or her government (Miller, 1974). For example, one's political trust includes whether one believes that political leaders are honest and can be trusted to do what is right.

Political action is any deed that helps reach a political goal. Specifically, political action influences public policy (Hess, 2009) including the policies of corporations, labor unions, private social service agencies, and the local and national government (Quigley, Buchanan, & Bahmueller, 1991). Political action is varied. Political action comes in public forms such as voting, petitioning, protesting, and boycotting or "buycotting." Political action moves toward individuals realizing their power in their local, national, and global communities and working in large and small ways to participate in their own governing.

Civic action is denoted by actions that support the civil society, such as volunteering and recycling. These actions refer to participation in voluntary associations, economic groups,

religious organizations, and other social relationships that are free from government control (Quigley, et al., 1991). For example, one might read about social or political issues in the newspaper and then volunteer at a center serving free meals.

Because students often internalize their role as citizens from their experience in schools and communities (Campbell, 2012), more information is needed on how students in charter schools are equipped with the tools necessary to foster a democratic society. In this study, I give voice to these students and elevate their experiences in social studies classrooms, schools, and in society in order to learn more about how they view their role as citizens. In the following section, I discuss literature pertinent to this study's research questions.

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

To identify how charter school students experience civic education, this literature review draws from contemporary research in civic education and charter schools. In particular, I focus my analysis on how students are prepared for citizenship in "no excuse" charter schools. Additionally, I highlight the role that school ethos plays in political socialization. I describe the ideology behind the "no excuse" model and scholarship that reflects the varied attitudes toward the model. Finally, I discuss civic and political attitudes and behaviors as they relate to Black American youth.

Civic Education and the Civic Empowerment Gap

In recent years educational reforms, such as the federal Race to the Top and No Child Left Behind initiatives, have addressed differential school achievement yet they sometimes indirectly undermine the original civic-focused intent of public schooling in the United States (Gould, 2011), particularly in schools enrolling large numbers of minority and low-income students. Most recently, the Common Core literacy standards movement has entered the national discourse. Scholars in social studies education created the *College, Career & Civic Life C3 Framework for the Social Studies State Standards*, which aims to prepare students broadly for "college, career, and civic life" by raising the bar on the current state of civic education (NCSS, 2013). The C3 Framework calls for the development of historical thinking, discussion, writing, inquiry-based lessons, and civic engagement in the social studies.

The C3 Framework is timely because the diminished attention to citizenship education, particularly in urban schools, has negative effects for Black students and has led to or resulted in racial and class disparities on tests of civic knowledge; inequity in the quality of civic education courses, reflecting inequality in schools; and ultimately, the civic empowerment gap. For example, the IEA Civic Education study revealed a relationship between race, civic knowledge,

and civic behavior (Baldi, Perie, Skidmore, Greenberg, & Hahn, 2001). Using a nationally representative sample of ninth graders, researchers found that White and multiracial students scored higher than Black and Hispanic students on civic content and skills and overall civic knowledge scales. Also, students' average civic achievement scores were related to home literacy resources. Students who reported having 200 or more books in their home had higher than average scores; students who reported having ten or fewer books scored lower than average on the content and skills subscales. Also, the researchers found that students' civic achievement was related to their educational attainment; students with one parent who graduated from high school had higher scores than those whose parents had not graduated. Students whose parents had college degrees scored highest on the total civic knowledge scale (Baldi, et al., 2001). In later NAEP Civics assessments, several of the same disparities were revealed. Black and Hispanic students scored significantly below White and Asian students on tests of civic knowledge; students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and students whose parents had less education scored lower than their peers (NCES, 2007, 2011). Both race and class were related to a student's likelihood of scoring in the "proficient" range (All together now, 2013).

Using a representative sample of students in California, between 2005-2007, Kahne and Middaugh (2008) researched civic opportunities for more than 2,500 high school juniors and seniors using the instruments from the IEA Civic Education study. The purpose of this research was to gain insight to students' civic learning experiences and how well they aligned with best practices in civic education. The researchers found that "students who are more academically successful or White and those with parents of higher socioeconomic status receive more classroom-based civic learning opportunities" than Black, Hispanic, and low-income students (p. 5). Race and class largely exacerbated unequal political participation; Kahne and Middaugh

offered solutions to closing the civic participation gap. One solution they proposed was that the opportunities offered to high-socioeconomic students should be offered to all students; they said the education they receive should be "universal and common" (p.19).

This research informed Kahne and Sporte's later research in Chicago. Using data from the bi-yearly study conducted by the Consortium on Chicago School Research, Kahne and Sporte (2008) studied over 4,000 students in 52 schools throughout the Chicago area. Researching the effects of classroom experiences on citizen development over time, Kahne and Sporte found that "what happens in classrooms can have a significant impact on students' commitments to civic participation" (2008, p. 754). The researchers also found that civic engagement among American youth is low; these numbers further decrease when considering low-income, minority, or immigrant students. Students of color are less likely to receive classroom-based civic learning opportunities, yet they have the most to lose by continued failure to participate en masse. This reality causes great concern because Black, Hispanic, and low-income communities are already underrepresented in elected political office. These groups lose voice in their communities, and the nation at large, through failing to participate in local meetings, vote in local elections, or stay informed of current issues.

During the 2004 presidential election, Pace (2008) observed two 12th grade government classes located in two racially diverse schools in Northern California. In each school she observed one Advanced Placement (AP) course and one lower-track, College Preparatory course. Pace noted that teachers and administrators felt challenged to integrate the Black students with "urban attitudes," who represented 25% of the school population. She approached her study with one research question: What is being taught and learned in discussion-based 12th grade Government classes during the fall semester of 2004? The teaching Pace observed did not

coincide with what researchers have defined as good civics teaching. Pace observed that AP classes, which were predominately White, provided more opportunities for involvement with the subject matter than college preparatory classes, which contained non-Blacks. Pace's findings supported previous researchers who claimed there is a civic education gap. Pace (2008) and Kahne and Middaugh (2008) both concluded that race and class largely exacerbate unequal political participation through unequal education.

Levinson (2012b) cites several causes of disparities in civic education: bias in tests of political and civic knowledge (as they only include conventional forms of participation); lack of knowledge about political structures, institutions, and contemporary politics; pessimistic and skeptical attitudes toward government; and unequal power and wealth distribution. She, among many others, calls for reform of the current system that largely excludes poor and minority students from democratic participation. According to Levinson, affluent and middle-class Americans are dominating the political decisions of the nation at the expense of millions of low-income citizens. The opinions and concerns of working class citizens have little or no distinct effect on the actions of elected representatives. This should be especially concerning for groups that would benefit from advocacy and attention to the issues of their communities.

The aforementioned studies reveal the various factors that contribute to the civic empowerment gap. They disclose that in racially and socioeconomically diverse schools minority and low-income students are not civically prepared with the same expectations as White and affluent students. Levinson (2012b) argues that even in predominately Black schools where Black students are culturally affirmed as Black citizens, they are not learning to see themselves as participating in the national discourse. The IEA Civic Education study and NAEP Civics

assessments provide national data that reveal the immensity of inequalities in Black and low-income students' preparation for citizenship.

Collectively, these studies show that the formal political socialization of many minority and low-income students in social studies classrooms is inadequate, yet it is imperative for students' future knowledge and engagement, particularly for those who do not seek higher education or are from low socioeconomic backgrounds, that something is done. All of the studies reveal that race and class are identifiable markers in pinpointing which students have access to high quality civic lessons and score well on tests of civic knowledge. Furthermore, many researchers in civic education have called for more research in charter schools as minority and low-income students are increasingly represented in these schools (Campbell, 2013; Gould, 2011; Lake & Miller, 2012)

Civic Education in "No Excuse" Charter Schools

Many charter schools are approved based on the supposition that they provide an educational opportunity that is different from those offered in traditional public schools and that the results of educating students in this particular fashion leads to higher academic performance overall (Fryer, 2012). Some perspectives posit that students need additional instructional time to improve academic performance (Feinberg, 2011; Feith, 2013; Whitman, 2008); and, others assume that focusing on literacy and mathematics will increase overall performance (Hoxby, Murarka, & Kang, 2009; Hoxby & Rockoff, 2004; Simburg, & Rosa, 2013). Still others promote explicit goals for preparing students for democratic citizenship, as they speculate that citizenship preparation is the ultimate purpose of schooling (Andrew, 2011). In the following paragraphs I provide four examples of leading charter school networks that have explicit missions toward

democratic citizenship and also adopt the "no excuse" model. For each network, I explain how they report integrating civic education in the school wide curriculum.

First, the UNO charter school network currently serves over 6,500 students in 13 schools throughout Chicago (Feith, 2013). The student body of this network is 95% Hispanic and UNO has adopted the "no excuse" model and has an explicit goal of educating Hispanic students for "citizenship education as a project for assimilation and Americanization" (Feith, 2013, p. 2). School founder Juan Rangel stated that the original purpose of public schools in the United States was to educate for assimilation to meet the civic, or democratic, mission of the nation; therefore, Hispanic students in UNO charter schools are trained specifically how to be successful Hispanics in the United States (Feith, 2013). This requires a delicate balance between culturally relevant practices and traditional schooling. For example, all of the schools are named after influential Hispanic Americans; and, each morning students recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Students in UNO schools are encouraged to vote and are discouraged from protesting. As the founder states, "the greatest protest action in this country is the right to vote" (Feith, 2013, p. 9). He aims to prepare Hispanic students for full citizenship in the democracy by ensuring that they understand how to utilize traditional democratic processes, such as voting, to fully participate in the society.

Two other programs, the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) and the National Heritage Academies are, respectively, the first and second largest national charter school networks in the nation. Both have civic missions that are closely tied to academic performance. At KIPP, students who have received a certain amount of merits[1] are permitted to attend civically

[1] Merits and demerits make up a behavioral modification system that is often used in "no excuse" schools. Students receive merits for "good" behavior and demerits for "bad" behavior.

enriching activities, such as visiting the nation's capital or traveling abroad (Feinberg, 2011). KIPPsters are encouraged to keep their environment clean, volunteer, and vote. The network's founder, Mark Feinberg writes, "many of our students live in neighborhoods influenced by a street culture that values intimidation and strength over working hard and being nice" (2011, p. 117). In opposition to this culture, he has adopted a motto to encourage students to see that "the world can be dictated by compassion, kindness, and empathy" (2011, p. 117).

Yet another example, Democracy Prep is a growing New York City based charter school network that also has civic education as its chartering mission while simultaneously implementing the "no excuse" model. Like the UNO charter schools, there is an emphasis on community service, voting, jury duty, and even registering for military service (Lautzenheiser & Kelly, 2013). Seth Andrew, the network's founder, writes "even the best 'no excuses' schools are rarely preparing citizens for a life of active citizenship" (2011, p. 102). Democracy Prep's slogan, "Work hard. Go to college. Change the world," adds a civic dimension to the KIPP slogan. Students attending Democracy Prep schools participate in "Get out the vote" campaigns, and the teachers and administrators take their classes to the voting booth to observe voting alongside them on Election Day.

All of the charter schools mentioned above are top-performing charter school networks and are often praised for their exceptional results on standardized tests of reading/language arts and mathematics. Minority and low-income students attending these schools pass tests that many of their public school counterparts of the same backgrounds fail (Feinberg, 2011; Goodman, 2013; Jacobs, 2013; Lautzenheiser & Kelly, 2013). The information reported above tells of school leaders' commitments to citizenship preparation; however, little, if anything, is known

about the actual civic outcomes of these schools. Many of these new schools are beginning to graduate high school seniors, who will soon be eligible to vote.

In practice, however, these charter models are difficult to implement. Lake and Miller (2012) conducted a research roundtable with leaders from leading "no excuse" charter schools. They found that many of these school leaders viewed citizenship education as a school-wide task, not only to be taught in social studies classrooms. Charter school leaders also admitted that they find it difficult to focus on civic outcomes, even when civic empowerment is their chartering mission, because of the need to emphasize math and reading. Ensuring students pass standardized state tests is important for many charter school leaders, as outstanding test performance that surpasses the scores of the neighboring public schools is often necessary for remaining open. This finding is also true of many "at risk" public schools enrolling large numbers of minority students (Gould, 2011; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008). Charter school teachers also reported that they have little time, professional development, and resources to deliver civic education effectively (Lake & Miller, 2012).

Other researchers have looked at the "mixed bag" of charter schools' outcomes without disaggregating by model or approach used. Carnoy, Jacobsen, Mishel, and Rothstein (2005) conducted a comprehensive study that compared traditional public schools to charter schools in 11 states and the District of Columbia. They found no evidence to support the claim that charter schools academically out-perform traditional public schools in any specific content area. Moreover these researchers found that on average the charter schools may be less academically effective. There are numerous studies that support this finding (Barge, 2012; Buckley & Schneider, 2007; Stuit & Smith, 2009). In the 2010 NAEP civics assessment, civic achievement was similar for students in charter and traditional schools. In most grades, and for most racial

groups, the civic achievement of charter school students did not differ significantly from that of traditional public school students (Chudowsky & Chudowsky, 2012). Carnoy, Jacobsen, Mishel, and Rothstein (2005) cite the following reasons for questioning the effectiveness of charter schools: although many charter schools are serving minority and low-income students, the students they serve are socioeconomically better off than their peers in public schools; the deregulation of charter schools allows for students to be instructed by less qualified teachers; and, the overall outcomes of charter schools are not outstanding enough to inform the practices of public schools.

Another study of charter schools by Buckley and Schneider (2007) examined the civic outcomes of charter school students in Washington, D.C. and came to similar conclusions. In this longitudinal mixed methods study, the researchers interviewed a sample of parents of children attending D.C. charter schools and others with children in traditional D.C. public schools. The researchers tracked parental search patterns online to understand what factors parents considered when choosing a school. They found that parent enthusiasm for charter schools started out strong but faded over time. This fading enthusiasm may be attributed to the related statistics that show that charter-school students are not outperforming students in traditional public schools and that the quality of charter-school education varies widely from school to school. Buckley and Schneider argue that although charter schools may meet the most basic test of public policy, in that they do no harm, the evidence suggests they all too often fall short of their founding claims, particularly in the area of civic preparation.

Although the charter schools might not fully fulfill their chartering missions, Buckley and Schneider (2007) did find that students in charter schools were more likely than public school students to volunteer; ten percent of students in traditional D.C. public schools volunteered, and

over 40 percent of charter school students reported participating in community service. It is, however, important to consider that many charter schools require community service to attend the school. Civically-centered classroom practices may meaningfully differ, however. Buckley and Schneider found that charter school students were more likely to report participating in debates and making comments in a public meeting. In a similar vein, Chudowsky and Chudowsky (2012) found that significantly higher percentages of eighth grade charter school students reported participating in role plays, mock trials, dramas, and responding to short-answer questions in their classes than public school students.

Of the studies mentioned above, all focused on the general civic goals and outcomes of charter schools. In the next section I discuss how implementing those goals is also affected by the school ethos. Specifically, I discuss literature on how the "no excuse" model can color the civic goals of some charter schools.

School Ethos and the "No Excuse" Model

In addition to classroom instruction, another important factor contributing to students' political socialization is the school environment. Students often learn their role as citizens from their position in schools and communities. Many scholars refer to this as the ethos of the school in which norms are shared, encouraged, and enforced within the school community (Campbell, 2012). Levinson (2012) asserts that all schools teach experiential lessons about civic expectations, identity, and opportunities through the environment they provide for students. Many "no excuse" charter schools refer to school ethos as "school culture."

"No excuse" charter schools usually subscribe to a very similar model that is best described in Whitman's (2008) book *Sweating the Small Stuff*. In this book, Whitman describes the practices of high-performing inner-city schools and he contends that the best way to combat

poverty is to provide disadvantaged students with structure in which expectations are "crystal clear," instead of assuming that students can figure things out for themselves. Whitman supports Mead's (1997) argument that "the problem of poverty or underachievement is not that the poor lack freedom. The real problem is that the poor are too free" (p.36). Whitman makes an argument that the success of these model schools is a result of removing students from their home and community environments and inculcating them into a new culture. This new culture requires accepting the social and cultural norms of the middle and upper class and rejecting those of their impoverished neighborhoods. He argues that rejecting poverty, as a state of mind, will increase students' academic achievement.

Whitman (2008) identifies 20 practices that he advocates are most important to the success of "no excuse" charter schools. From Whitman's list, I identified four practices that I believe are most important to understanding ethos, or culture, in "no excuse" schools. I selected these four practices because many of the other practices can be explained in discussing the selected four. I also chose these four practices because they are the most salient practices in "no excuse" schools as they ideologically and visibly set these schools apart from traditional public schools. In discussing Whitman's suggestions, I note how other scholars have critiqued his suggested practices.

1. Tell students exactly how to behave and tolerate no disorder. Whitman (2008) asserts that successful schools implement strict behavioral codes that teach students how to behave and enforce consequences for failure to comply. He suggests that students should wear professional uniforms, such as ties and khaki dress pants, and that teachers should ensure that the students' clothes are worn properly by requiring their shirts be tucked in and their pants worn on their hips. Teachers are encouraged to ensure students have proper hygiene, can properly introduce

themselves to others (which includes making direct eye contact, stating their first and last names, and providing a firm handshake), and "learn the difference between a salad fork and a dinner fork" (p. 256). Whitman encourages teachers and administrators to view themselves as another parent and the school as a second home; within the family structure, teachers should act as "morally authoritative parents" in which students receive consequences for non-compliant behavior and must prove themselves worthy before they are granted privileges (p. 257). Students who fight in school should not only be suspended and receive demerits, according to Whitman, they should also be required to apologize to the entire school for their actions before returning to class.

As a further organizational practice to discourage disorderly behavior, "no excuse" schools use public shaming when students do not meet behavior expectations, such as taking their chair away so that they have to spend an entire school day standing while others sit. Alternatively, students may be required to wear their shirt inside out or to wear the shirt that denotes the color of a lower grade. Students with too many demerits are not allowed to attend field trips or other enriching activities. Suspended students are often not allowed to return to class until they offer a public apology, even if their infraction was unknown to the student body (Goodman, 2013; Lack, 2011; Woodworth, David, Guba, Wang, & Lopez-Torkos, 2008).

In "no excuse" middle and high schools, student behavior is often moderated through a system of merits and demerits, which is tied to a monetary reward system. Merits and demerits provide a school wide behavioral modification system that all teachers and administrators can use to encourage desired behaviors and discourage detrimental behaviors. This system of rules mirrors and corresponds to the ethos, or school culture. Students can earn merits for "cleaning up someone else's trash in the lunchroom, hallway or around the school," "serving as an example to other

students," "earning the honor roll," or other behaviors that the teachers and administrators feel support a positive school environment. Students can earn demerits for off-task behavior, being out of uniform, having their book bags in the aisle, making inappropriate comments, or other unidentified behaviors that teachers and administrators deem objectionable. Students with several demerits are required to attend Friday detention or they are not allowed to attend certain school events. Students with several merits can buy a "get out of Friday detention pass," "free uniform Friday," snacks, agendas, or three-ring binders. In some KIPP schools students receive an actual paycheck in the form of $50.00 at the end of every week; deductions are made for violations to the school's behavioral code, absenteeism, and uniform violations (Goodman, 2013). This token economy is practiced in all KIPP schools (Ellison, 2012); scholars are connecting such behavioral modification systems to efforts supporting neoliberal ideology (Elliott, 2013; Lipman, 2008). In these token economies students receive capitalist consequences and benefits based on their individual performance and behavior. These researchers argue that the emphasis placed on the individual and the resulting merit pay for certain behavior is anti-democratic (Lack, 2012; Lipman, 2008).

Although Whitman does not use this language, his support of strict disciplinary policies is kin to the term "zero tolerance." Zero tolerance is a school policy that favors strict imposition of penalties, regardless of the circumstances of each case. Such policies have resulted in the increase of suspension and expulsion rates in schools throughout the nation, particularly in urban schools (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). Supporters of zero tolerance policies contend that they promote the safety and well-being of school children and send a powerful message of deterrence. They also claim that the strict adherence to these polices ensures that school officials

do not treat individual children differently, which curbs discrimination toward marginalized groups (Casella, 2003).

Critics of zero tolerance policies state that inflexible discipline policies can produce harmful results, particularly for certain groups. Today, Black students are three times more likely to be suspended than White students, often for subjective infractions such as eye-rolling, body language, and other signs of disrespect (Cregor & Hewitt, 2011; Gregory, et. al, 2010). Black boys are the most likely to be suspended from school (Yang, 2009). This effect also appears to be true of "no excuse" charter schools as KIPP has an unusually high attrition rate, especially among Black males (Vasquez Heilig, Williams, McNeil, & Lee, 2011). Moreover, critics assert that school administrators have failed to use common sense in applying zero tolerance, leading to the expulsion of children for bringing aspirin to school or missing too many days of class. Implementing polices that call for a zero tolerance ethos do not allow students room to grow, and make mistakes, without receiving harsh penalties that can influence their life outcomes. Ross, MacDonald, and Alberg (2007) conducted a qualitative study of KIPP schools and found that students rated the harsh disciplinary policies as the worst aspect of school.

Baker, Libby, and Wiley (2012) conducted a study on practices of charter schools in New York, Ohio, and Texas. They found that charter schools had far higher expulsion rates than traditional public schools because "they can set academic, behavioral, and cultural standards that promote exclusion of students via attrition." A similar survey of expulsion rates in the District of Columbia found that charter schools, which now enroll almost half of the students in the district, have an expulsion rate that is 72 times that of public schools (Brown, 2013).

Some scholars are critical of this type of "militaristic" or zero tolerance environment because it hinders democratic goals (Lack, 2009; Lack, 2012). Lack (2012) writes that White and

upper class Americans, who often fund and support KIPP schools, would not subject their own children to the discipline policies or the instructional practices that they support for low-income and minority students attending KIPP and other "no excuse" schools. The people supporting, and often teaching in, KIPP schools are not enrolling their children in these schools (Lack, 2011; 2012) even though they claim to prepare students to attend college.

2. Require a rigorous, college-prep curriculum. Whitman (2008) states that paternalistic schools are successful because they prepare all students for college by "providing no bilingual instruction, not tracking students, and offering little formal multicultural instruction…or pull-out instruction for special needs students" (p. 259). He encourages a strict preparation for college for all students by emphasizing mathematics, English, science, and modern language; according to Whitman, these are the most important subjects to ensure student success in college. He cites an exemplary charter school in Oakland that has a "whatever it takes" team of teachers who tutor struggling readers.

Although instruction in exemplary charter schools may be rigorous, pedagogical practices seldom vary and belie critical thinking. For example, researchers in KIPP schools found that, in hopes of preparing students for college, direct instruction was the primary form of classroom instruction (Ellison, 2012; Lack, 2011; Ross, et al., 2007). One of the criticisms frequently cited against the KIPP model is that their heavy reliance on teacher-centered instruction and assessment produces high scores on tests but does not teach critical thinking and problem solving skills (Ellison, 2012). One of Lack's (2011; 2012) critiques of the KIPP model is the direct-instruction teaching method is often praised as "good enough" for minority and low-income students but would not be tolerated by the parents of White or middle class students. Middle class parents, who have no intention for their children to become order-takers, would not agree to

such rote learning strategies. Lack argues that a "no excuse" model will exacerbate inequality by producing a working class of minority students (Lack, 2011; 2012). Pinkney (2014) added that many aspects of the "no excuse" school she studied hindered democratic goals due to traditional teaching practices that encouraged passive note-taking, regurgitation of information, and silencing of student voices.

Still, many charter schools, particularly ones using the "no excuse" model, have shown gains in reading scores for minority students (Fryer, 2012). For example, in 2012, charter schools in Georgia outperformed non-charter schools on the English portion of the End-of-Course state high school test (Barge, 2012). Minority and low-income students in Detroit charter schools outperformed students of similar demographic backgrounds who attended traditional public schools in reading and math (Charter school performance*, 2013).* Recent research on one KIPP school compared the academic gains for students selected in the lottery to those who attended their local public school (Argrist, Dynarski, Kane, Pathak, & Walters, 2010). Researchers found that students enrolled in the KIPP school demonstrated substantial reading gains. Other studies comparing students attending the KIPP school to students enrolled at a local inner-city school also found significant educational advantages to the "no excuse" model citing less distractions in class and more time on task as commendable aspects of the learning environment (Carter, 2000; Ross, MacDonald, & Alberg, 2007).

It is important to consider, however, that overall, charter schools have yet to produce significantly better academic results than traditional public schools. In 2010, researchers from Mathematica Policy Research conducted a randomized study of 36 charter middle schools in 16 states and found that the majority of charter school students scored no better or worse than students in traditional public schools on math and reading assessments (Gleason, Clark, Tuttle, &

Dwoyer, 2010). They also noted that even charter schools within the same network differ widely in results (Di Carlo, 2011; Gleason, et al., 2010).

Overall, researchers conclude the academic gains of charter schools, specifically "no excuse" charter schools, have yet to be realized. Moreover, the way in which schools adopting this model conceptualize a college preparatory education might not result in long-term college success. A "militaristic" atmosphere may be counter-productive (Lack, 2011; 2012). If "no excuse" charter schools intend students to be successful in college, then encouraging conformity instead of creativity and compliance instead of curiosity will not assist in completion of this goal. Perhaps the lack of critical thinking skills and questioning is one of the reasons that only 31% of KIPP students complete college, even though 89% of them enroll in college (KIPP First College Completion Report, 2011).

3. Reject the culture of the streets. Whitman (2008) celebrates taking extreme measures to protect the school culture by removing all possible threats. In discussing the ways in which model schools meet this goal Whitman writes:

> These schools literally rebuff the culture of the street by banning street language, swearing, gang insignia, and 'tagging' school property with graffiti. If students so much as doodle gang graffiti on a notebook or piece of paper at Cristo Rey, they are suspended. And if they doodle a gang symbol a second time, Principal Pat Garrity expels them (p. 264).

In rejecting the culture of the streets or any actions that might reflect "street" or non-conforming behavior, "no excuse" charter schools often adopt strict rules that public schools cannot enforce.

Recently, research was conducted on the socio-emotional consequences of learning in such a school. Goodman (2013) analyzed the affects of learning in schools managed by charter

management organizations (CMOs), which are synonymous with "no excuse" schools. She found that these schools assume the worst in students. Though rules can be protective, if not counterbalanced with opportunities for personal agency, the rules may suppress students' motivation and dampen their aspirations. She related the strict model to the "theory of broken windows," which assumes the probability that small misdemeanors will escalate into more serious infractions is lessened by policing the former. For example, in "no excuse" schools, students are required to have their hands clasped together on top of their desk, as this will prevent students from playing with objects or touching each other inappropriately. Also, students are often silent during transitions from one class to the next in order to prevent bullying, tardiness, fighting, or other unwanted behaviors. Students are often required to be silent in lunch as well. Whitman (2008) applauded a school that attempted to curb gang activities by requiring students to take a Breathalyzer test to gain entry to a school dance.

Goodman (2013) alleged that students who learn in this accusatory environment, in which they are blamed before ever stepping out of line, have internalized negative views of themselves such as seeing themselves as unworthy. Through interviewing students, Goodman learned that students perceived autonomy in school as bad because freedom was associated with an untamed, or "street," spirit that would lead to them being suspended in school or jailed in society. In her sample, young children referred to themselves as "bad" and noted that they should strive to be more like suburban kids who "make better choices" (p. 94). Students saw themselves as deserving of the harsh treatment they received, mostly because they believed they would "act up" without the strict rules that were in place.

4. Extend the school day and/or year. One of the most defining factors of the "no excuse" charter school is its extended school day and school year. As Whitman (2008) explains, many of

the model schools in his book have an extended school day, extended school year, periodic Saturday schools, and mandatory summer school. KIPP, Success Academies, Democracy Prep, and National Heritage Academies are all similar in their adoption of the extended school day and year. For example, students at KIPP spend approximately 60 percent more time in school than the average public or private school student (Lack, 2011).

Requiring additional time in school is often cited as one of the reasons some charter schools are successful in improving students' academic performance on standardized tests of math and reading. This additional time in school is often used to support students in tested subjects, such as reading and math, and not to add a civic dimension to the school curriculum (Pinkney, 2013). Lack (2012) writes that such schools do not just aim to help students reach academic goals, but also desire to keep students outside of their communities as much as possible in order to control their exposure to environments that might influence students in negative ways. He writes that KIPP advocates assume that the easiest and most sensible way to explain poverty and poor outcomes is to link poverty to a poor work ethic. Students are constantly reminded to "work hard." Not only do the students work hard, teachers are required to do the same. Mike Feinberg (2005) KIPP's founder boasted:

> Every single school in this country has [one] teacher's car in the parking lot at seven o'clock in the morning and that car is still there at five…What's different at KIPP is that *all* the [teachers'] cars are there at seven in the morning and *all* the cars are there at five o'clock in the afternoon.

However, Feinberg does not address the issue of teacher attrition in KIPP schools. Stuit and Smith (2012) used national survey data to examine why teacher turnover in charter schools is twice as high as traditional public schools. They concluded that the primary cause of teacher attrition in

charter schools was teachers' dissatisfaction with their working conditions. Many cited long hours causing burn-out as a primary reason for their early departure from teaching in charter schools (Stuit & Smith, 2009; 2012).

These four practices described by Whitman (2008) and implemented in most "no excuse" charter schools capture what the school and classroom environment might be like in such a school. Though the research is somewhat limited, researchers are beginning to explore the possible effects that learning in such an environment has on students academically, emotionally, and culturally. I will build on these studies as I explore the civic consequences of being socialized in the "no excuse" environment. In the following section, I explore relevant literature that situates my research in terms of the impacts of the "no excuse" model on students' civic and political attitudes and behaviors.

Civic and Political Beliefs, Attitudes, and Behaviors

The International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) explored the ways in which countries prepare eighth grade students to assume their roles as citizens. Gathering data from more than 140,000 students in more than 5,300 schools from 38 countries in 2009, the ICCS researchers distinguished four affective-behavioral spheres: attitudes, behavior intentions, value beliefs, and behaviors (Schulz, Fraillon, Ainley, Losito, & Kerr, 2008). These spheres acknowledge that individuals operate with varying conceptions of democracy. Individuals' conceptions of democracy are important because, "Democracy requires a certain degree of adherence to underlying principles, along with common values and attitudes" (Torney-Purta, et al. 2001). Although the United States did not participate in the 2009 ICCS study I report these findings because they capture the political beliefs and attitudes of students from the largest and

most recent representative sample assessed[2]; and therefore serve as a way to compare findings about U.S. students with students internationally. I discuss the results as they relate to three chapters in the final ICCS report: 1) students' values, beliefs, and attitudes; 2) students' civic engagement; and 3) the roles of schools and communities.

First, ICCS researchers sought to assess students' perceptions of democracy by studying students' values, beliefs, and attitudes. On the *Perceptions of Democracy and Citizenship* scale, 98 percent of students in the participating countries agreed that everyone should have a right to express their opinions freely and 95 percent agreed that all people should have their political rights respected. On the *Conventional Citizenship* scale, most students agreed that a good citizen votes; fewer associated good citizenship with joining a political party or engaging in political discussions. In capturing students' attitudes toward equal rights, several questions were asked regarding gender, racial, and immigrant equality. Students' agreement with attitudes supporting gender equality varied by country; however, in all countries female students supported gender equality more than did male students. Overall, 93 percent of students agreed that all racial groups should have an equal opportunity to a good education but their answers varied related to racial equality in elections and jobs. Similarly, on the A*ttitudes Towards Equal Rights* scale, students were most supportive of equal education, with 92 percent agreement; they were less supportive of immigrants' rights to speak their own language or vote in elections. Students' rated their trust in a number of civic institutions. In descending order they trusted schools (75%), armed forces

[2] It is important to denote that most of the countries participating in this study are developed nations and many are technologically advanced, including: Austria, Belgium (Flemish), Bulgaria, Chile, Chinese Taipei, Colombia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, England, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Guatemala, Hong Kong SAR, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, Poland, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Thailand.

(71%), national government (62%), media (61%), people in general (58%) and political parties (41%) (Schulz, et al., 2010).

Second, ICCS researchers addressed the question, "What is the extent of interest and disposition to engage in public and political life among adolescents and which factors within or across countries relate to it?" (Schulz, et al., 2010, p. 115). In capturing students' civic engagement researchers evaluated student self-beliefs, or efficacy, and discovered that in most countries male students reported higher levels of internal political efficacy than females. When applied to students' efficacy related to their ability to perform particular civic behaviors, or citizenship self-efficacy, the results varied. In some countries, females tended to show somewhat higher levels of confidence in citizenship participation than boys; the reverse was true only in Indonesia and Thailand. This was especially notable given that earlier research measuring self-efficacy tended to report gender differences favoring males. The *Expected Political Participation* scale measured the ways in which students expected to participate in democratic governance, such as writing a letter to a newspaper, rallying, or petitioning. Between 51 and 57 percent of students overall expected to probably or definitely participate in such civic actions except contacting an elected representative. Eighty-two percent of students anticipated that they would vote; thus making voting the most expected civic action (Schulz, et al., 2010).

Third, ICCS researchers captured the ways in which family background, classrooms, and community contributed to students' civic and citizenship education. In evaluating students' influence in the school, or the school context, researchers found that students' with an average or above average understanding of civic concepts were most likely to report having an influence on classroom delivery, content, and school rules. Also, males reported feeling more influential in school decision-making than females. In the school context, in most countries, students with an

average or above average understanding of civic knowledge were likely to report that events, such as the discussion of current political happenings, occurred at least sometimes. In all ICCS countries, females perceived classroom climate as more open than males did (Schulz, et al., 2010).

The International IEA Civic Education Study (CivEd), the precursor to ICCS, was a large-scale international study to "identify and examine in a comparative framework the ways in which young people are prepared to undertake their role as citizens in democracies" (Torney-Purta, et al., 2001). Importantly the CivEd study included data from a U.S. sample. Additionally, U.S. students' civic and political beliefs and attitudes were reported in terms of race, socioeconomic, and gender differences. Although this study is older than ICCS, as it took place in 1999, it sampled 2,811 students from 124 representative public and private schools in the United States. Importantly, IEA CivEd researchers found that U.S. ninth-graders scored significantly above the international average on the civic knowledge scale and civic skills scale (Baldi, et al., 2001). Black and Hispanic students scored lower than White and Asian students on the content and skills subscales and the total civic knowledge scale. However, when examining the role of race, socioeconomic status, and out-of-school variables, U.S. students' performance and reported experiences varied widely. I include these differences as they are discussed in the U.S. report relating to areas I examined in my study: 1) students' concepts of democracy, citizenship, and government; 2) students' attitudes toward the nation, the government, immigrants' and women's political rights; and, 3) students' civic engagement and political activities.

Examining ninth-grade U.S. students' opinions on what creates democracy and defines good citizenship, researchers found that 90 percent of U.S. students reported that it is good for

democracy when everyone has the right to free speech. Also, about 80 percent of U.S. students agreed that voting in every election was important to acting as a good citizen. Also 87 to 93 percent of surveyed students said that the U.S. government should ensure equal political opportunities for women and men, provide free basic education, and provide for the elderly (Baldi, et al., 2001).

On the *Attitudes toward the Nation* scale approximately 90 percent of U.S. students agreed that the United States should be proud of its achievements, thus demonstrating a positive feeling toward the nation. White and Black students were more likely than their Hispanic peers to agree with the positive statements about the United States; however, it is important to note that White students had the most positive attitudes toward the nation. A majority of students reported that they trusted the local and national government-related institutions, including the police and courts. However, only 35 percent of U.S. students reported trusting political parties. Female students were more likely to report that they trusted government institutions than did their male counterparts. Also, White ninth grade students were more likely to report trusting government institutions than did their Black and Hispanic peers (Baldi, et al., 2001).

In measuring students' current and expected political activities researchers found that U.S. students' average score on the *Expected Participation in Political Activities* scale was higher than the international average and there were no differences in expected participation by race or country of birth. However, students in homes with 100 or fewer books were less likely to report expected political participation as adults than students in homes with more than 200 books[3]. On the scale measuring students' ideas about the importance of conventional citizenship,

[3] Because IEA CivEd was an international study, researchers measured students' socioeconomic status by students' estimates of the number of books in their homes. The number of books in the home were measured in the categories of "1-10," "11-50," "51-100," "101-200," and "more than 200."

U.S. students scored higher than the international mean; Black students scored higher than White, Hispanic and Asian students on their support of conventional civic behaviors. Black students and females also had the highest average score when rating the importance of social movement related citizenship. Additionally, on the *Classroom Climate* scale, students of lower-SES had lower scores on the *Classroom Climate* scale than students of higher SES, and Black and Hispanic students also reported their classroom environment as less open and supportive than White students (Baldi, et al., 2001).

One of the consistent predictors of political participation is political efficacy, the belief that individual action can influence the governmental process (Levy, 2011a; 2011b; Massialas, 1974). Political efficacy is indicative of citizens' belief that they can understand and influence political affairs. Political scientists often measure political efficacy in two forms: internal and external (Balch, 1974). Internal political efficacy explores how a person feels that her knowledge, abilities, and skills can have an effect on the political system. It often indicates the likelihood of a person voting or becoming politically active if she feels what she has to offer can make an impact on the political system. External political efficacy is the extent to which a person feels his government cares about and responds to his needs and reflects his concerns (Balch, 1974; Rodgers, 1974; Sullivan & Riedel, 2001). Researchers have found that nonpolitical environments about self-governance increased internal efficacy (Sullivan & Riedel, 2001) and that political efficacy is higher for individuals who have had opportunities to discuss political issues in an open supportive classroom climate (Hahn, 1991, 1996, 1998, 1999; Morrell, 2005). Researchers have also shown that political efficacy increases when students participate in small-scale democratic processes (Levy, 2013; Stroupe, & Sabato, 2004). Considering this, schools

emerge as an ideal, and necessary, space to educate students in a way that they may become politically efficacious.

In the post-Civil Rights era several researchers studied political efficacy as it related to race, and most researchers found that Black students had lower political efficacy than Whites. Abramson (1972) sought to explain the findings from several studies of political efficacy and trust in Black schoolchildren. He offered two basic explanations; the first is the social-deprivation explanation, which means that "racial differences result from social-structural conditions that contribute to low feelings of self-competence among Blacks" (p. 1249). The second description, the political-reality explanation, explains racial differences because of differences in the political environments in which Blacks and Whites live. However, Abramson also mentioned that there is a possible political-education explanation, which maintains that racial dissimilarities in political trust and political efficacy result from differences in political education within American schools.

In an earlier study, Billings (1970) studied a small group of Black student activists attending integrated high schools in Michigan to gain insight to their political efficacy. Through questionnaires, Billings found that the traditional definition of political efficacy did not fully describe young activists' feelings about their impact on politics or political issues of particular concern to Black-Americans. The measures used in this research were not traditional measures of political efficacy, as students were not being asked about their personal feelings of political power but about the ability of groups to change political structures. Billings wrote that politically aware Blacks understand their minority status in America and are therefore more efficacious as a group than as individuals. He suggested a new phrase that contains the component of collective efficacy, as opposed to individual efficacy. Billings defined a "sense of situational political

efficacy," as the feeling that Black students can, by collective actions, make changes in their condition within a circumscribed area of the political realm (pp. 99-100). Billings explained studies of student activists revealed a strong faith in the ability of Blacks to solve America's racial problems by their collective actions, "students share the legacy of group efficacy left by the civil rights movement of the 50s" (Billings, 1970, p. 102). Pinkney (2014) explored collective political efficacy in Black high school students and found that students favored collective action and reported increased efficacy in groups. This research offers another way to understand political efficacy in Black youth.

In another early study, Rodgers (1974) explored the reasons for low political efficacy and high political cynicism (low trust) of young Black students. He researched the lack of political efficacy in Black students as it related to five speculated factors that might affect Black students' political outcomes: education (teachers intentionally socializing students to be passive), social deprivation (deprivation contributes to low self-confidence), intelligence (if efficacy is related to intelligence and, as assumed by intelligence tests, Blacks are less intelligent), political reality (Blacks are aware of the reality that based on numbers, they have less opportunity to influence outcomes than Whites) and environmental politicization (influence of peer group and family). Rodgers' findings indicated that a considerable percentage of Black students sampled held negative attitudes toward the American polity. He also noted an accelerating trend that Black students were more negative and less supportive of the political system than earlier cohorts of Black youth. Rogers wrote:

> Current research leads us to believe, however, that the attitudes of all Blacks are becoming more negative in the South…because of these findings, it is hard to believe that the current generation of young Blacks will be as tolerant of failures in alleviating racial

inequality as were their elders…we are in an awkward stage in the civil rights struggle." (Rodgers, 1974).

Today, Rodgers' words seem prophetic.

Additionally, in 1972 Button studied the extent to which high school government courses could influence political efficacy and political knowledge among Black, Mexican-American, and White students. In her study of over 250 12th graders in Austin, Texas, Button subjected two classes of students to a rich curriculum in which students examined their own political socialization, explored elitism and racism in the United States, analyzed historic and current social movements, and participated in a local service project. The experimental groups were later compared to control groups. Before the treatment, Black students reported feeling more cynical (less trust) and less efficacious than White students. After the treatment all students in the experimental classes appeared to have increased feelings of political efficacy and political interest. Black students demonstrated increased feelings of both political cynicism and political efficacy. This finding supported Ehman's (1969) earlier finding that exposure to controversial issues does not disturb the political trust of Whites, but may promote cynicism among Blacks. Interviews with Black students revealed that they were strongly influenced by the case studies of political change such as the Montgomery Bus Boycott. This finding somewhat supported Billings' findings on the increased efficaciousness of Blacks in social movements.

After a 40-year hiatus, researchers are once again focusing on political efficacy and students' political socialization. Analyzing interview data from 32 high school students and questionnaire responses from 142 college undergraduates in a predominately White affluent Midwestern city, Levy (2011a; 2013) sought to update historic research to reveal the current factors that influence the development of adolescents' political efficacy. He also updated past

scales used to capture political efficacy. He identified a broad range of factors currently that contribute to the development of political efficacy. Some key findings were that the level of government influences students' efficacy such that political efficacy declines at higher governing levels; students are more efficacious in relation to local and state politics than national politics. Also, students' level of political efficacy varied based upon their interest in an issue; the more passionate students were about an issue, the more efficacious they were. Collective efficacy still played an important role in students' individual efficaciousness; if students' perceived that others became politically engaged in a cause, they were confident that change was possible. Finally, Levy's analysis revealed a direct relationship between students' actual political knowledge and their external and internal political efficacy; those who lacked basic political knowledge were less efficacious than those who learned in school about voting, writing letters to representatives, and protesting. Levy considered the key finding of his study to be, "school based civic learning experiences can positively influence all four dimensions of political efficacy" (p. 26).

Though many schools have tried innovative methods and experiences in citizenship education, only a few of them have demonstrated they increase political efficacy in students today. Kahne and Westheimer (2006) evaluated the effects of The Madison County Youth in Public Service program, which gave students opportunities to contribute to civic and political life through service learning. They found that this program did not influence political efficacy as students experienced frustration as a result of real world barriers to change:

> We are concerned that such activities will not provide sufficient preparation for the often contentious and difficult challenge of working to understand and change the social, economic, and political dynamics that surround complex issues such as poverty, caring for the environment, or racism (Kahne & Westheimer, 2006, p. 293).

Young people who are cynical about the government (low trust) but believe they have the power to change things (high efficacy) and those that feel powerless (low efficacy), are both connected in their low-voter turnout.

Other studies revealed that classroom instruction and extra-curricular programs could positively affect students' political efficacy. In a second study Levy (2011b) researched the effects of civic advocacy projects on students' political efficacy. Using a longitudinal mixed methods design, Levy observed one high school elective course, "civic advocacy," for a semester and surveyed students to gauge their political efficacy at the beginning and end of the course. The course included seven females and six males, and all students in the class were White except for one Black female. Although this study was conducted in an affluent high school and in a class that enrolled students who were on the AP track, it still offers important findings on the ways in which enriching classroom projects can affect students' political efficacy. Both quantitative and qualitative data revealed that students involved in the civic advocacy project developed a stronger belief in their own ability to influence political processes than students in the comparison group. Though some students were skeptical about their ability to influence government due to the time commitments, need for persistence, and substantive disagreements between decision makers in civic organizations, all students reported feeling more efficacious at the conclusion of the semester then they did at the beginning. Levy (2011a) conducted a similar study with students who participated in Model United Nations and again found a positive correlation between participation in a civic-missioned organization and increased political efficacy.

In another study of an innovative program, Bixby (2008) interviewed 21 young adults who had participated in the Mikva program while attending a public high school in Chicago. The

Mikva program is a community-based effort to develop the next generation of civic leaders through after-school activities in which teachers and community leaders encourage students to "act, think, live, and breathe politics" (p. 254). Bixby found that participation in the program correlated with students' increased political interest and efficacy. Her findings suggest that urban youths' experiences in programs such as these portray important elements of the civic and political interests of low-income and minority students that cannot be captured by standardized tests.

Pinkney (2014) conducted a qualitative study on political efficacy and other political attitudes of Black students in a predominately Black school. Through classroom observation and eight student interviews, she found that Black students in one charter high school were politically efficacious and expressed that they were well qualified to participate in governance as elected officials. Interviewed students' displayed high internal political efficacy and they stated that their vote and voice mattered in politics. Conversely, the Black students interviewed displayed low external political efficacy as they shared varied opinions on the government's ability to respond to their needs and the needs of their communities. The eight Black students seemed partial to collective political action and had high collective political efficacy. They hesitated to commit to signing a petition or protesting but said that they would do so if joined by others. Furthermore, Pinkney found that the context of the school affected students' perceptions of citizenship. As students in a "no excuse" charter school, the students defined good citizenship using words that emphasized compliant behaviors and "being good."

In an advocacy piece, Beaumont (2010) constructed four pathways that youth can adopt to develop a sense of political efficacy. Her suggestions are practical and easily adaptable in a classroom setting. I believe the benefits of her methods can be life-changing for urban youth in

helping increase their political efficacy. First, she suggests that teachers work to help students build political mastery experiences in real-world settings by exploring meaningful issues that youth value. These political goals must be feasible in order to help students become more efficacious. She also suggests that students benefit from the opportunity to work on concrete political goals and tie their work to political values, political power, and political change. Beaumont claims that guided political mastery experiences can play an important role in developing political efficacy. Next, she reiterates the idea that the most powerful role models are those with whom students can identify. To feel politically efficacious students need to see that people like them possess a confident outlook in spite of differing political experiences. Beaumont also identifies social encouragement, supportive relationships and networks, and inclusion in a political community as equally important to fostering political efficacy. She wrote that the goal is to create a balanced optimism, which allows for both hope and criticism. This can be achieved by cultivating a political outlook that is hopeful and realistic about contributing to meaningful political change and toward democratic ideals.

Recent studies focus on adolescents' perception of democracy and the realization of the ideals of the United States. Compiling data from four studies on adolescent's civic beliefs and attitudes in the United States and abroad, Flanagan (2013) captured students' perceptions on democratic values, governance by the people, inequality, and trust. Adopting theories from political science and psychology, Flanagan "argues that civic identities form during adolescence and are rooted in teens' everyday lives—in their experiences as members of schools and community-based organizations and in their exercise of voice, collective action, and responsibility in those settings." Through informal social contracts established in schools and communities, students are prepared for their role as participating citizens and thus learn their

place in the social order of the society. The relevant finding of this study is that internalized political theories are established long before citizens can vote and are strongly related to the experiences individuals have and the information people learn in youth.

Levine (2013) echoes many of Flanagan's ideas about the importance of political socialization in youth; however, he highlights the increased difficulty in preparing young citizens due to a loss of institutional structures that encourage and educate for effective engagement. Levine's concerns are legitimized by the declining levels of trust and satisfaction amongst Americans due to the disproportional imprisonment of citizens, concerns about healthcare for the masses, increasing numbers of poor citizens, encouraged privatization, and the failure of schools. Drawing on empirical research from several studies, Levine weaves together stories of the successes and failures of various modes of civic preparation and action. He concludes that deliberation, collaboration, and civic relationships with others, including those with differing political views, is key to civic renewal in the United States. Importantly, Levine critiques the use of social networking by stressing the inadequacies of social media in encouraging authentic, or recognized, action for the masses. He notes that the number of "likes" a post receives on Facebook raises awareness to issues; however, it does not necessarily translate into meaningful political action. He encourages positive youth development and critiques the current urban education reform movement that emphasizes conformity and compliance.

Hess and McAvoy (2015) conducted a longitudinal study in various private, traditional public, and charter schools in Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin in which they observed and interviewed students and teachers over the course of several years. They interviewed students about their current political views, levels of political and civic engagement, and views of citizenship. They found that the political and social context in which students learn influences

students' civic commitments; students who learn in more politically homogeneous classrooms and communities are more politically active than those who learn in diverse setting as adults, but they are also less open to diverse views. Their findings "also suggest that the social class differences predict which students are likely to become politically engaged adults" (p. 14) and those of higher socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to become politically active than those of lower socioeconomic status.

The literature reveals that researchers have explored the political attitudes and behaviors of youth using various methods. Most of the older studies were quantitative or used mixed methods and were conducted with large groups for a short time. Many of the studies that were specifically concerned with the political behaviors of Black students were conducted in the 1970s at the conclusion of the Civil Rights movement. There is now a resurgence of research on political attitudes and the findings of these studies are varied; some show that some classroom experiences can positively affect students' political efficacy and others credit extra-curricular programs with increasing efficacy, particularly for low-income youth of color. Additionally, researchers postulate that civic identities are formed in youth; thus affirming the importance of the exposure and experiences that occur during adolescence.

The recent change in the political behaviors of young citizens warrants examination. Further, I sought to understand more about the role of school ethos and social studies classes in affecting the political and civic attitudes and behaviors of minority and low-income youth in a "no excuse" charter school network. In this study, I sought to close the gap in research on the civic outcomes of charter schools by shedding light on the current and projected political behaviors of eighth grade students enrolled in schools in a leading "no excuse" charter network. In the next chapter, I explain the methods I used to reach this goal.

Chapter III: Methodology

In this research I examined how civic education was intended, implemented, and received in four "no excuse" charter middle schools. In this mixed methods study I used observations, interviews, and surveys to capture the school culture, classroom instruction, and students' civic and political attitudes and behaviors. This study was specifically concerned with the civic messages that eighth grade students received from various socializing agents including the informal community, family, school, and classroom instruction. I investigated the extent to which what happens in charter schools and social studies classrooms is associated with students' commitment to civic participation. I explored three research questions:

1. How do "no excuse" charter schools prepare students for democratic citizenship? How does the "no excuse" approach vary in different schools?
2. How does the intended, implemented, and received curriculum in social studies classes prepare students for citizenship?
3. How do students attending "no excuse" charter middle schools conceive of and enact their roles as current citizens and imagine their roles as future citizens? What are students' civic and political attitudes, and current and projected civic/political behaviors? How do those attitudes and behaviors vary by gender, socio-economic status, and school?

In the following sections I describe the site, participants, instruments, procedures, and methods of analysis I used, as well as my researchers' perspective and reciprocity with the schools.

Site

As a result of conducting a preliminary qualitative empirical study of the political socialization of Black students in social studies classes in a racially homogenous charter high school, I became familiar with many teachers and administrators within the Education First (pseudonym) network. This allowed me to build relationships that assisted me gaining access to

the research sites for this study. One administrator who worked within the national network was especially helpful in guiding me throughout the process of accessing schools. After obtaining approval from the charter school network's Research Review Board, I had difficulty in getting responses from the principals of the four schools. When the helpful administrator intervened by sending introductory e-mails to the principals, the principals and teachers in the schools were quite supportive.

It was the empirical study that led me to this dissertation study. Though my previous study was not specifically about charter schools, the findings of the study were greatly influenced by the context of the charter school and their adaptation of the "no excuses" model. In the high school where I conducted my previous study, the school culture was so pervasive it colored many of my findings about students' experiences in the classroom, often in ways that contradicted democratic goals. My interest in learning more about Black students' political socialization in charter schools developed from my observations during my empirical study.

I selected Education First schools as the research sites because of their explicit rhetoric regarding their dedication to academic rigor and character development. Though Education First was a relatively new charter school network in the selected southeastern urban district, the "no excuse" model that it adopted had a reputation for improving achievement for minority and low-income students in other districts. I also selected these schools because their student population is directly aligned with the research focus of this study. Specifically, each school served over 96% Black students (varying between 96% and 99%), Hispanic students (varying between one percent and four percent) and, at least 67% of students were identified as being from low-income households (between 67% and 93%), in that students were eligible for the free or reduced lunch

program.[4] I began by studying school ethos in four Education First middle schools in different areas of the same metropolitan city. These schools included: Westside Academy, Victorious Academy, Scholastic Academy, and Southside Academy (pseudonyms). The four research sites are described in detail in Chapter IV.

As I continued to study classrooms within the four schools, the teacher at Victorious Academy opted-out of the study; therefore, I observed three classrooms. The schools in which I made classroom observations and collected survey student data were Westside Academy, Southside Academy, and Scholastic Academy. I collected classroom level data in three Education First charter schools during basic-level eighth grade social studies classes. As a non-traditional public charter school network, Education First had the flexibility to adapt the mandated state curricular requirements for public schools but is subject to the same accountability tests as traditional public schools. The state-mandated curriculum for these classes was state history, which included several civics standards that were particularly relevant to the research focus of this study.

Participants

The sample for this study consisted of the teacher and students in one basic level eighth grade social studies class in each of three Education First charter schools. Each class enrolled between 23-28 students and attendance varied daily. The total sample of students for this study consisted of approximately 70 students who were enrolled in one of three state history social studies classes being observed, and whose parents provided informed consent. All courses were

[4] According to the United States Department of Agriculture, in 2014 children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free meals ($30,615 for a family of four). Those with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals, for which students can be charged no more than 40 cents (185 percent is $43,568).Children from families with incomes over 185 percent of poverty pay full price, though their meals are still subsidized to some extent.

guided by state standards and the state's eighth grade social studies standards included civic goals. For example, one state standard reads, "The student will analyze the role of local governments in the state" (State Department of Education).

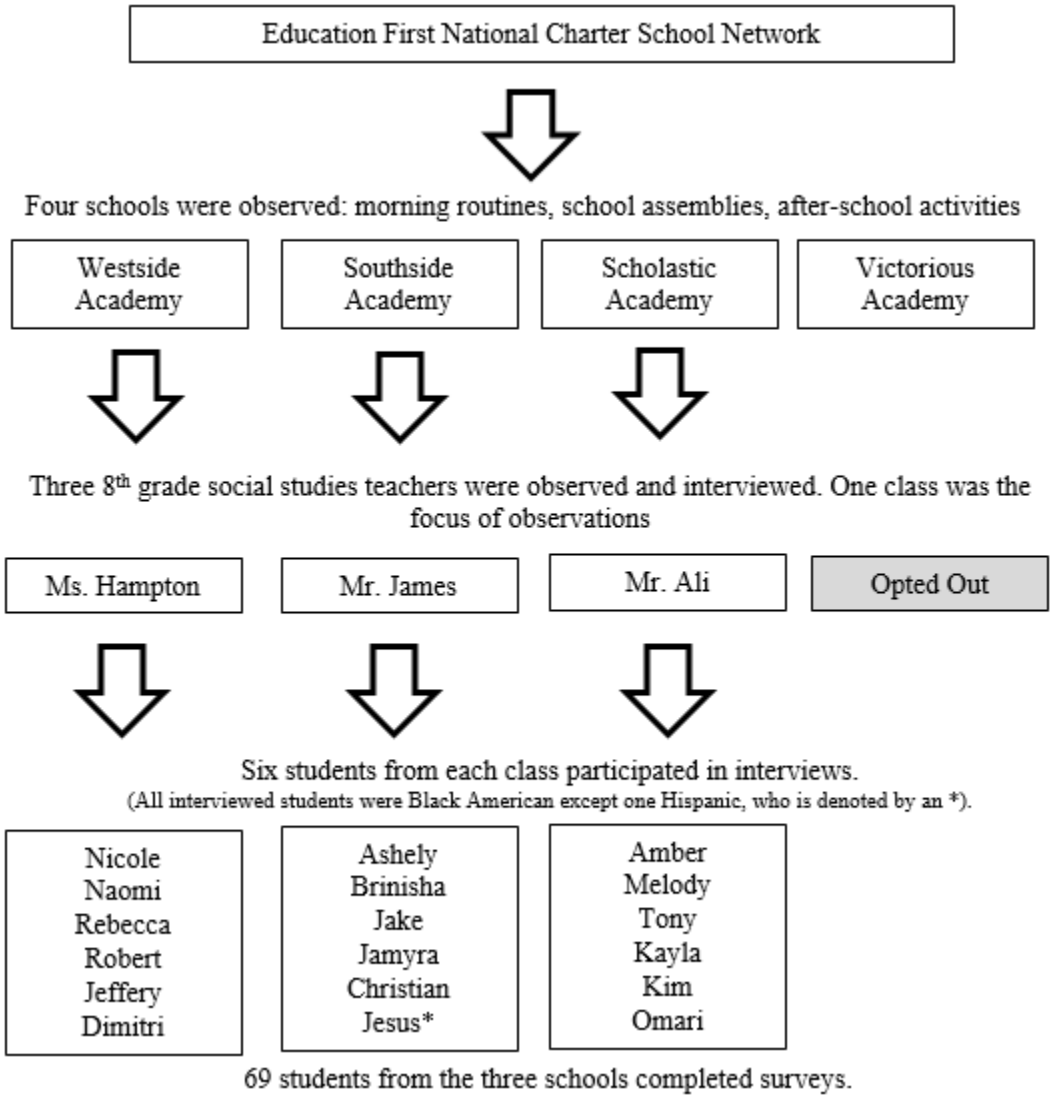
Additionally, I purposefully selected six students from each observed class (three male, three female) to participate in individual interviews, totaling 18 interviewed students (Appendix A). I selected students based on their classroom behaviors. I selected students who displayed varying degrees of political interest during classroom discussions. For example, a student who displayed political interest was identified because of her thoughtful comments in class, and a student who displayed less political interest was selected due to his failure to comment at all. Overall, I selected students to understand a range of students' experiences learning civics in the classroom and their experiences with civically socializing agents in their school and in their community.

Teachers of each of the three observed classes, Ms. Hampton, Mr. Ali, and Mr. James, participated in an introductory interview that provided general knowledge about their credentials and pedagogy, periodic interviews after teaching lessons that are relevant to the research questions, and a final interview at the conclusion of the observation period (Appendix B). The teacher interviews served to gauge what state standards and individual goals teachers attempted to meet throughout the lesson, if they felt those goals were met, and what they hoped students retained from the lessons. Participating teachers also shared their written lesson plans for the observed lessons, to enable me to understand teachers' intended lessons.

Additionally, to understand the variance I observed in school culture, I decided to interview all four principals of the participating schools (Appendix C). Each principal

participated in one formal interview in which I sought to understand his or her civic goals as school leaders and their vision for the school. For a list of participants see *Figure 2*.

Figure 2. Setting and Participants of the Study.



Data Sources and Collection

I gathered information on school ethos, teacher practice, and students' projected political participation through observation and interviews. I administered a student survey to further assess students' civic and political attitudes and behaviors. Data collection occurred on multiple levels to capture how four "no excuse" charter schools prepared students for democratic

citizenship. This collected data captured how students' experiences in school, social studies class, and with their friends and families are associated with their political attitudes and behaviors. I adhered to my university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines and obtained informed consent from parents, teachers, and students. I also observed IRB guidelines for field observation, data protection, and interview protocols throughout my research. Table 1 summarizes the data sources I utilized to answer each research question:

Table 1

Summary of Research Questions, Data Sources, and Methodology

Research Question	Data Sources	Methodology
How do "no excuse" charter schools prepare students for democratic citizenship? How does the "no excuse" approach vary in different schools?	• School culture observations • Classroom observations • Teacher interviews • Student interviews • Principal Interviews	Triangulation of observations, teacher interviews, student interviews, principal interviews
How does the intended, implemented, and received curriculum in social studies classes prepare students for democratic citizenship?	• Classroom observations • Teacher interviews • Teacher lesson plans • Student interviews • Student surveys: *Civic Attitudes Survey*	Triangulation of observations, lesson plans teacher interviews, student interviews, student surveys and lesson plans
How do students attending "no excuse" charter middle schools conceive of and enact their roles as current citizens and imagine their roles as future citizens? What are students' civic and political attitudes, and current and projected civic/political behaviors? How do those attitudes and behaviors vary by gender, socio-economic status, and school?	• Classroom observations • Student interviews • Student survey: *Civic Attitudes Survey*	Triangulation of observations, student interviews, and student surveys: *Civic Attitudes Survey*

Classroom observation. During the data collection period from January-December, I observed the classrooms of Mr. James (January-April), Ms. Hampton (August-October), and Mr. Ali (September-December). Over the course of a calendar year, I observed classes designed to address civic standards for 50-minute class periods, for a total of over 100 hours of observation data. Observation days were negotiated between me and the teachers to ensure that observation occurred on days when the teacher was giving instruction and not days when tests

were administered. I only observed teachers' lessons that included civic messages and students' responses to those lessons. I also noted the ways that students interacted with the teacher, the material, and each other throughout the lessons. Furthermore, I listened for students' prior knowledge and noted whether they attained this knowledge through traditional media sources, social media, family, or life experience. I typed field notes during and after every observation. Additionally, I wrote memos that I included with the corresponding observation data.

Teacher interviews. The teacher interviews were "open-ended and loosely structured" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). The purpose of the interviews were to gauge how well teachers felt they implemented lesson plans, the students' responses to the material, students' understanding of the material, and teachers' perceptions of their overall success with the lesson. I followed an interview guide to help keep the conversation targeted to these general topics but each teacher was encouraged to talk about what she felt was relevant about the lesson. This structure also allowed impromptu and follow-up questioning if the teacher said something that was particularly informative or I deemed useful to the research questions. I used the data collected from the interviews to supplement and contextualize the information gathered from the classroom observations.

Student interviews. Like the teacher interviews, the student interviews were also loosely structured and followed an interview guide. The interviews served to explore students' perceptions of the instruction that they received and how it affected their political attitudes and political actions. Interviews also served to gain insight to students' political participation outside of school and their past and current experiences with voting, petitioning, social media, and accessing information on current events. Interviews often lead to conversations about students' political socialization through family and friends. I used the data I collected from interviews to

learn about the out-of-school factors that contributed to students' political socialization, as well as the information they retained from class that could shape their political behavior.

Principal interviews. I conducted principal interviews in order for me to understand school ethos. I interviewed each of the four principals once for approximately one hour. A professional transcriber transcribed all of the interviews. I later cleaned the transcribed interviews to ensure that transcriptions were accurate renditions of interviews.

Lesson plans. For this study, I used lesson plans to determine the extent to which the intended, or planned, lesson was delivered to the students. I did not conduct a content analysis of the lesson plans.

Surveys. In each of the observed classrooms, I administered surveys on the last day of observation. I provided students with the schools' laptop computers and students took the surveys in their classrooms. Each student completed the survey using Survey Monkey, an online survey software.

Researcher memos. I wrote memos while observing the field site, and reflective memos after leaving the research site, in order to begin the process of analyzing observational data (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). Writing memos allowed me to develop the relationships among observational data, interviews, and scholarship (Emerson, 2001; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). The memos also assisted me in generating codes that I later used to analyze data (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). I also noted personal reflections and reactions to relevant events and comments.

Combined, these methods assisted me in explaining how students are prepared for democratic citizenship within the "no excuse" model, how social studies classrooms within such schools support or contradict that goal, and how students view themselves as current and future

citizens. In the following section, I describe the instruments and process that I used to analyze data, limit bias, and maintain the integrity of observations.

Instruments

In this mixed method study, I utilized both qualitative and quantitative instruments. In the following section I explore the ways I used each instrument in this study.

Qualitative Instruments

In addition to the guides I used for interviews with students, teachers, and principals (Appendices A, B, and C), I used an observation guide to ensure each classroom observation was focused on answering the research questions (Appendix D). I developed the observation guide to capture the general classroom climate as well as the instructional strategies that were implemented during instruction. I was specifically interested in opportunities for students to engage in recommended practices, including the discussion of current events and controversial issues, and decision making opportunities.

Quantitative Instruments

Sixty-nine students from three classes completed the adapted *Civic Attitudes Survey* at the end of the observation period. The adapted survey questions for this study were designed to capture students' civic attitudes, engagement, and current and expected future participation using selected scales and items developed for the *International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS)* (Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010), the IEA CivEd study (Torney-Purta, et al. 2001), the *Political Efficacy and Trust Survey* (Craig, Niemi, & Silver, 1990), and Levy's *Political Efficacy Survey of College Students* (2011a). I used a total of 12 scales to capture various aspects of students' civic and political attitudes and experiences. I categorized the scales

into three groups: 1) Values, beliefs, and attitudes 2) political efficacy, and, 3) civic engagement (Appendix E, Student Survey).

Values, beliefs, and attitudes. To capture students' perspectives ICCS and IEA CivEd researchers developed an assessment framework that consisted of Likert-type items in the areas of value beliefs, attitudes, behavioral intentions, and behaviors (Schulz, et al., 2008; Torney-Purta, et al. 2001). IEA and ICCS researchers conducted factor analyses and established reliability on four scales from which I drew items.

In this study, I used four scales developed to capture students' value beliefs and attitudes and civic engagement. First, adapted by ICSS from the IEA CivEd scale, I used five-items from the *Perceptions of Democracy and Citizenship* scale (α = not reported). The scale sought to determine the extent of student endorsement of basic democratic values. Second, I used the *Equal Rights and Citizenship* scale, also revised from CivEd by ICSS. It included eight-items measuring students' attitudes toward gender and racial equality and opportunities for immigrants (α = .79). Third, I used the scale measuring *Attitudes Toward the United States*. It contained five items, from both ICCS and IEA CivEd, that measured students' attitudes toward their country (ICSS, α = .82; IEA CivEd, α = .68). Fourth, I used the IEA CivEd and ICCS *Trust in Government Related Institutions* scale. For this five-item scale in which students rated their trust in civic/political institutions including courts and police (ICSS, α = .84; IEA CivEd, α = .78). In total, I included 23 items from IEA CivEd and ICCS for this section of the survey.

Political efficacy. In order to understand students' civic dispositions, I administered ICCS and IEA CivEd surveys to capture students' self-beliefs (internal efficacy) about their ability to influence government (Schulz, et al., 2010;Torney-Purta, et al. 2001). Additionally, I included items to capture students' external and collective efficacy from the *Political Efficacy*

and Trust Survey (Craig, Niemi, & Silver, 1990). Finally, I used items from Levy's *Political Efficacy Survey of College Students* (2011b) because several of these items capture students' efficacy using contemporary forms of political participation including online activity.

I included six items from the IEA CivEd and ICCS studies' *Internal Efficacy* scale reflecting students' beliefs about their own capacity to engage in politics (ICCS α = .84, IEA CivEd α = .76). I used six items from the ICCS *Citizenship Efficacy* scale (α = .82), which asked students to rate how well they thought they would perform different activities related to citizenship participation. The *Internal Efficacy* and C*itizenship Efficacy* scales both measure internal efficacy. I measured students' *external efficacy* using four-items from the *Political Efficacy and Trust Survey* (α =.74) and the *Political Efficacy Survey of College Students* (α =.76), which measured students' perceptions of the government's responsiveness to their demands. Finally, I measured *collective efficacy* using three items also from the *Political Efficacy and Trust Survey* (α = not reported). I included a total of 18 items in this section of the survey.

Civic engagement or behavior. In order to understand students' civic engagement ICCS and IEA CivEd administered survey items to capture students' levels of current engagement and future expectations, including: engagement and communication about political and social issues, participation in civic activities outside of school and within school, and expected political participation in the future (Schulz, et al., 2010; Torney-Purta, et al. 2001).

I included 14-items from ICCS, IEA CivEd, and the *Political Efficacy Survey of College Students* to measure students' expected participation in conventional, volunteer, and unconventional political activities. These items came from the *Expected Political Participation* scale (ICCS α = .70, IEA CivEd α = .73, *Political Efficacy Survey of College Students* α = .66). I included an additional scale *Conventional Citizenship*, which captured some of the same items

used in the *Expected Political Participation* scale in order to highlight students' commitments to traditional civic acts, such as voting. This scale included four-items from IEA CivEd (α = .67). I also sought to capture students' perceptions of the school and classroom environment. The *School Context* scale included five-items from ICCS and IEA CivEd (ICCS α = .86, IEA CivEd α = .69). The *Classroom Context* scale included six-items from ICCS and IEA CivEd (ICCS α = .76, IEA CivEd α = .76). Twenty-nine items were included in this section of the survey.

I piloted the original survey, which included 76-items, with 23 students in an eighth grade social studies class at a local traditional public school in which the students mirrored the race and class demographics of the charter schools I studied. After discussing the survey with the students, I removed two items to avoid repetition and I deleted three items because they were either confusing, not age-appropriate, or not relevant in the U.S. context. After deleting items I uploaded the remaining 71-item survey on Survey Monkey to simplify the data collection process. After administering the survey to eighth grade students in the three participating schools (n=69), I ran an exploratory factor analysis to measure the internal consistency, or reliability, of the items, which captures how closely related a set of items are as a group. As most of these scales were previously proven reliable by other researchers, including ICCS and IEA CivED, I only had to remove one item from the *External Efficacy* scale to improve the reliability of that scale. In Table 2 I report the reliability of each scale using data from my sample.

Table 2

Overview of Student Survey, Sources, and Scale Reliability

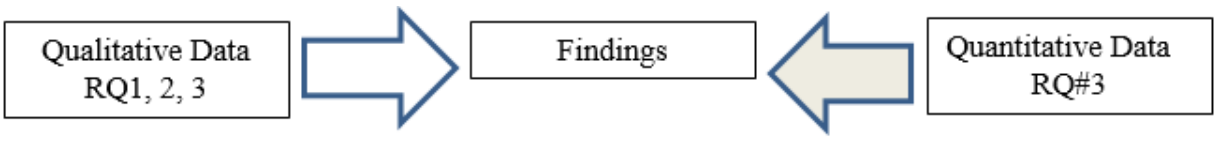
Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Source of Questions	Number of Survey Items	
			Pilot	Final
Perceptions of Democracy and Citizenship	α = .78	Schulz, et al., 2010	5	5
Attitudes Toward the United States	α = .83	Schulz, et al., 2010; Torney-Purta, et al., 2001	5	5
Equal Rights	α = .87	Schulz, et al., 2010	8	8
Political Trust	α = .90	Craig, Niemi, & Silver 1990; Schulz, et al., 2010; Torney-Purta, et al., 2001	5	5
Internal Efficacy	α = .88	Schulz, et al., 2010; Craig, Niemi, & Silver 1990; Levy, 2011	6	6
Citizenship Efficacy	α = .81	Schulz, et al., 2010	6	6
External Efficacy	α = .53	Craig, Niemi, & Silver, 1990; Levy, 2011	4	3
Collective Efficacy	α = .68	Craig, Niemi, & Silver, 1990	3	3
Conventional Citizenship	α = .79	Schulz, et al., 2010; Torney-Purta, et al., 2001	4	4
School Context	α = .87	Schulz, et al., 2010; Torney-Purta, et al., 2001	5	5
Class Context	α = .87	Schulz, et al., 2010; Torney-Purta, et al., 2001	6	6
Expected Political Participation	α = .90	Schulz, et al., 2010;Torney-Purta, et al., 2001; Levy, 2011	14	14

Data Analysis

I adopted a mixed methods approach to answer the research questions. Creswell and Clark (2007) argue that quantitative and qualitative methodologies each have their merits and limitations and utilizing both methods can provide a better understanding of the research problem than either approach alone. I used qualitative data in the form of classroom and school observations, teacher and principal interviews, and student interviews to answer research questions one and two. I explored research question three using the aforementioned methods with an additional quantitative portion in the form of a survey. Specifically, I adopted the exploratory sequential mixed methods design, which involves a two-phase approach that begins with qualitative data, to explore a phenomenon, and then builds to a second, quantitative phase (Creswell, Plano Clark, et al, 2003). Often, researchers adopting this design use the results of the qualitative phase to develop the quantitative instrument; however, I used instruments developed by researchers who have sought to capture similar aspects of students' civic and political development.

As the exploratory mixed methods design denotes, because the design begins qualitatively, a greater emphasis is placed on the qualitative data. Additionally, I merged the qualitative and quantitative data at the conclusion of the study (Creswell, 2006; Creswell & Clark, 2007). Figure 3 represents how I explored the data:

Figure 3. Exploration of Findings



I explain the relationship between these distinct qualitative and quantitative data sets in the discussion portion of this dissertation. I utilized a series of strategies to analyze the data from observations, principal, teacher, and student interviews, and surveys.

Qualitative Data

In analyzing the qualitative data, I coded interview transcripts and observation notes during four stages. First, I read and broadly coded transcripts and field notes for words corresponding to my research questions. During the second stage of coding, I close coded to identify themes and to group the data into initial codes that reflect these themes. I then recoded the data using codes from the literature that allowed me to better answer my research questions. The final level of coding lead to findings based on the identified themes that related to the relevant research questions (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006). Next, I triangulated collected observation and interview data for emergent themes (Denzin, 1978). I used *NVivo* (QSR International, 2012) to assist with analyzing the qualitative data during the three stages of coding.

I guarded against the bias of selective perception and interpretation through triangulation. Triangulation requires collecting information from a variety of sources and using more than one method of data collection as recommended by Denzin (1978). Such triangulation minimized the possibility that the findings may result from particular measurement biases. I employed three methods of data collection: interviews, observations, and surveys. I collected data from three sources: principals, teachers, and students. I also conducted member-checks with teachers and students to validate the research findings.

Reliability is the extent to which any measuring procedure yields the same result on repeated trials. To increase reliability for my observations, I observed several classes over an extended

period to understand the overall classroom environment and spent an extended amount of time (from two to four months) in each school to capture the school ethos. Furthermore, in order to accurately represent the data, it is necessary that I share my background and perspective as a researcher because these experiences color the lens through which I see the world, and thus might have tainted my research findings (Golafshani, 2003). I share my perspective as a researcher in the following section.

Researcher perspective. My experiences in charter schools have been varied. In middle school, I attended a start-up charter school that was created by teachers and parents in my local community. The school was largely attended by middle and upper class White families and created as a means to escape the racially and socioeconomically diversifying public schools and to allow teachers to use innovative teaching methods. My mother believed the small class sizes, innovative teaching methods, controlled student population, and focus on academics would provide a better school environment than my assigned public school. I was one of the few Black students who attended the Magellan charter school, and I was acutely aware that there were no Black teachers, administrators, and very few students of color in the school. The school did not offer as many extra-curricular activities as traditional public schools and did not have the facilities, such as a football field or basketball court, to support them. When my academic performance failed to meet my mother's expectations I was allowed to return to public school for the remainder of my K-12 education.

Almost ten years after my experience at Magellan I found myself in a charter school as a teacher. My interest in civic education in charter schools resulted from my experiences as a social studies teacher at a start-up charter middle school created to educate low-income minority girls and prepare them for college. In this setting, the "no excuse" and "high expectations"

culture allowed for instruction with fewer distractions than was assumed to be present in traditional public schools; however, this culture of "whatever it takes" also lead to the silencing of teachers regarding their rights as professionals. For example, my co-workers and I worked late and completed additional assignments with no supplementary pay; we remained silent when we observed that the teachers who verbalized their concerns about "burn-out" were not invited back.

These silencing and marginalizing practices also applied to students. The "no excuse" culture led to "pushing out" undesirable, or non-culture-abiding students, many of whom were poor. The "push out" and exclusion of low-income students resulted from issues inherent within the operation and policies at my school (eg. the lack of free busing, high cost of uniforms, and the absence of a school lunch program). Furthermore, the strict school culture in which teachers and administrators were encouraged to "sweat the small stuff" promoted higher suspension rates for trivial acts of noncompliance. Despite these issues, families rushed to enroll, many seeking to escape "failing" traditional public schools. Little did they know that to access the "benefits" offered at my school, students and teachers had to possess a willingness to relinquish particular rights. Those who were unwilling to do so were not allowed to stay.

I came to this work as both an insider and an outsider. As a Black woman conducting research in predominately Black charter schools I was in many ways an insider: I formerly taught middle school social studies to Black and Brown students, attended a charter school, and taught in a "no excuse" environment. As a Black woman I was somewhat privileged to know many of the cultural experiences and expressions of students in the observed classrooms. However, there are factors that positioned me as an outsider: Although I shared a racial identification with many of the students I observed, I did not share their socioeconomic background as I have never received free or reduced lunch. Furthermore, as a graduate student who has studied civic

education in charter schools and observed teachers in training, I likely saw and heard messages of which participants were not aware. With this, my perspectives and experiences intersected with those of the students and teachers who I observed and interviewed, but in other ways they were quite different.

Furthermore, my presence in the classroom changed the dynamics of the classroom. On several occasions I was called on to "fact check" information for a teacher, allow a teacher to use the restroom, make copies, or supervise the class while the teacher talked to a student in the hallway. Mr. James asked me to "fact check" on a consistent basis whereas Ms. Hampton did not interact with me often. When students worked independently, I often walked around the classroom to gather information on their assignments. During these walks, students would ask me for help and I always assisted them. As time passed, teachers and students would greet me by name throughout the day. I also noticed how much I was changing as I became more comfortable in the schools. When students were supposed to be silent in the hallways, I "shhhed" talking students or shook my head to show disapproval of students' failure to meet the expectation. Often, I would type my observation notes in the teachers' lounge, where I created relationships with several teachers and administrators.

Quantitative Data

Prior to beginning the quantitative data analyses I screened for missing data and abnormalities (skewness and kurtosis) (Kline, 1998; Osborne & Waters, 2002) and excluded outlying cases from the analysis (Osborne & Waters, 2002). I excluded missing data per case. For the analysis I first computed scale reliability analyses (Cronbach's alpha co-efficients) dropping one item to obtain adequate reliability. Then I examined student responses to the *Civic Attitudes Survey* using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation for each item). In

addition to item-level descriptive statistics, in order to investigate differences related to demographic variables, I calculated and compared means for different sub-groups using *t*-tests and one-way ANOVAs for each item. I ran one-way ANOVAs, at the item level, to explore potential mean differences between individuals of different genders and between students with different free and reduced price lunch status. I ran one-way ANOVAs at the item level and *t*-tests to find potential differences in students' responses by school. I conducted all statistical analyses with the help of *Statistical Package for Social Sciences software* (SPSS), version 22.0. I report results of the analysis in Chapter IV.

Reciprocity

All of the principals and students who participated in this project were helpful and cooperative. Everyone willingly offered their time during their planning periods, after school, or over the weekend when we met at coffee shops to complete interviews. In exchange for their valuable time, I attempted to find ways to support schools' and teachers' goals beyond teaching. Due to my extended presence in the schools, I was invited to be on a team of Education First school evaluators in which I visited the elementary, middle, and high schools in the area and shared in constructive conversations about how schools could meet their goals. I provided Mr. Jones with teaching materials to use in his U.S. history class at his new school. I edited Mr. Ali's business school personal statement and supported him through the process in the ways that I could. I stayed later after school with Ms. Hampton and helped her evaluate students' projects. Most importantly, I was in discussion with principals and teachers about my research findings. We engaged in critical discussion that could positively impact their teaching practice and therefore created additional opportunities for the students they teach. On my last day of observation, I hosted a Krispy Kreme doughnut party in which I thanked all the students in the

class and especially thanked those who participated in interviews. I gave all three teachers a gift card to a local restaurant and thanked them in front of their classes.

Limitations

The scope of the proposed study included four charter middle schools that were all members of the same network during one school year. Therefore, generalizations to other sites cannot be made. Another potential limitation is that the sample over represents Black American students and under represents other underserved groups such as Hispanic and low-socioeconomic status students of other races and ethnicities; this reduces the external validity of the research. One logical way to improve the external validity of this study's finding would be to replicate the study in another network of charter schools in various geographic areas and different communities throughout the United States in the future.

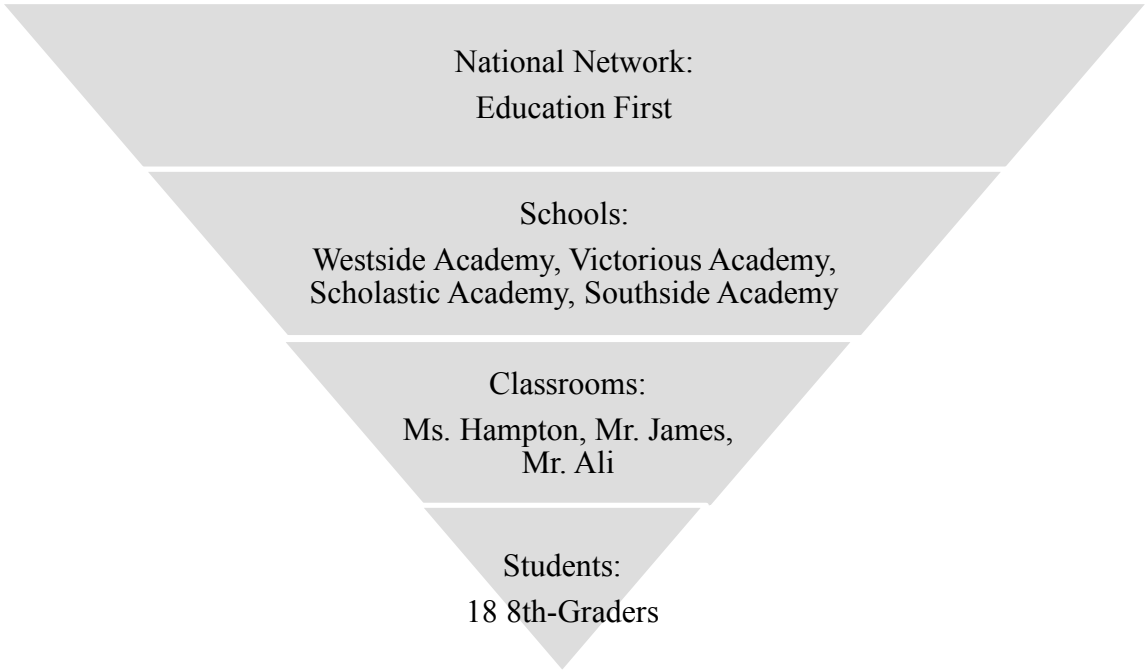
Chapter IV: Findings

I used several sources of data for this study. First, I observed school culture and social studies classroom instruction. Second, I interviewed teachers, students, and school leaders, and conducted informal interviews with parents and other stakeholders. Third, I administered a survey to students. Collectively, data from these multiple sources assisted in answering the following research questions:

1. How do "no excuse" charter schools prepare students for democratic citizenship? How does the "no excuse" approach vary in different schools?
2. How does the intended, implemented, and received curriculum in social studies classes prepare students for citizenship?
3. How do students attending "no excuse" charter middle schools conceive of and enact their roles as current citizens and imagine their roles as future citizens? What are students' civic and political attitudes, and current and projected civic/political behaviors? How do those attitudes and behaviors vary by gender, socio-economic status, and school?

The following findings reflect the ways in which four "no excuse" charter schools within the same network sought to prepare students to assume their roles as citizens of their school, communities, and the nation. These findings also offer a glimpse into three social studies classes within the same network and the ways the teachers and students in those classes experienced civic education. Eighteen eighth-grade students, six from each class, offered additional information about their current and projected political participation, much of which was influenced by what they learned in class. In discussing the findings, I will use a funnel model, in which I explore the findings as they relate to the larger context, the national network, and trickle down to the individual student. Figure 4 depicts how I present the findings:

Figure 4. Presentation of Findings.



I begin by addressing the first research question and describing the Education First network. I explore the similar ways in which the four schools implemented the national model and how they varied in their approach to citizenship education. I also discuss the unique qualities of each school. Next, I explore research question two and describe three teachers and their classroom practices and lessons. Then, I answer the third research question and highlight students' experiences in and out of the classroom and how they envision their current and future civic participation. Finally, I present additional themes that emerged from the data analysis and present elements I could not answer using the collected data.

Education First Inputs and Outcomes

Before discussing the outcomes of Education First schools, it is important that I provide background information. I explore the inputs of Education First schools as they relate to funding, teachers and staff, and school leadership.

Funding

Beginning like most start-up charter schools struggling for supplies and funding, Education First has moved far beyond its roots and is now a thriving corporation. Like all public charter schools, Education First is supported by public dollars and has the additional freedom to accept unlimited amounts of private funding. Backed by major corporations and wealthy philanthropists, Education First has more financial backing than traditional public schools. Also, unlike many public charter schools where teachers and administrators are paid less than traditional public schools (Harris, 2006; Texas Association of School Boards, 2008), Education First seeks to compensate employees for additional work. Education First acknowledges that their model, which includes longer hours in school, requires supplementary funding and have estimated that reaching their goals requires $1,000 to $1,500 in added funding per student.

Using the national federal dataset on school finance for the 2007-2008 academic year researchers found that Education First received more per student in combined revenue, $12,731 per pupil, than any other comparison group; the national average for funding for students in all schools was $11,937 and the national charter average $9,579 (Miron, Urschel, & Saxton, 2011). An additional analysis revealed that Education First schools collected more private funding than the federal dataset reported, "Combining public and private sources of revenue, Education First received, on average, $18,491 per pupil. This is $6,500 more per pupil than what the local school districts received in revenues" (Miron, Urschel, & Saxton, 2011, p. ii). According to the Education First Report Card (2013) the schools participating in this study received between $7,907 and $8,995 per pupil for the 2012-2013 academic year, which is similar to the amount received by the associated public school district. However, an equity audit conducted by the city where the schools are located in the same year reported that the charter schools in the district

received approximately $15,000 per student which was about $3,500 more per student than the nearby traditional public schools; notably, the audit did not share financial information for individual schools (Fortner, Faust-Berryman, & Keehn, 2014).

Teachers

Teachers in Education First schools work more days and longer hours than teachers in nearby public schools, and they are required to be available for homework help by phone until nine o'clock each evening, including weekends. Education First teachers are compensated more than teachers in the associated traditional public school district. This compensation varies by district, but Education First teachers in the city in which this study took place were compensated 20 percent more than traditional public school teachers. One teacher, Ms. Hampton, who taught at another "no excuse" school, shared that the additional pay attracted her to Education First. In her previous school, the additional work came with more hours and responsibilities and the same pay as the teachers in the associated school district. For her, working at Education First was more "humane" (O2:W)[5].

Like many charter school teachers, Ms. Hampton was not certified. Using information from the Schools and Staffing Survey of 1999–2000, Harris (2006) found that charter school teachers had fewer advanced degrees, less experience, and were less likely to be certified than traditional public school teachers. Also, the close relationship that Education First, and many "no excuse" schools, has with Teach for America (TFA) might contribute to the higher numbers of

[5] This coding system includes observation notes and interview data. Observation notes are denoted using "O" and the following number indicates the numerical order of the observation. The letter following the colon indicates the name of the school at which the observation took place. This citation refers to the second observation at Westside Academy. Interviews are indicated by PI (Principal Interview), TI (Teacher Interview) and SI (Student Interview) and after the colon an associated number indicates each individual. PM (Parent Meeting) and NSI (non-structured interview) are used to indicate these events.

novice and uncertified teachers. The network website advertised that 33% of their teachers are from TFA (Frequently Asked Questions, 2015). In this study, five of the seven teachers and principals I interviewed began teaching with TFA.

Education First teachers are supported in improving their practice and are offered constant professional development, particularly around behaviors that the network values: classroom management, Common Core literacy standards alignment, test-preparation, and college-readiness. Teachers in all four schools in this study frequently attended workshops or professional development opportunities. For example, Education First holds a yearly national conference three weeks before the beginning of the school year. During the summer of 2014 teachers and administrators from all four schools boarded a bus and headed to the conference. This event offered workshops, materials, motivational speeches, and concerts from award-winning recording artists.

School Leaders

Having invested so much in the professional development of their teachers, Education First recruits administrators from and trains within the Education First network. Of the four principals participating in this study, all four started as deans or teachers within the network and were eventually promoted to school leaders. Two principals, Mr. Jackson and Mr. Pryor, matriculated from the classroom to founding Victorious Academy and Westside Academy, respectively. Aggressive efforts toward national growth have necessitated leadership training programs in which potential candidates are trained to lead and found Education First Schools (Frequently Asked Questions, 2015).

Potential leaders are enrolled in a yearlong residency that prepares them to effectively run a school. They attend classes at some of the top business schools in the nation, observe other

Education First schools, and attend an intensive four-week training. At the end of the program each leader is evaluated on 11 skills including critical thinking, communication skills, key personal attributes, and prior experience with disadvantaged students. Once a school opens, the foundation continues to provide professional development to the school leader, teachers, and support staff (Newstead, Saxton, & Colby, 2008). Fifty percent of Education First leaders are recruited from TFA (Teach for America and Education First: Where great school teachers become great school leaders, 2014). Three of the four school leaders in this study were TFA alumni. Much of Education First's success has been attributed to its leadership training programs. Because of the popularity of this particular network of schools they have become the archetype of all that is right and all that is wrong with the charter school movement. In the following section, I explore Education First's outcomes relating to national perceptions, and debates, about students' academic and behavioral outcomes.

Academic outcomes. Education First has explicit goals based on student achievement and is nationally recognized as a viable method of getting low-income and minority students to college. A recent study conducted by Mathematica, an independent research firm, shows that Education First provides a significant learning boost to middle school students in multiple subjects but mostly reading and math (Tuttle, Gill, Knechtel, Nichols-Barrer, & Resch, 2013). All four Education First schools in this study scored slightly higher than the local school districts on state accountability tests in particular areas, especially reading (Barge, 2012; Education First Report, 2013). However, as a national network, Education First's results vary.

Studies have found that although Education First serves more low-income students than public school peers, it serves fewer special education students and English language learners (Tuttle, et. al, 2013). This was true for the four schools in this study. Additionally, the Education

First network has often been accused of "creaming" students by selectively admitting high-performing students (Horn, 2011). Others accuse the network of automatically being selective because families choose to attend charter schools unlike traditional public schools which serve all assigned students (Nichols-Barber, Gill, Gleason, & Tuttle, 2014). Students attending these schools usually have parents that can afford to purchase school uniforms, provide transportation, and sometimes provide lunch. The ability to do these things denotes some form of privilege. However, these issues are minimized in the schools I studied; all four schools in this study provided busing to and from school, free and reduced price lunch, and offered support for families struggling to afford uniforms.

Behavioral Outcomes

Though the network is explicitly concerned with teaching students character skills and has high behavioral expectations, it has been met with much criticism in the news. One newspaper reported that a student was suspended from school for wearing her hair in dreadlocks. Mr. Pierce, the school leader at Westside Academy, shared, "I remember when I went to New York for my leadership training at the summer institute and this Black leader wouldn't allow his kids to have dreads or braids. Oh! We got into it!" (PI-W). None of the school leaders in the four schools I studied supported policies such as these. Although each school leader has the freedom and flexibility to choose which additional rules to implement in order to meet the non-negotiable network goals, when one Education First school gets bad publicity, it is rarely presented as a one-off case.

Four-Education First Schools

Within the Education First national network, the four schools I studied served comparable student populations and implemented the national model similarly. Yet, they differed

in their approach toward democratic citizenship. In this section, I describe the setting in which the study took place and then I explain the varied ways each school approached democratic citizenship. The setting described below details the schools, their cultures, and the social studies curriculum within the four Education First Schools in this study.

Schools

The city in which this study took place is widely known as a city of Black political leadership, entrepreneurship, and wealth. Yet, the local public schools have been marred with "failure" and scandal. With the implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, historically Black schools that were the pride of many local alumni were labeled as "failing." In recent years many of the public schools throughout the city did not make Adequate Yearly Process (Barge, 2011a) and did not graduate a considerable portion of their students (Barge, 2011b). With this, Education First strategically opened schools in areas with high concentrations of poverty and traditional public school "failure."

The first Education First school that opened in the city was Westside Academy (2003), followed by Southside Academy (2004), Victorious Academy (2004), and Scholastic Academy (2010). All four schools in this study opened in former traditional public elementary schools that closed due to low-enrollment and budget cuts (Public Schools, 2012). By 2014, all the schools, which started as middle schools, expanded to include elementary schools. Due to the small size of Education First schools, the elementary and middle schools share the same building. The schools are situated in relatively similar neighborhoods that vary slightly socio-economically.

Three observation notes depict images of the schools and the surrounding neighborhoods. During my first visit to Westside Academy I wrote:

> On the way to school this morning I saw a sign that said, "Save our Youth!" spray-painted on the side of an abandoned building. There are lots of abandoned buildings in this neighborhood. The houses are dilapidated and boarded-up. There was a small corner store that was opened. A stray dog walked alongside the street (O2:W).

Westside Academy appeared as an oasis. It was the only building in the surrounding three blocks that had not been neglected and was buzzing with life and possibility.

Victorious Academy served the most economically disadvantaged group of students, as 97% of its student body received free or reduced-price lunch. Additionally, it had the oldest, and least maintained building. The facilities were crumbling. After my first visit, I wrote:

> When I drove in the school parking lot I noticed it had gaping holes in the cement. They were approximately a foot deep and there were several of them. It recently rained and the holes are filled with water. It seemed as if the school facilities hadn't been well maintained (O1:V).

In contrast, during my first visit to Southside Academy, which is the only school that is located outside the city limits, I wrote:

> The school was housed in an older, well-kept community. The houses were most one-story, four-sided, brick homes that appeared to have been built in the '60s or '70s. All the lawns were mowed. The school building was located in the center of a residential neighborhood. From the architectural style, it also appeared to have been built in the '70s (O2:S).

After several visits to Southside Academy, my Global Positioning System (GPS) guided me to use a different route to the school due to a traffic accident. Upon following these directions, I discovered a trailer park that was less than two-blocks from the school. The homes in this trailer

park looked condemned, but housed several Hispanic families. Principal Richards said that Southside Academy had intentionally recruited families from that neighborhood and eight students from the trailer park community had enrolled in the school. Southside Academy had the highest percentage of Hispanic students, eight percent, whereas the other three schools enrolled two percent or less.

Each of the four Education First school buildings touted two names on the signs posted in the yards in front of the schools; the name of the former public school is etched in brick, and the Education First name is either reflected in a screen or posted on a sign. Allowing the former school name to remain appears as a way to pay homage to the closed public school that was once housed in the building. This seems important to the local community in which many natives graduated from the city's public schools and the schools themselves are community landmarks. It is often a point of pride for local citizens to name the elementary, middle, and high school they graduated from; in this transient city, natives are often proud to be from the area and to have attended its schools.

This predominately Black public school district graduated many Black leaders of the Civil Rights Movement. Today, parents who choose Education First as an alternative to the traditional public schools feel fortunate to have another option. While attending an Education First parent meeting, a mother shared her story:

> My son started Education First in third grade. In tenth grade I took him out. We all know the kids at Education First talk about the discipline and they say, 'They're too strict', 'I just want to leave'. But [after leaving Education First] my son was like, 'Can I go back?' …I have so many of my family members who ask, 'Why do you have him at that school?' and not, like, their kids are at [the public schools many locals attended]. This

> was my best fit. This was the best fit for my son, and until he left Education First he didn't realize it. He just felt lost at a [traditional] public school (PM:1).

Stories like this were common amongst parents, students, and teachers. Many expressed feeling grateful or lucky to be attending an Education First school and to have "gotten out" of the otherwise failing city school system (SIW:1). Even though the traditional public schools throughout the city were updating their buildings, parents were attracted to the safe environment and educational opportunity at Education First charter schools.

Although the outside of most of the schools were old, the insides buzzed with color, positive-affirmations, murals, and college banners. The hallways of each school were painted in their respective school colors and adorned with similar signs. Common words and slogans such as "grit," "no excuses," and "college bound" could be found in every school. There were also several bulletin boards dedicated to displaying academic data. Homework averages for each grade were posted at Westside Academy; Scholastic Academy displayed the percentages of students in different advisories[6] that had improved scores since their last Benchmark test; and Southside placed students' admission letters from private boarding schools behind a glass case.

Culture

All administrators, teachers, and students must agree to four pillars which characterize Education First schools. The pillars are: 1) high-expectations, 2) more time, 3) focus on results, and 4) choice and commitment. These pillars were displayed in all four schools participating in this study and contributed to very similar, strong, and pervasive cultures. At each Education First

[6] Education First's "advisory" is similar to many middle and high schools homeroom classes in which students are assigned to one teacher throughout their middle school matriculation. The advisories offer academic and social support for students.

school everyone knows exactly what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. In describing each pillar I use observation data to describe how each played out in the life of the four schools.

High expectations. First, high expectations is demarcated as:

> Having clear and measurable high expectations for academic achievement and conduct that make no excuses based on the students' backgrounds. Students, parents, teachers, and staff create and reinforce a culture of achievement and support through a range of formal and informal rewards and consequences for academic performance and behavior (*Frequently Asked Questions*, 2015).

Before the school year began, all students attended a two week "culture week," which oriented students to Education First expectations. Culture week was lightly referred to as the "Education-matizing" or "legal hazing" of students by teachers and administrators. Throughout culture week, students earned their right to a desk, chair, classroom, and to wear the school colors. In all four schools, students learned similar information such as the history of Education First, school chants, how to walk in a line, and what it means to be silent. Students were required to arrive on time each day and participate in various activities to earn points. When students collectively earned enough points, they would gain privileges; therefore, every student was invested in helping their group earn privileges. Whenever a student was late or absent, their advisory received a point deduction. Parents were held fully responsible for ensuring their child's attendance at all aspects of culture week. For example, a father came to pick his daughter up early for a dentist appointment. He was informed that taking her out of school would mean that her advisory would be penalized. After pleading from his daughter, and the assistant principal, he decided to let her finish the day.

Using observation notes from three of the four schools, I display several important aspects of culture week. At Westside Academy:

> I walked into the room and saw students sitting on the floor. These students all have on white t-shirts or colored shirts with no Education First logo. The teachers are standing around the room surrounding the students. They are all equidistant apart at about 7 feet between each teacher. The students are handed a "morning work" sheet that has the Westside Academy logo in the left hand corner and is titled "reading comprehension skills" (O5:W).

As new students trickled into the room, many appeared nervous and amazed to approach such a silent space. They were individually greeted by a teacher who firmly told them to get a worksheet and sit on the floor. Each student found his or her place on the floor and began working. The students then experienced an entire day of instruction on how things are done at Westside Academy:

> Mrs. Masset tells the students that they can earn their chairs today by responding to three attention-getters properly and learning how to transition. She tells them about "1,2,3" in the classroom. When the teacher says "one" that means to gather your materials and place them in a neat stack on your desk, look around your area and pick up trash, track the teacher and let them know you are ready. *The students stack up their materials.* "Two" means to stand up silently and push in your chair and stand behind your chair with your materials in your hands. She reminds the students they don't have chairs yet "We are trying to get them" but just stand with your materials in your hands. *The students do as they are told. One young man forgets to pick up his materials. Several people come help him understand that he needs to pick up his stuff.* "Three" when the teacher calls your

> group, section, row, etc…silently line up in designated area. "Binders should be in front of your body." Mrs. Masset then reviews what she just taught the students by asking, "What does it mean to get on one" and so on and so forth. *They repeat this several times* (O5:W).

Throughout culture week students practiced these routines repeatedly. If one student did not reach the expectation, all the students had to re-do whatever was being asked. In another example, students at Southside Academy struggled for three days to earn their advisories because their lines were not "quite right":

> The students are inside the classroom. They stand behind their desks. They are silent. Soldiers. They are to line up. Girls on one side. Boys on another side. The boys begin to walk out. As the boys walk out a girl falls in line between each boy. The pacing is perfect. Teachers are commenting on the lines. When there is too much distance between two students she says "tighten up." When the lines are evenly distributed she says "very good." This whole transition has occurred and no one has talked (O8:SF).

The students in this class lined up over-and-over, until the line was perfect; each student equidistant apart, hands by their side, and silent. In addition to learning school routines, such as how to line-up, use the restroom, and ask a question, students were also introduced to the merit and demerit system.

Victorious Academy, though often culturally relevant in language and pedagogy, as I will show later, still adopted the national practice of having students earn their right to a chair and to wear school colors and logos. Instead of having to earn rights to their advisories, students at Victorious Academy worked to earn membership into their "village." While visiting their culture week I observed students learning more about the behavioral expectations and the merit and

demerit system. As students sat on the tile floor for hours, teachers lead a lesson in character training and behavioral expectations for eighth grade students:

> "Raise your hand if last year you got a deduction." *Every hand goes up.* "Raise your hand if you got an incentive." *Almost every hand goes up*. The teacher says, "We are all about giving privileges, we are also about taking them away if you do not meet expectations…We don't care if it is happening, we care how it looks." She gives an example of a student's mouth moving and explains that if it looks like students are talking they will get a demerit. "In life, it is all about how it looks…if you are standing over a dead body with blood on your hands, what are people going to think? Perception is reality…we are going to prepare you for looking like you are doing the right things and looking like you are meeting the expectation" (O3:V) .

Students were then provided with a worksheet in which they learned that they would be given a weekly paycheck of $40.00 and they would receive incentives, or increases in pay, or deductions, decreases in pay, based on their behavior. Students could earn incentives for being respectful, on-task, or showing leadership. Deductions were given for disrespect, playing in the hall or bathroom, disorganization, and unpreparedness. At the end of the lesson teachers reminded students that the amount they earned for their paycheck was "all on them." Students then chanted "It's all on me!" several times at the conclusion of the lesson.

More time. The second pillar, more time, is described as "having no shortcuts when it comes to success in academics and life. An extended school day, week, and year offer students more time in the classroom to acquire the academic knowledge and skills that will prepare them for competitive high schools and colleges" (*Frequently Asked Questions*, 2015). At the conclusion of culture week, students arrived for the first day of school a week earlier than

traditional public school students. After establishing such a strong culture during culture week, the first day of school ran smoothly. Westside Academy ran like a machine. The students arrived at school proudly wearing their newly earned shirts. Students' grade levels were indicated by the color of their shirt. The school leader stood at the door and greeted every student with "Good morning!" and a handshake. Each student had already learned to give a proper handshake during culture week; each gave a firm shake and looked the principal directly in the eye. Three-weeks later, when I visited Victorious Academy, I observed a similar routine:

> Mr. Jackson greeted every student as they walked in. He shook their hands. Many students he greeted by name. When greeting the students he also praised them. Each student on the soccer team was congratulated for their big win and encouraged to continue to play next year. One young man did not look Mr. Jackson in the eye while he shook his hand. Mr. Jackson stopped the flow of the line and said, "Look me in the eyes young man. Be strong!" Another student jokingly responded, "He's weak." Mr. Jackson replied to me, "He just joined us seven months ago and he's still learning how to build others[7]" (O1:V).

After greeting the school leader, students were stopped at a "uniform station" in which an assistant principal checked their uniforms and instructed them to take off their "outer wear."[8] Students pulled up their pants to show the administrator their socks, as many students broke the dress code by wearing decorative socks, and tucked in their shirts before the first bell rang at 7:20 a.m. The middle school schedule was very complicated and changed on a daily basis in

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[7] "Building others" was a school value that included saying positive and affirming words to build the esteem of other students.

[8] Outer wear is any article of clothing that did not have an Education First logo or otherwise did not meet the dress code requirements.

order to provide teachers and students additional time in every class once per week. Each class lasted 55 minutes. Students were required to take two math classes, two reading/language arts classes, and one enrichment class in addition to one lesson each in science and social studies. When school dismissed at 5:00 p.m., very few students stayed to participate in afterschool activities. As a result of the extended school day, Education First schools include students' extra-curricular activities, or "enrichment" as a part of the school day. Between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. students participate in an extra-curricular activity of their choice. The available activities varied by school, as teachers agreed to teach an additional class in which they shared an interest. These classes included robotics, arts and crafts, music recording, African studies, and student government.

Students, teachers, and parents all showed some concern about the long school day. One first-year TFA teacher told me that Kindergarten students slept on the bus that the elementary and middle school students rode. Teachers often complained of burn-out and Mr. Ali cited this as a reason he planned to change his career path. However, one parent supported the long school day and said it prepared students to be successful in the working world, "If they can go to school from seven to five working a nine to five won't be nothing!" (PM:1). Her comment was met with laughter and nods of approval from several other parents. The long school day stood in stark contrast to the experience of traditional public school students. There were several times I finished an observation of a first period class and left to observe another school. As the Education First students transitioned to their second period class, the traditional public school students walked to their bus stops. Leaving the school before the end of the school day, I was especially observant of children from nearby schools who played outside or walked to the corner store with their friends.

Focus on results. Focus on results was the third pillar, which posited, "Just as there are no shortcuts, there are no excuses. Students are expected to achieve a level of academic performance that will enable them to succeed at the nation's best high schools and colleges" (Frequently Asked Questions, 2015). Teachers and administrators constantly focused on results in the classroom and throughout the school. Teachers were responsible for collecting data on how many students turned in their homework. Homework was only accepted if it was signed by a parent. Students who did not turn in their homework for a particular class had to immediately call their parents and inform them of their failure to complete the assigned worked. Ms. Hampton often spent the first few minutes of class in the hallway with students who needed to call home. Homework data were reported during weekly school assemblies. A schoolwide "Monday morning meeting" at Victorious Academy depicted this experience:

> The eighth grade teacher addresses the students and shares that eighth grade had 92 percent homework completion. The students do the "McDonalds cheer" in which they sing the McDonald's slogan "Ba da da da da…I'm loving it!" The 7th grade has a 97 percent homework rate. The students and teachers sound really excited about that completion rate. 5th graders have a 94 percent completion rate. Sixth grade comes in first with 99 percent. She shares that only one student didn't do their homework in the grade (O2:V).

Data were also collected and reported on classroom test results and school-wide benchmarks. Expectations were immediately set for where students should aim to reach. All data collection was explicitly connected to college attendance. In addition to college banners adorning the walls, as in all Education First schools, each teacher's classroom was named after a college. Students and teachers were only allowed to wear college regalia when they wore other than Education

First approved clothing. During culture week, students at Victorious Academy learned the "fight song" of each of their teachers' alma maters. On the first day of school at Westside Academy Mr. Pierce addressed the student body:

> "There is a goal that starts today. And that is to get everyone of you to and through college." He then asked the students, "What year are you going to go to college?" A fifth grade student stood and answered, "I am going to go to college in 2022!" (O5:W).

Every Education First student, even kindergarteners, could name the exact year they would graduate from college.

Choice and commitment. Fourth, the choice and commitment pillar states, "Students, parents, and faculty choose to participate in the program. No one is assigned or forced to attend an Education First school" (Frequently Asked Questions, 2015). Students were constantly made aware that attending an Education First school is a privilege that not everyone gets. If they, or their families, were not pleased with their experience, they could choose another school. The undercurrent of choice was pervasive. Students, parents, and teachers have to sign a yearly contract. The student contract commits students to several expectations including arriving to school on time, wearing the correct uniform, taking responsibility for their own actions, and upholding the Education First character traits in and out of school. The parent contract includes getting their child to school on time, assisting with homework or allowing their child to remain at school for additional support, volunteering, and taking responsibility for their child's behavior. Finally, the teacher contract includes similar commitments and contains additional statements such as, "I am committed to results," "I make myself available to students, parents, and fellow staff members via phone in the evenings," and, "I am committed to my professional growth and

constant learning. I offer and accept feedback regularly and seek out professional development opportunities."

Curriculum and Social Studies

The emphasis that Education First places on test-performance colored the curriculum. Though each school had a slightly different curricular aim, they were alike in their focus on state standards and Common Core standards in mathematics and literacy. Students took two hours of each math and reading, and only one hour of social studies each day. In the hallways, posted data were never on social studies; however, many social studies projects were displayed. Additionally, the national Education First website reported school-performance data for science, math, and English/Language Arts, but did not report social studies scores. Considering this, I concluded that social studies achievement was not a priority within the network.

Like traditional public school students throughout the state, eighth graders in Education First schools learned state history. This included learning about state geography, economics, government, and history. Each of the three teachers participating in this study critiqued the standards for being too narrow because the eighth grade social studies standards only focused on state history. They all reframed the direction of the curriculum and thus considered the course an American history course with a focus on the state.

School Culture and Citizenship

The following findings reflect the ways in which school ethos contributed to the civic education of students. First, I describe the unique qualities of each school to answer the first part of research question one: "How does the "no excuse" approach vary in different Education First schools?" Second, I explore the ways in which the overall "no excuse" model related to civic

goals thus attending to the second part of the research question "How do "no excuse" charter schools prepare students for democratic citizenship?"

Westside Academy: Work Hard. Play Hard. As the oldest of the four Education First schools, students and teachers at Westside Academy had school pride and distinguished their school from the other Education schools as being "more fun." The school leader, Mr. Pierce, played an important role in establishing this school culture. He expressed that his goal was to create a family environment among students, staff, and parents. Mr. Pierce explained,

> I try to push relationship building between staff members, students, and parents, one that's built on respect, trust, and a little bit of fun. We're definitely a school where we want the students to enjoy being here. We try to put things in place so they are having fun (PI:W).

Although many Education First schools have a reputation for being strict and somewhat militaristic in their daily routines and practices, Westside Academy was more flexible. Although the students at Westside were still required to walk in precisely straight lines and to sit in complete silence during assemblies, they were often permitted to sing, chant, and dance at various points in the school day.

Westside Academy held a weekly Monday morning meeting. During these meetings Principal Pierce lead the teachers and students in an assembly in which they shared their successes and opportunities for improvement. Principal Pierce posted each grade's homework average, recognized areas for student improvement both academically and behaviorally, and gave "shout-outs" to students who had successes throughout the week. The following observation note depicts how students learned to create such a joyous culture:

> Mrs. Dallas leads a presentation on "attention getters and praise." She tells the students, "Here at Westside, we don't do a lot of 'please stop talking, please be quiet'." She tells the students that we will do attention getters. She introduces the first attention getter. She shouts, "Westside 1-2-3." Students reply, "SLANT 1-2-3, say it, do it, BOOM!" When they say "BOOM!" all students are to be quiet and not moving. The entire auditorium practices this four times. *The students appear to be having fun*. Next, Mrs. Dallas teaches the students a call and response that is done through clapping. She claps in a certain pattern, the students respond by clapping back in a complementary pattern. To practice, Mrs. Dallas allows the students to talk. Suddenly, she claps. When she claps all of the students immediately stop talking (O5:W).

These norms were not only useful in the morning meeting, but teachers used these norms in their classrooms. For example, when the energy in the classroom declined, a teacher might suddenly shout, "What time is it?" and the students would respond, "Learning time!" and then jump up from their chairs and dance around the room singing the remainder of the song. When the song ended everyone returned to their seats and continued the lesson as if there was no interruption. Though all four Education First schools had some elements of joy, Westside Academy embodied this principle in all aspects of the school, which made Westside seem especially spirited.

Southside Academy: Scholarly Habits. College Bound. Southside Academy was founded soon after Westside Academy. As the oldest two of the four Education First Schools, these schools had the strongest school cultures. In discussing the culture at Southside Academy it is important to distinguish it from the other three schools in some very important ways. First, Southside Academy was the only one of the three schools that was not in the city school district.

Southside Academy was located in the nearby county district, which fared better than the city school district on state test scores, student drop-out rates, and student attendance. Also, Southside Academy served a slightly more advantaged population of students. Southside Academy had only 67 percent of students who received free or reduced lunch and less than four percent who required special services, as compared to 90% and 5%, respectively, for the other schools.

As described by the school leader, Mr. Richards, and echoed by principals in the other participating schools, Southside Academy is known as the "bourgeois school." Mr. Richards shared, "We have parents who drive here in the nicest Mercedes Benz and Lexus. We have some parents who really are doing well for themselves. I would definitely say that and we also have parents who are struggling."

Although all Education First schools stated in their charters that they are committed to serving low-income minority students, many are starting to see an influx of Black middle-class families who are seeking improved educational opportunities. Southside Academy and Scholastic Academy were located near a historically Black neighborhood that used to, and still somewhat does, house many of the city's Black professionals. Perhaps Southside's more middle-class student population contributed to the ways in which they adapted the Education First model to better suit their students' and parents' needs.

Although Southside Academy, and Scholastic Academy, also used some of the basic principles outlined by Education First, they relaxed their implementation of these policies. For example, students were expected to walk in silent lines when walking to lunch. Otherwise, they were allowed to transition to and from classes freely, and they were also permitted to talk. Also, teachers and administrators still used some of the Education First language, such as SLANT or

"track the speaker," yet they focused more on academic behaviors that supported college-readiness and less on order. Mr. Richards recognized that when the eighth grade students graduate and go to high school they would not be expected to walk in lines or to be silent in the hallway. Considering this, his goal was to create an atmosphere where students can prepare to be successful in environments where they have choices and make decisions.

Also, at Southside Academy, the Education First uniform seemed to take on a different connotation. Where Westside and Victorious Academy had uniform checks to ensure students were not in uniform violation, at Southside Academy the uniform policy was more relaxed. The uniform appeared to embody a social status symbol similar to private school uniforms, rather than to promote conformity as it did in other Education First schools.

Scholastic Academy: Be Calm. Be Positive. Scholastic Academy was the newest of the four Education First schools. The founding school principal, Nicholas Lee, created a school culture that improved upon some of the issues he noticed in other Education First schools. For example, Principal Lee implemented a strict "no yelling" policy in which teachers and administrators were required to redirect student behavior in particular ways. He explained that in order to get positive outcomes from students, adults must first approach students in a kind and respectful manner. His goals were met. The calm nature of Scholastic Academy was pervasive. The current principal, Ms. Williams, who was a founding Dean under Lee's leadership, continued this practice.

Though many policies at Scholastic Academy were similar to typical Education First schools, the ways that the policies were implemented created a more respectful environment. For example, a student would still receive consequences for wearing improper earrings to school, but the teacher writing the student a demerit would be intentional about being kind and respectful

throughout the process. For teachers at Scholastic Academy, treating students well was part of their job. Principal Williams said,

> We use non-oppressive measures within our school. So, we have a no yelling policy where the teachers are not supposed to yell. I'm not saying it doesn't happen sometimes, but if it does happen, somebody is going to have a conversation with that teacher. We talk about handling things in a positive way. We talk about building relationships with kids. That's a core part of Scholastic. You're not going to be a part of Scholastic Academy and not hear the word relationship and not hear the word calm and positive (PI-ST).

Where teachers at Westside Academy screamed chants to get students' attention, teachers at Scholastic Academy used calm and patient voices to command attention. The overall school community operated in this calm and positive fashion. Getting students to respect the school rules without yelling or giving harsh consequences required more pro-active work from school leaders. Principal Williams expressed that students are more cooperative when they have a better understanding of why the structures and procedures of the school are in place. She said,

> Once you explain to kids why you're doing something… Kids will buy into it. We talked about getting in class quickly and not disturbing other classes, which is why students are silent in the hallway. Students in the eighth grade, we want to get them ready for high school, so they don't have to be silent in the hallway. So, everything has a purpose and a reason (PI-ST).

Though Scholastic Academy used the merit and demerit behavior modification system like the other Education First schools, they also implemented additional rewards for students who do the right thing. For example, at Scholastic Academy three bells dismissed class. The first

bell informed students and teachers that it was almost time for class to end; the second bell allowed students with a "Flex Pass," a wrist band that students earn for good behavior, to leave class one minute early; and the final bell dismissed the entire class. Ms. Williams explained that systems like this prepare students for adult life, "We try to express that everything is earned. If you do good things, good things happen. If you don't do good things you are going to have consequences, those are the things that happen in real life" (PI:ST).

Victorious Academy: Be Black. Be Proud. Founding principal, Solomon Jackson, said that students are most successful when they know who they are and where they came from. For this reason, he created a school-wide Afro-centric culture in which students used African languages and customs throughout the school day. When arriving at Victorious Academy Principal Jackson greeted each student by shaking their hand and saying, "Kawula," which is a Ghanaian word that means good morning. The students respond "Kawula, Baba Kwamee." Like many of the teachers, and some students at Victorious Academy, Principal Jackson adopted an African name to use within the Victorious Academy community. "Baba," which means father, or "Mama," which means mother, was used instead of Mr. or Mrs. to address most adults in the school. Principal Jackson said that his approach was powerful because it caused students to recognize their own greatness. In an interview about his goals as a school leader Mr. Jackson expressed,

> If you don't know where you're from, you don't know where you're going…There's a war against our children….The true story is…once your DNA comes in contact with your historical legacy, your greatness, you can never be the same. You don't walk the same. You don't talk the same. [Afrocentric curriculum] is something that wakes up the

> powerful genes inside. Like whether you're African or not, you're Black in America. You came from Africa, period (PI:V).

The Afro-centric culture was pervasive. Although Victorious Academy still used the main pillars assigned to all Education First schools, they implemented additional "Victorious Values." These values were: respect (bi nki bi), unity (nkonsonkonson), positive choices (nyansapo), and fun (dono). Teachers were often heard using this language in addition to English. A teacher might instruct the class, "Do not talk while Jillian is talking. Show your sister some bi nki bi." Students used this language as well.

Like the other Education First schools, Victorious Academy used most of the same procedures to call order, transition in the hallways, or during the first five minutes of class. Education First had a "first five" policy in which students completed the same tasks in the first five minutes of every class. At Victorious Academy, teachers required students to complete the same tasks, yet they were called by different names. A customized poster on the wall reminded students what to do during the "first five" (minutes):

- Moja- Come in silently. Take your seat.
- Mbili- Write homework in your agenda.
- Tatu- Place your agenda and last night's homework on top of your desk.
- Nne- Start your do now.
- Tano- Assign yourself.

Throughout the hallways of Victorious Academy, Education First posters and slogans and college banners hung on walls much like all Education First schools; however, at Victorious Academy these posters hung on walls painted in the colors of African flags and decorated with Adinkra (Ghanaian) symbols.

Although all four Education First schools valued community and family, Victorious Academy connected the value to African culture. Whereas students at Scholastic Academy were told, "There is no I in TEAM" and "Team beats individual," students at Victorious Academy were taught that having an allegiance to your community is an African value that has resonated with people from the African Diaspora throughout time. They were taught that individualism, as a social theory, is a European value and not one that reflects the ideas of the Black community. Throughout Victorious Academy, the combination of Education First values and Afrocentric values created a unique culture.

The Civic Goals of Four Education First Schools

In exploring the second part of the research question, "How do "no excuse" charter schools prepare students for democratic citizenship?" I learned that none of the four schools had specific goals towards the preparation of citizens. The varied school cultures, or ethos, within the four schools led to different approaches to civic education. Although civic goals were not included in school mission statements or values, all four school leaders expressed that civic education was important and said they intended to do more to address it in the future. School leaders assumed that students were being civically engaged in their classrooms and by their participation in school activities such as clubs and sports.

Like most Education First schools, each school's mission statement named college entrance and academic performance as its primary goal. A modified version of each school's mission is below:

- *Scholastic Academy* equips students with the tools necessary to excel in competitive colleges and professional careers. Scholastic Academy students achieve success through rigorous instruction, virtue, and enrichment.

- It is the mission of *Westside Academy* to prepare students for top quality high schools, colleges, and the competitive world beyond by instilling in each student commitment to scholarship, teamwork, and integrity.
- The mission of *Southside Academy* is to strengthen the knowledge, skills, character, and physical fitness of students, thereby creating opportunities for success in top-notch high schools, colleges, and the competitive world beyond.
- It is the mission of *Victorious Academy* to inspire students to develop a positive vision for their future in order to become socially and environmentally responsible students who are highly successful in high school, college and beyond.

As represented in the mission statements, academic-performance was the primary focus in Education First schools, and success in competition was valued. The missions privileged neo-liberal values of competition and said nothing about preparing citizens for democracy. Students at the four Education First schools were not required to take national or state tests that were based on civic skills; thus, there was little focus on civic education.

When asked about their goals toward civic education, all of the four principals apologetically admitted that they had not thought a lot about their goals towards civic education. They each named a place within the school where they assumed students were being civically engaged. Most presumed it was within students' extra-curricular activities or social studies classrooms.

Scholastic Academy was the only one of the four schools that had an active student government and it was in its first year. Student government was offered as an enrichment class. Students who were interested in running for office signed up for the class and received guidance throughout the campaign and speech writing process. Those who were not elected remained in

the class with those who were elected. Ms. Williams expressed that the reason Scholastic Academy finally started a student government was because an English teacher expressed interest in starting one. Similarly, Mr. Pierce, of Westside Academy, said that they had a student government whenever there was a teacher who was willing to sponsor the after-school activity. It had been a few years since anyone had expressed interest but he said he thought it was a good idea to restart the organization.

Although none of the other schools had a formal student government, Mr. Jackson, or *Baba Kwamee*, established the *Futumfunafu* Society, which was a special group that was made up of selected "scholars" who exhibited the school values. Represented by an Adinkra symbol of two crocodiles that share one stomach, this society embodied the connectedness of the community. These scholars were offered leadership classes to help hone their skills. Using the crocodile as an example, Mr. Jackson explained the goals of the society,

> [I want the students to understand that] you have a choice of running whatever you want into our body, but as a leader in the school, you have to be cognizant and be responsible for what you bring in because if you're in a society of leaders, then, you affect us or you empower us. The leadership comes from within--because it's not like 'I'm the president'--because in most traditional schools, it's just like' 'All right, we're going to talk to or give speech or we're going to do this.' Here, we're actually developing a leadership, so they can impact change within the classrooms, so they can impact change within their villages. It's like working from inside out versus these presidencies and superficial titles down (PI:V).

Mr. Jackson expressed that selecting and training students who already displayed leadership was a better investment than allowing students to select their own leaders. In line with traditional

African values, leadership positions were granted to those who earned them through merit, not through popular vote.

In Education First schools, students take quarterly surveys to evaluate various aspects of the school including their teachers' performance, lunch, satisfaction with school events and assemblies, and the merit/demerit system. In schools without a student government or a leadership society these surveys served as students' primary method to express their views on school issues; the surveys, however, were more consumer oriented than about empowering citizens. In classrooms, students were sometimes permitted to vote on how class time was spent. A teacher might say to the students, "Raise your hand if you would like to watch the video and complete the worksheet for homework. Raise your hand if you would like to complete the worksheet now and skip watching the video." Otherwise, there was very little visible student input to class or school decision-making.

Finally, although all of the schools in the local (traditional public) city school district begin their day by having students recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States, none of the Education First schools in my study had students recite the pledge. However, each of them had an Education First creed and a school creed that students and teachers recited during school assemblies.

With this, in answer to my first research question asking how "no excuse" charter schools prepare students for democratic citizenship, I found that there were very few, if any, explicit messages about democratic citizenship in the four schools' cultures. Conformity, order, academic performance, and college-readiness were the pervasive goals. Additionally, I found that the four schools varied widely in their approach to implementing the "no excuse" model. This variance in implementation reflects, in large part, differences in the vision of the school

leader. In analyzing the school climate of four charter schools it was apparent that although uniformity existed in several respects (e.g. uniforms, strict school discipline policies, earned privileges), the overall climate of the school supported different dispositions within the "no excuse" environment.

Civic Education in the Classroom

In the following section I address the second research question, "How does the intended, implemented, and received curriculum in social studies classes prepare students for citizenship?" Again, three teachers participated in the classroom portion of the study as the teacher from Victorious Academy opted out of the classroom observations. First, I describe three teachers and their classrooms, relationships with students, and goals for student learning. Second, I describe the three teachers' perceptions of the social studies curriculum and how they intended to prepare students for citizenship. Next, I explore the implemented instructional strategies I observed in Mr. Ali's, Ms. Hampton's, and Mr. James' classrooms, as well as the ways teachers taught students about citizenship. Finally, I explore what students reported they received from those lessons.

Teachers' unique styles were reflected in their classrooms, interactions with students, and relationships with students. Mr. Ali desired to share his love of music with students and he sought to prepare them to recognize the oppressive societal structures in which students live. Ms. Hampton combined a warm and demanding style with an Afro-centric style. She expressed that her role as a teacher was to support students in finding their purpose. Mr. James' ultimate goal was to prepare students to assume their roles as professional adults who could perform at high levels.

Mr. Ali and his Classroom

Mr. Ali was a third-year TFA teacher who was in his second year teaching at Scholastic Academy. As a TFA teacher his first teaching assignment was in a high-poverty, high-needs, under-resourced public school in Miami-Dade County, Florida. After a year of struggling to teach under such conditions, Mr. Ali applied to Scholastic Academy to return to the city of his college alma mater. Mr. Ali originally came to Scholastic Academy to teach math but he struggled to help students meet math performance standards. Consequently, he was reassigned as a social studies teacher mid-year, having been an international studies major. The year I observed his class was his first year teaching the entire eighth grade social studies curriculum.

Mr. Ali was a tall, athletic, mid-20-year-old, Black man who seemed to be in touch with youth culture. Although he wore a collared shirt and slacks, much like the other male teachers at Scholastic, his shoes often reflected urban fashion. He wore the same fashionable sneakers as his students. He described himself as, "a laidback person in general" (TI1:ST) in which nothing seemed urgent or affected him very much. During enrichment, Mr. Ali taught a music production class in which the students created beats, wrote lyrics, and produced their own music. Mr. Ali's love of music was reflected in his classroom decor. Posters of Black music "greats" adorned the walls. In an effort to tie his love of music to the state theme, local artists such as Ray Charles and Gladys Knight and the Pips records hung from the ceilings. Additionally, portraits of black leaders such as Jesse Jackson, Maya Angelou, Bill Cosby, and Mary McLeod Bethune were posted on the walls. The only non-Blacks on the classroom walls were Abraham Lincoln and George Washington. There were also several posters listing the expectations for students. One particular poster read, "REACH: respect, enthusiasm, achievement, citizenship, hard work" (O2:ST).

Mr. Ali's classroom was in the basement of the school, which made the room especially dark. The walls were painted red, black, and green, in the colors of an African flag; however, the dark paint contributed to the overall dimness of the classroom. Spatially, there were eight rows of student desks in which three or four desks were in a row. The rows were never quite straight, and even though the classroom was well-organized, random pieces of paper on the floor and around the room made the classroom feel somewhat disheveled.

Using my experience as a teacher supervisor, I noticed Mr. Ali struggled as a classroom manager. Although he was well prepared, with detailed plans for every class, he struggled to execute those lessons due to students' lack of respectful behaviors. Mr. Ali often negotiated his behavior expectations, which enabled a few students to take advantage of the situation. He then sent several students, most of whom were Black males, out of the classroom. Still, Mr. Ali seemed to have a good relationship with many of the Black boys in his classroom and made special provisions not to write them up. Even though they were sent out of the classroom, they were always invited back. For example, after sending Shaquille out of the classroom to calm down after an outburst, Mr. Ali invited him back and sat with him while he completed his work.

When I asked Mr. Ali about Shaquille, he seemed very concerned about his struggles both academically and emotionally. Mr. Ali shared:

> I knew Shaquille would be upset because he doesn't really understand the work. I understood that. He's not going to admit that. He's not going to flat out say, 'I don't know what to do,' instead, he's going to mess with his neighbor and then, get my attention that way…I've dealt with students who are like him before (TI2:ST).

Mr. Ali wanted students to learn from his class several important ideas related to racial pride, awareness of oppressive systems, and the role that the past plays in the present:

> They may know a little bit about slavery, black history, the Civil Rights movement, Reconstruction, things like that. They don't know how it really affects them today and how it still plays a huge part in how they define themselves now. I think that's something that I want them to definitely take away from this course. Just knowing we went through all of this, but it's not over. We're still feeling the effects of many of these things today…I want them to realize that when we talk about the justice system, when we talk about the juvenile justice system, that those things of the past are still the foundation [for what happens today] (TI2: ST).

Additionally, Mr. Ali desired for students to be self-advocates. He said, "I want them to have the ability to speak up and advocate for themselves, to ask really good questions, and to be able to defend whatever they believe, verbally and in writing" (TI2:ST).

After fewer than three years of teaching in all, Mr. Ali had decided to leave the profession. He asked me to help edit his personal statement for business school. Citing the lack of financial incentives and "burnout" as his reasons for leaving teaching, he said, "I already know that I can't do this forever because you do get burnt out eventually" (TI4:ST).

Ms. Hampton and her Classroom

Teaching was Ms. Hampton's third career. After working in advertising, Ms. Hampton found herself working in the communications department for a private school that one day needed her to substitute for a suddenly sick teacher. She shared:

> They had me substitute and I was in heaven. I was hoping that the teacher would stay sick for a couple of more weeks! I asked them if I could be a teacher. They told me sure, but you're going to take a huge pay cut because you're going to have to start out as a paraprofessional. I started out as a para-professional, I did that for one year. I shadowed

> the kindergarten teacher. She was amazing. She was a master teacher and everything I learned about managing a class, I learned from her (TI1:W).

Teaching social studies seemed most appropriate considering that in college Ms. Hampton majored in sociology with a minor in psychology and it was her favorite subject. Having never gone through a teacher education program of any sort, Ms. Hampton managed to teach more than 13 years without any certification. During the time of this study, however, her school principal required Ms. Hampton to obtain certification to continue teaching at Westside Academy; therefore, Ms. Hampton participated in the state alternative certification program in the evening. Due to her non-certified status Ms. Hampton has always taught in international, private, or charter schools. Admittedly, she preferred the charter setting, "I like the autonomy that teachers are given in their classrooms. I have never met a public school teacher who was able to do that" (TI1:W). She also was motivated to complete her certification so that she could pursue leadership positions, ideally to become Dean of Students. She considered teaching her calling, and planned to retire from teaching. She shared, "I think they are going to bury me on the [school] playground with a little tree around me" (TI1:W).

Ms. Hampton's personal style was reflected in her Westside classroom. As a Black American woman who wore her hair in locks, adorned her ears with Afro-centric earrings, and wore beautiful skirts made of African cloths, it seemed fitting that her classroom was similarly decorated. The classroom walls were painted bright yellow and brown with black Adinkra symbols stamped evenly around the room. Ms. Hampton's classroom was bright and students' desks were organized in two horseshoe-shaped rows. As an artist, Ms. Hampton often drew beautiful pictures of Black faces, trees, or flowers on the board. The students appreciated the surprise of a new picture when they walked into the room. Ms. Hampton described her

relationship with students as "warm and demanding:"

> Warm is, I want you to feel comfortable. Warm is any correction that I'm giving you, I'm doing it because I want you to be better. Demanding is, you need to put forth your best effort and follow the culture in the classroom. Demanding is there are no exceptions and there are no excuses (TI2:W).

Of all the classrooms I have ever observed, Ms. Hampton's class was the most well-run. Ms. Hampton was a master teacher in terms of establishing a strong classroom culture. Students knew exactly what to do. She clarified changes to the daily plan before students entered the classroom. Although Ms. Hampton was quite strict and quick to send students out of the classroom for disrespect, failure to turn in homework, or talking while she was talking, she was fair. The following observation depicts her style:

> When some students did not bring permission slips back, she says, "So that means that you did not do your homework." One student tries to explain where it is. He says that his parents are out of town so he couldn't get it signed. Ms. Hampton holds up her hand and says, "No excuses" (O12:W).

Although Ms. Hampton required strict structure, she was always sensitive to students' needs. When students completed worksheets, she played a variety of music and often allowed the students to select what genre of music she played. When students zipped their coats and put their arms in their shirts, Ms. Hampton offered to turn down the air-conditioning without being asked. She was very aware of her students' needs and willing to make them comfortable in the ways she could. She also encouraged the use of song and dance to give students breaks throughout their academic lessons.

Ms. Hampton expressed that her goal for students, and the ultimate purpose of school,

was to help young people find their purpose and prepare for adult life. Her goal for her students was to fill in the gaps that family and formal school curricula might not provide students:

> I want them to come out with the skills to see things, analyze it, and choose what side they're on for themselves. So, I don't share my political views. I think they make assumptions just based on how I dress and my hair, but I want scholars to come out feeling like they're citizens and feeling like they have a say, not just in our country or our state, but in the world. I know it's at a lower level in eighth grade, but you'd be amazed at some of the things that come out of their mouth once they start listening. I teach because I wasn't given that in school, if I hadn't gotten it from home I don't even know who I would be right now (TI2:W).

Ms. Hampton often stayed at school until late in the evening making elaborate packets of worksheets, which often included questions, graphics, and activities that she created. She preferred to have full-control over the information and assignments she gave students. Making copies from pages in various textbooks and online sources, she essentially created her entire curriculum.

Mr. James and his Classroom

Mr. James was a second-year TFA teacher at Southside Academy who was certified through TFA's certification program. He was assigned to teach social studies because he studied comparative religions and psychology in college. During this study he was also enrolled in an online class to obtain a gifted endorsement. A young White Ivy League university graduate, Mr. James was tall and thin and often talked of his weekend marathon runs. Unlike the other male teachers at the school who varied their style, Mr. James' dress looked like a work uniform: he wore a blue collared shirt, tie, and khaki slacks every day. Mr. James did not support any after-

school activities because “the day is already long enough” (TI3:SF). He had already secured a job for the next year at a public school in a nearby county. He welcomed the shorter school day and the opportunity to teach AP high school U.S. History at the public high school. He also looked forward to teaching in the school district from which he graduated. Mr. James appeared to be a leader on the eighth grade team that was comprised of all first or second year TFA teachers. As a result of having many inexperienced teachers on the team, Mr. James emerged as the disciplinarian, or rule-enforcer, for the entire team. He said that this role prevented him from having his ideal relationship with students. Instead of being a mentor, as he would have hoped to be, “I find myself being stricter and meaner than I would generally consider myself. I think that’s how my students perceive me, strict and mean” (TI1:SF).

Southside Academy was the most dilapidated of the four school buildings and its crumbling conditions were apparent in Mr. James’ classroom. The blinds in the window were broken and many of them could not be raised. The sunlight peered through the dents in the blinds. The temperature in the room was also extremely hot or cold because the heating system was broken. During one observation, a repair man tried to fix it while students were in class. Mr. James walked by and sarcastically commented, “Everything in here is broken.” He went on to say that when he came in early that morning the power was out; neither the Internet access nor the copier worked and he was thus unable to make the copies he came in early to make. Mr. James did not add many personal touches to his classroom. There were a few Education First expectations posted around the classroom, and a banner hung above the board that read, “All of us will learn!”

Mr. James’ class was very fast paced and almost completely lecture-based. Choosing lecture as his primary source of teaching to raise test scores, Mr. James’ purposefully set up his

class to use every second to prepare for the standardized test at the end of the year. He said, "If this was a four-year class, then I wouldn't use as much lecture…So I use lecture to get them facts that they need" (TI1:SF). Mr. James' timed everything. Whenever students had an assignment to complete, he set a timer and counted down, "Ten more minutes," "30 seconds, 29, 28, 27" were constant reminders that students had to complete their assignments before time was up. Students seemed comfortable with the emphasis on time and often celebrated finishing early. Those who needed more time would plead, "One more minute! I just need one more minute!" Mr. James often honored their requests. Mr. James emphasized knowing facts, which made me feel I was watching a trivia game show.

Mr. James was sarcastic with students but somehow the students did not appear offended. In the beginning of one class he walked around the room and used one finger to tap his chin as he asked, "Which one of my irresponsible babies did not complete their morning work?" (O5:SF). Still, Mr. James held his students in high regard. He addressed all of his students by their last names as he said it helped prepare them as professionals.

Mr. James' goal for the year was for his students to understand that they are professionals who should aim to be excellent in their work because it would offer them access to more opportunities. He said,

> I would like my scholars to leave being able to speak more professionally. We work a lot on not saying "um" and "like" and "well" to start off their sentences. I would like all of my students to be comfortable reading and understanding primary sources, be it charts, graphs, pictures, political cartoons. I would like my students to be able to develop an argumentative thesis that they could use to write an essay or a paper (TI3:SF).

He also added that he wanted his students to have an acute awareness of the times in which they lived and how not much has changed over the years. As a White teacher in a predominately Black school, he felt a responsibility to make students aware that something was amiss with the context in which they were being schooled:

> It's very ironic when we cover *Brown vs. Board of Education* and school integration the fact that school segregation was declared unconstitutional; yet, we're in a school that has no White students and where our facilities don't compare to the facilities in our same county. Textbooks make us want to believe that everything is progressing and moving forward and improving but in some cases our situation isn't that much better (TI3:SF).

Mr. James was committed to taking a bit of time to "touch" on these pressing topics. However, due to his quick pacing and his sarcastic style, I am unsure if students could decipher what to trust.

In summary, all three teachers wanted their students to develop skills and behaviors to be successful in jobs and society. None mentioned acquiring insights from the context of U.S. or state history, the subject of the course they taught. Perhaps, not having majored in history or social studies education they were not skilled in using the curriculum as a springboard to develop students as critical citizens. Having very different styles, all three teachers had positive relationships with students. Two of the three teachers planned not to return to the charter school context the following year; Mr. James' planned to teach in a traditional public school and Mr. Ali intended to stop teaching altogether.

The Intended, Implemented, and Received Civic Curriculum

In the following section I address the second research question to identify the ways in which the intended, implemented, and received social studies curriculum prepared students in

three schools for citizenship. Teachers used the state social studies standards as the intended curriculum. The implemented curriculum was characterized by teachers predominately using lecture to meet their goals. Students received varied messages from their teachers. Ms. Hampton's students received her intended messages, which included awareness of political structures and racial pride. Mr. James' students recalled several stories from history lectures, specifically those involving Native-Americans. Mr. Ali's students said that he wanted them to know the geography of the state and their rights as citizens.

The Intended Curriculum

The intended curriculum refers to the expectations for what students will learn and be able to do. It is often captured in content standards, textbooks, and lesson plans. Teachers in the three Education First schools expressed that their primary intention was to teach the state social studies standards to prepare students to be successful on the state test. Their secondary goal was to prepare students to become citizens.

Standards-based instruction. Each of the three teachers I observed used the eighth grade social studies state performance standards to guide their lessons. In each classroom the standard being addressed was always posted on the board and accompanied by an essential question that students were required to answer at the end of class. Teachers assumed that students' ability to correctly answer the essential questions was evidence of their mastery of the standard.

The state standards required varied levels of critical thinking, as measured by Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956). According to Bloom's Taxonomy, the action verb used to complete a task shows its level of academic rigor. For example, the first, and lowest, level in Bloom's Taxonomy is "knowledge" and is associated with verbs such as "define, list, order, name." Using

Bloom's Taxonomy, the state standards required a low level of rigor, reaching only the second level "comprehension," indicated by verbs such as "explain, describe, and identify." The eighth grade social studies standards focused on state history; and I observed lessons that explicitly addressed civic goals. Examples of two eighth grade civic standards I observed being taught are listed in Figure 5 below:

Figure 5: Two Eighth Grade Social Studies Standards

The student will describe the role of citizens under the state constitution.

a. Explain the basic structure of the state constitution.
b. Explain the concepts of separation of powers and checks and balances.
c. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
d. Explain voting qualifications and elections in the state.
e. Explain the role of political parties in government.

The student will analyze the role of local governments in the state.

a. Explain the origins, functions, purposes, and differences of county and city governments
b. Compare and contrast the weak mayor-council, the strong mayor-council, and the council manager
c. Describe the functions of special-purpose governments.
d. Evaluate the role of local government working with state agencies to administer state programs.

In the time I observed the three teachers' classes, I never witnessed a lesson that did not directly address a state standard. Teachers were very purposeful in aligning their teaching with students' success on standards-based achievement tests. Ms. Hampton seemed to accept the standards as necessary. She explained, "The standards are just a part of it and the tests are just a part of it" (TI2:W). In a later interview Ms. Hampton recognized the sociopolitical aspects of the test. She said,

> These standardized tests…they don't really test how the students truly comprehend the concepts. They test how the students remember facts. That, to me, it's not as important as the students' understanding the concepts of how power structures or how communities

> change over time. Having the balance is somewhat political because if you do it the wrong way [fail the test] and you make the wrong people angry, then, it affects your school, and it affects your classroom (TI3:W).

Ms. Hampton explained that her willingness to ensure her students were successful on standardized tests was a way to protect her community and ensure they had access to needed funding.

Mr. James shaped his entire lessons around addressing state standards and openly shared with students and me that his main responsibility as a teacher was to ensure students passed the test. He said,

> My lessons are very dependent on lectures, notes, and primary sources. It's very much because of the standards and how fact based social studies is. I do a lot of spiraling and drilling on facts that I just know they're going to be tested on…While I am trying to prepare my students with writing and reading and synthesis and high-level thinking skills, a great deal of our teaching is geared towards helping students prepare for their [standardized test]. Helping them prepare to exceed it (TI1:SF).

Mr. James' emphasis on tests reflected the wider environment of Southside Academy, which was the highest performing of the four Education First schools I studied. The pressure from parents and administrators influenced school culture. At the end of the school year I attended Southside Academy's eighth grade graduation. Mr. Richards, the principal, asked all the eighth grade students to stand. He announced that 100% of the eighth grade students passed their math, language arts, and science standardized tests. The parents stood and the room roared with applause. I noticed the principal did not mention social studies. Later, Mr. James told me that one student did not pass the social studies test. Mr. James expressed frustration with his "failure"

because the students who had special needs, either linguistically or academically, like this student, were not supported in social studies and science classes. The student who did not pass the test was an English language learner who I observed struggle with comprehension in class and when completing worksheets. Mr. James contended that if this student was given more support, he would have met the 100% mark.

The three teachers participating in this study were critical of the state standards and expressed that the eighth grade social studies standards were shortsighted because they overemphasized state history. Mr. Ali shared, "It's boring. Like who cares who the first governor was or whatever" (TI2:S). The teachers intended to use the state curriculum to teach a course that introduced students to U.S. History using the state's history as a lens to see the nation. Fortunately, the state experienced several important periods in American history including the colonial period, Reconstruction, the Civil Rights Movement, and more recent national events; therefore, making a national connection was easily accomplished.

When asked, "How does your school prepare students for democratic citizenship?" Mr. James quickly, and angrily, answered "We don't give them any tools to actively engage in any sort of democratic process. There is no democracy at Southside Academy." After I probed for more details, Mr. James added "I think it is the fact that the academics are so heavy. I think there is more emphasis on [standardized test] content than citizenship for sure" (TI3:SF). Ms. Hampton expressed similar sentiments about the prevalence of testing and the ways in which it hindered the preparation of democratic citizens. She said,

> I think there are pockets of preparation. I think we're all still trying to figure out what it means when we've got all these other things we've got to meet: Common Core, milestone tests, tests for the state. Our evaluations as teachers are changing and so if

> something is not on a standard, sometimes it takes a backburner. [The goal] for us, more than anything else, is getting the students to understand this is your country. That is the first step. I think, in just having conversation with them, they don't view this as their country. They see the country as belonging to Whites and that they're just kind of here following Whites' rules. We're just trying to help them understand this is your community…You don't have to embrace another culture in order to be a part of this. I think that's the step that we're taking right there. I don't think we're going as deeply as we could because we've got so many other things we have to hit first (TI3:W).

Mr. Ali taught at Scholastic Academy, which had recently started a student government. He cited student government as the catalyst for students learning to become democratic citizens. He expressed, "We have a student government now; but there wasn't much of that before. I'm hoping the student government will turn into more of a diplomatic solution to a lot of the things" (TI3:S). The student government continued through the next school year.

Teaching citizens. Throughout the teacher interviews I asked each participating teacher, "Is teaching political?" and all three agreed that teaching embodies political elements. Ms. Hampton saw teaching as "A civil rights issue because there's so many disparities between the schools in one area and another" (TI3:W). She and Mr. James sought to help students recognize the disparity in education as it related to school funding. However, she did not want to share her political beliefs with students and went to great lengths to disguise her personal opinions. Sometimes, she played devil's advocate and pretended to support policies and ideas she personally opposed in order to push students' thinking. However, one student was skeptical of her approach. Melody commented, "She acts like she doesn't want to give us her opinion of things, but you can see how [she thinks]… by her facial expressions and stuff" (SI1:W).

Mr. James expressed that all teaching is political and that there is no way any teacher can disguise his agenda for his students' learning. When Mr. James first started teaching within the Education First network, he was required to observe Ms. Hampton's class for a week. He said,

> I don't think it's possible [not to be political]. I think you can be conscious. I think you can be good and political. You can be bad and political. I don't think you can be apolitical. I think everyone brings some sort of politics, like Ms. Hampton's politics are very clear in terms of how she teaches her kids (TI1:SF).

Similarly, in my observations Ms. Hampton's political ideologies were quite apparent to me. Further, the school leadership also supported them. She admitted that when funders visited the school, Mr. Pierce, the principal, checked what she was teaching that day before sending visitors to her classroom. The way that Ms. Hampton blatantly named White supremacy in socioeconomic policies and practices might have made some White visitors uncomfortable.

Mr. James did not believe that eighth grade students had the ability to identify biases; he was very aware that teaching such a young group of students was going to shape them for the rest of their lives. He added, "If I was standing in front of the classroom preaching any specific version of politics or world view on any level, it would become part of their belief system" (TI3:SF). However, his sarcastic attitude toward material may have conveyed more than he realized.

Mr. Ali did not recognize any political implications to his teaching, but did view his work as an act of service to Black children,

> Is my teaching political? No, it's not. I would say my teaching is- I want to give my students an experience that I didn't necessarily have in the classroom, but that I got through life. So, I grew up in Madison, Wisconsin. I went to predominantly White

> schools. However, I was raised in a very Afrocentric household. I want them to know themselves and know no matter where you are, no matter who you encounter, whether you go to an all-white school, if you go to a private school, or if you go to a Black school, if you go to a HBCU when you go to college. You can be yourself and you don't have to be afraid to be who you are (TI3:S).

However, I would disagree with Mr. Ali's evaluation of his teaching as apolitical. Teaching students to see their value as Black people is likely to have political ramifications, as it challenges the dominant culture.

The three teachers said that they hoped their lessons would result in students' positive civic behaviors. Although they did not explicitly privilege voting, petitioning, or watching the news as desirable behaviors, they all said they wanted their students to have an awareness of the social, political, and economic systems that were affecting their lives. Raised in a pro-Black-anti-establishment community, Ms. Hampton grew up thinking that it was politically righteous to refuse participation in partisan government politics. She later grew to understand that her failure to participate preserved the power structures; therefore, she sought to entice students to challenge the systems through their participation. She professed,

> I definitely sat on the wrong side of political activism for a very long time because in some intellectual circles in African-American communities being a part of the political process is seen as selling out; but, as I've gotten more mature and savvy, I've realized it's just the opposite. If we are to truly help our communities grow, we just can't be apathetic and we can't teach our kids to do that either. This was definitely a personal realization because I just wasn't taught that. I voted and I remember not wanting to tell my friends. My mom would drag me [to vote] because the elementary school was next to our house.

> We would go together, but I'd take my sticker off. That's crazy. I don't want them to have to go through that.

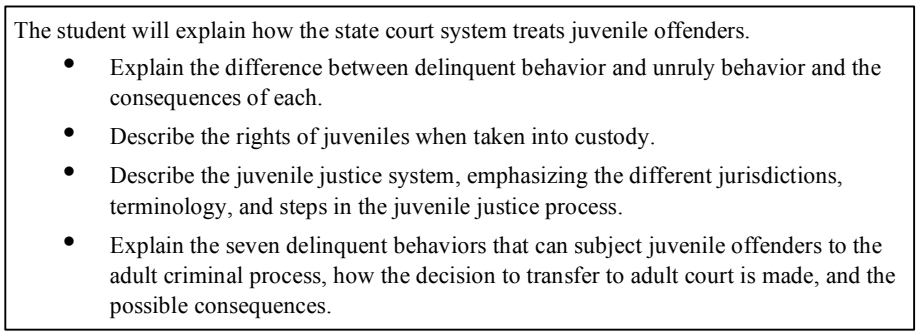
Mr. James and Mr. Ali also sought to help students recognize oppressive systems; however, their lessons did not push students to change the structures through their participation.

The Implemented Curriculum

The implemented curriculum refers to the various learning activities or experiences created for students to achieve the intended curricular outcomes. The implemented curriculum designates the actual practice of teachers in interaction with students. In the following section, I explore the implemented instructional strategies used in Mr. Ali's, Mr. James', and Ms. Hampton's eighth grade social studies classrooms in three different schools. In all lessons I observed the primary form of instruction was direct instruction with an emphasis on students' note-taking, completing worksheets, and regurgitating facts. I rarely observed teaching strategies recommended by experts in social studies education; yet, each teacher provided moments of "best practice." Ms. Hampton's use of political cartoons, Mr. Ali's use of a video, and Mr. James' use of skits were rare but all served as light-bulb moments for many students and sometimes lead to meaningful classroom discussions.

In order to elaborate and provide thick description, I have selected to report observation data on the implemented curriculum for one standard that I observed taught in all three classrooms. Using a common standard (See Figure 6), I am able to capture the prominent instructional strategies used by each of the three teachers. This allows me to compare common classroom practices while also capturing the unique ways in which teachers implemented their lessons based on their individual personalities and goals. I have also selected this standard

dealing with state courts and juvenile offenders because it seemed to generate the most student


The student will explain how the state court system treats juvenile offenders.

- Explain the difference between delinquent behavior and unruly behavior and the consequences of each.
- Describe the rights of juveniles when taken into custody.
- Describe the juvenile justice system, emphasizing the different jurisdictions, terminology, and steps in the juvenile justice process.
- Explain the seven delinquent behaviors that can subject juvenile offenders to the adult criminal process, how the decision to transfer to adult court is made, and the possible consequences.

interest.

Figure 6: Juvenile Justice Eighth Grade Social Studies Standards

Direct instruction. The main instructional approach promoted in Education First schools can best be described as traditional and teacher-centric. In the three classrooms I observed, I found that direct instruction was the primary form of instruction. Using PowerPoint presentations, worksheets, and lectures, teachers lead students in lessons that ensured they would be able to later "bubble in" the correct answers on a test. Rote memorization of facts, dates, and names was the way in which students showed mastery in all three observed classrooms. Table 3 illustrates the number of times I observed particular teaching methods in each class.

Table 3

Frequency of Lesson Types Observed

	Ms. Hampton	Mr. Ali	Mr. James
Direct Instruction	15	11	14
Political Cartoons	3	0	0
Video	4	3	1
Role Play	0	0	1

Current Events	5	3	2

I spent several days observing classes in which the entire 50 minutes of instruction were call and response that was interrupted only to complete another worksheet. A similar pattern played out in each of the three teachers' classrooms every day: The students walked into the classroom and immediately began working on their "do-now." The do-now was a review of previously learned material or an introduction to new material. While the students completed the "do-now," the teacher took attendance and collected homework. After five minutes of silent "do-now" time, the teacher would review the "do-now" with the students. Next, the teacher lectured for five to ten minutes presenting new material. After the lecture the students completed a worksheet, either individually or with a partner. The teacher would lecture again, this time questioning students for their understanding of the new material. Finally, students would complete another worksheet before the end of class.

Mr. James provided one example of the use of worksheets and students' regurgitation of answers throughout a lesson. Mr. James introduced his students to the juvenile justice unit by providing them with a large packet of worksheets. He first walked around the classroom and ensured students placed the packet in the correct place in their notebooks. Students at Southside Academy did not have a textbook to take home, so Mr. James was very particular about the order in which students stored their materials as they were essentially using worksheets to create a textbook. The lesson began with students completing a worksheet on the vocabulary needed to understand juvenile justice. First, they were encouraged to speculate on the definitions of vocabulary words:

> Students write various answers to define <u>juvenile</u>. I walk around the room and note their answers: "children," "a child that committed a crime," "a child that is bad," "a rapper."

> Under the term detention one student writes "Ms. Bennett, Mr. Jackson, and Mr. James." Another writes, "to detain." The timer goes off after two minutes and Mr. James reveals a PowerPoint slide that defines a juvenile as "citizens age 17 and under." Students hurriedly write the correct answer. Mr. James then reveals the word rehabilitation on the PowerPoint and students write their personal definitions before being provided the correct one. The class continues in this fashion until they move on to the next worksheet. This worksheet requires that students' circle the terms that they just learned as Mr. James reads the story titled, "The Central City Drug Bust." As he reads the story of a boy named Jim who "made a purchase," students follow along and circle their newly learned vocabulary words (O5:SF).

These types of lessons were not unique to Mr. James' class. Ms. Hampton also provided large packets of worksheets to her students. In her class, reviewing facts was more likely to be followed by moments of brief elaboration in which she shared a story, or personal opinion, that related to the standard. After reviewing the state's definition of the "seven deadly sins," or crimes that resulted in juveniles being tried as adults, Ms. Hampton shared that she did not agree with the privatization of prisons and believed the policy was related to increased incarceration rates. The students asked her a few questions about her thoughts before she insisted that they move on. Similarly, Mr. Ali's class went over the seven deadly sins:

> Mr. Ali asked, "Which of these is required to be a state court judge?" Students shout answers. "What are the 'Seven deadly sins'?" Students shout answers while Mr. Ali writes correct answers on the board. "Delinquent juveniles are those who?" More students shouting. Finally, all of the correct answers are projected on the board. Students check and correct their work.

Although direct instruction was the norm, there were also moments when teachers broke the pattern, as I describe in the next section.

Ms. Hampton's political cartoons. On five out of the 21 days I observed Ms. Hampton's class, the teacher opened class by encouraging students to talk about current events. She tried to develop higher-level thinking skills using political cartoons and students struggled to find the deeper meaning. During the time I observed the class, television news continually covered protests in Ferguson, Missouri. The "hands up, don't shoot" language was rampant amongst protestors on television and students used the same language in class. Students seemed hyper-aware of racialized issues throughout the United States. During the juvenile justice unit, students arrived one morning to find a political cartoon projected on the screen. The cartoon depicted a young black man waiting in line for service from the "affirmative action" or the "preferential incarceration" line. The affirmative action sign read "a quality education, a decent job, a fair shake" and inside the cubical was a picture of a U.S. flag, clock, and spider web that indicated no one had been there for a while. Sitting on the desk was an "out to lunch" sign. In front of the affirmative action cubical was another sign that read "next window please" and an arrow pointed to the preferential incarceration desk. The preferential incarceration sign read "Open 24/7 here to serve you" and a grim reaper sat behind a "welcome" sign on the desk.

The associated assignment required students to answer four questions about the cartoon: Who is represented? Are there symbols in the cartoon? What are they and what do they represent? What is the cartoonist's opinion about the topic portrayed in the cartoon? After students answered these questions, Ms. Hampton opened the floor to discussion:

> Kinnard: [The cartoonist's] opinion was that more people get to go to jail than letting them go to school to get a job.

Ms. Hampton: Do you think that they think that it's fair or unfair? Who is doing it, who is causing it?

Students: Unfair!

Ms. Hampton: How can you tell the cartoonist thinks it is unfair?

Nicole: They say they want us to get good jobs and stuff; but they are 'clearly out to lunch.' The cartoonist opinion is that the government provides us with affirmative action but they do not actually take their part. They are so busy putting black males in jail that they forgot that they gave us affirmative action for equal rights.

Ms. Hampton: According to the text [the main goal of juvenile justice] is to rehabilitate minors and not necessarily to punish them….My family is from a small town which is a part of a county that has one of the state's largest juvenile correctional facilities. I have my own personal opinions of juvenile justice especially because some of these places are privately owned instead of being run by the government. I don't like profit incentives being in prisons because if you are making money off of people being in prisons, you are going to want…

Two Students: More people in prison (O20:W).

With this comment, the conversation ended and the teacher shifted the topic to rights youth have when being taken into custody. The class quickly returned to completing worksheets to show their mastery of the material by defining "released" and "detained."

Mr. James' skits. In Mr. James' class only once did I observe an activity that was not students completing a worksheet or listening to a lecture. At the end of the juvenile justice unit, Mr. James allowed students to work in groups to display their mastery of the juvenile justice system. Students were required to use vocabulary words such as "detain" and "custody" to

demonstrate their understanding of the in-take process and consequences that might occur for varied crimes. One group presentation attempted to meet the standard:

> The first group begins their skit. The police catch three kids who did something wrong. *I can't tell what he did wrong.* The police pull out the guns on the kids. *These are made of broken pencils and rubber bands*. The three kids are taken to court. *They have their hands behind their backs and their heads are down*. One kid's mother starts crying "My child did nothing wrong. He is on the honor roll at school!" This kid is allowed to be sent home because he is a first time offender. The officer says to the next kid, "Seems like your parents don't want you. You have to stay here." The kid without parents sits before a judge. The judge says it is your first offense and he is sent home. The third young man has committed several crimes and he goes to jail.

The students' skits showed a very basic understanding of the material and it seemed that they were more excited about the opportunity to role play with props, interact with their friends, and move about the room than about the possible learning opportunity.

Mr. Ali's video. Mr. Ali used an episode of Scared Straight!, a popular television show in which convicts attempted to save troubled youth by sharing their stories about life in prison, thus "scaring them straight." When Mr. Ali announced that the students were going to be watching the show many of the students wiggled with excitement. While the episode played, students were tasked with identifying the difference between delinquent crimes, which adults would go to jail for, and unruly actions, that were only criminal because they are committed by youth. The episode displayed a young woman who kept staying out late, another who fought in school, and a boy who was disrespectful to his mother and teachers. The episode played until the end of class and the students were dismissed without any debriefing or discussion. The next day

the "do-now" required students to write a paragraph about the difference between delinquent and unruly behavior using examples of the youth from Scared Straight!.

In the three observed classrooms on a rare occasion when something other than direct instruction and recitation was used, students showed an increased amount of interest, as captured by their many questions and apparent alertness. The three teachers agreed that the students likely enjoyed the unit on juvenile justice because it most immediately and directly applied to their lives. One student in Mr. James' class told the class that he had experience with the juvenile justice system, having spent time in juvenile detention. Other students seemed glad to know what to do if they were ever stopped, or harassed, by the police. Perhaps it was student interest that encouraged teachers to break away from their usual lecture style to allow students to engage with the material in more meaningful ways than they did on most days.

The Received Curriculum

The received, or achieved, curriculum refers to student understandings as they construct personal meaning of curricular messages (Cornbleth, 1985). I attempted to capture the received curriculum by asking six students from each class two questions that directly related to their teacher's instruction: 1) Of all of the things that you learned in social studies this year, what were the major ideas/concepts that you remember? 2). What do you believe that your teacher really wants you to know? Do you believe that these things are useful in your life today? Why or why not? As I interviewed students during different times of the year, their answers likely varied based on the amount of material the teacher covered. For example, I interviewed Mr. James' students at the end of the school year, after they covered the entire eighth grade curriculum and I interviewed Mr. Ali's and Ms. Hampton's students at the beginning of the year when they had

only covered civics and geography units. Overall, Ms. Hampton's students' responses most aligned with her goals. Mr. James' and Mr. Ali's students' answers varied.

Five of six of the students I interviewed from Ms. Hampton's class remembered their civics lessons most. They cited "social things, like Michael Brown" (SI3: W), "the executive branch" (SI1:W), and "what happened in Ferguson" (SI5:W) as the topics that stood out. Ms. Hampton wanted to raise students' awareness of oppressive systems; her students' comments indicated they learned that message saying that Ms. Hampton wanted, "…us to understand where we stand in the whole process of making laws and things, as African-Americans" (SI2:W). Naomi added that Ms. Hampton taught her to see racism in the local transportation policies, "They don't want to extend [the train] too far because some counties and cities don't want it to have a sudden increase in the Blacks and Latinos" (SI2:W). Robert expressed that everything he learned from Ms. Hampton was useful throughout his life because, "I would need to know everything about my history, where I'm from, what I represent" (SI4:W). Jeffery added, "She wants us to know we are centered in this world because many people will tell you things to make you think differently when actually, you are more powerful than what you might think you are" (SI5:W). Through their interviews, Ms. Hampton's students appeared acutely aware of systemic racism and how it might affect individuals and societies, expectations of them, and behaviors toward them. Ms. Hampton's intended message was received by the six of her students I interviewed.

When I interviewed Mr. Ali's students they had just concluded their unit on government and were beginning to learn about the state's geographic features. Of the six students I interviewed, three recalled geography lessons and three named civics content as what they remembered most. Those who mentioned geography said that it was important to know about the

rivers, lakes, and places to visit in their home state. Those who expressed that their civics lessons impacted them most noted that "Juvenile justice applies to me. I'm a juvenile" (SI1:ST); "I want to know how like the government works and how decisions are going to be made for me" (SI2:ST); and, "I just want to know what kind of power the governor has because one day I am going to have to vote for him" (SI3:ST). Like Ms. Hampton's students, all six of Mr. Ali's students believed that their teacher wanted them to know their rights. However, they disagreed on the purpose for which they should know their rights. Melody was the only student who said that Mr. Ali taught them about the importance of government so "we can do something to improve it" (SI2:ST). Other students said that Mr. Ali stressed the government unit because, "it's our biggest unit" (SI4:ST) and "we need to know about our state" (SI5:ST). Overall, Mr. Ali's stated intention to instill healthy self-esteem in his students was not reflected in what students indicated they retained. Perhaps, they were not aware of their self-esteem if he did not explicitly state his goal to his students.

Considering that Mr. James desired to be a U.S. history teacher I was not surprised that his students' recalled the historical information about the state most. Although I only observed lessons tied to civic, rather than history standards, it was possible that he taught history more passionately than civics content. Mr. James admitted that he loved American history and looked forward to teaching high school history classes. Also, because I observed Mr. James' classes at the end of the school year, his students had learned the entire state curriculum when answering the question. When I asked Mr. James' students what they recalled most, they shared elaborate stories about historical figures. I was impressed with the details they provided about the first Native American leaders, the early European explorers, and the first governor. Only one student commented that Mr. James wanted students to know about the government. I asked Ashley why

she believed Mr. James wanted her to know about the government and she responded, "I don't know. It was really boring. I guess because we have to take like Civics and Economy [in high school]" (SI1:SF). Throughout interviews, several of Mr. James' students mentioned tests and preparation for high school to explain why it was important to learn new information.

In answering research question two about the ways in which the intended, implemented, and received curriculum prepared students for citizenship, I found that teachers said they aimed to prepare students for a critical citizenship in which they recognized structural inequities. Though all three teachers said they sought to instill critical thinking skills in students, I only observed Ms. Hampton teaching to that end when she used political cartoons. Mr. James' quick pacing and emphasis on test-taking skills likely hindered students' ability to critically engage the material. Also, Mr. Ali's students appeared unsure about the purposes of learning about the government; only one student expressed they were learning to improve the government while others said they were learning required material. In the next section, I provide further quantitative and qualitative data about what students received from the civic aspects of the eighth grade curriculum.

Students' Conceptions of Citizenship and their Civic/Political Attitudes

In this section, I address my final research question, "How do students attending "no excuse" charter middle schools conceive of and enact their roles as current citizens and imagine their roles as future citizens? What are students' civic and political attitudes, and current and projected civic/political behaviors? How do those attitudes and behaviors vary by gender, socio-economic status and school?" I administered the *Civic Attitudes Survey*, which consisted of a total of 71 Likert-type items, to assess a broad range of student attitudes. Additionally, I used qualitative data collected from student interviews and classroom observations to complement the

findings from my survey data. I analyzed students' responses by categorizing them into three groups: 1) Students' civic values, beliefs, and attitudes; 2) political efficacy; and 3) civic engagement and behavior. For each category, I discuss first the quantitative findings, then the related qualitative findings. Additionally, I examine whether students' responses varied by gender, SES, and school.

Students' Values, Beliefs, and Attitudes

According to the ICCS researchers (Schulz, et al., 2010) the values, beliefs, and attitudes scales measured students' perceptions relevant to citizenship. In this section I describe and discuss students' perceptions of democracy and citizenship, attitudes toward the United States, perceptions of equal rights in society, and levels of trust in civic and political institutions. I report data on students' overall responses to the scales. I also include students' responses to specific items within a scale where relevant. Table 4 reports means and standard deviations for each of the 12 scales I used to measure students' conceptions of citizenship and their civic/political attitudes.

Table 4

Responses to 12 Scales: Means and Standard Deviations

Scale	Scale Mean	Standard Deviation
Perceptions of Democracy and Citizenship	3.69	.39
Attitudes Toward the United States	3.09	.66
Equal Rights	3.69	.47
Political Trust	2.32	.76
Internal Efficacy	2.85	.65
Citizenship Efficacy	2.64	.70
External Efficacy	2.83	.50
Collective Efficacy	3.20	.56
Conventional Citizenship	3.10	.71
School Context	3.02	.76
Class Context	1.87	.70
Expected Political Participation	2.96	.56

*Cronbach alphas for scales are in Table 2, p. 60.

Perceptions of democracy and citizenship. Using the Likert-Scale in which a score of four correlated with "I strongly agree" and a score of one with "I strongly disagree," overall students supported democratic principles (M=3.69, SD=.39)[9]. On specific items, they agreed strongly that in a democracy everyone should have the right to free expression (M= 3.75, SD = .47); social and political rights for all (M = 3.78, SD = .52); right to elect their leaders freely (M = 3.73, SD = .57); and they supported the right to protest unfair laws (M = 3.75, SD = .51). They

[9] For analysis, I reversed the order of the responses from the way in which they appeared on the questionnaire.

also endorsed freedom to criticize the government, but slightly less strongly (M = 3.49, SD = .64).

All of the 18 interviewed students explained democracy meant governance by the people and they offered various definitions of the word. Some students, like Rebecca, defined democracy as a guarantee that your voice would be heard and that each citizen had a vote. She said, "Democracy is being able to vote and having a voice. Being able to speak your opinion about things" (SI3:W). Other students, like Tony, described democracy as a process, "Where citizens have equal rights and they get to vote for laws and people, like the legislators, judicial and executive branches" (SI3:ST). All 18 of the interviewed students communicated that democracy is a system of governance and that voting was the best way for citizens to have their say. Students were not critical in their definitions of democracy as they all described the ideals of democracy in defining the word; however many students critiqued the realities of the United States democracy throughout student interviews and during classroom discussions as evidenced in their attitudes toward the United States democracy and their levels of political trust.

Attitudes toward the United States democracy. Positive attitudes towards one's nation are often viewed as vital for sustaining a healthy democracy (Dalton, 1999).The *Attitudes Toward the United States* scale included five items. Using the Likert-Scale in which a score of four correlated with "I strongly agree" and a score of one correlated with "I strongly disagree," overall students expressed positive attitudes toward the nation (M=3.09, SD=.66).

In interviews, students' attitudes toward the United States varied. Many students stated that the country was better than it used to be or better than other countries. However, when talking about the United States' democracy as it currently stood many students were critical. Overall students "somewhat agreed" with the statement, "The political system in the United States works

well" (M = 2.95, SD = .85). I discuss reasons students gave for their attitudes towards the United States in more detail in the section on students' external efficacy. Skeptical attitudes toward the United States governance may have contributed to students low levels of trust in particular civic institutions.

Equal rights. Students also supported the equal rights of individuals from different groups (M=3.69, SD= .47). On particular items on the *Equal Rights and Citizenship* scale students "strongly agreed" with supporting the equal access to education for all racial groups (M = 3.68, SD = .64), voting rights for immigrants who lived in the country for several years (M = 3.68, SD = .59), educational opportunities for immigrants' children (M = 3.64, SD = .75), and equal rights of men and women (M = 3.63, SD = .81). In interviews, several students specifically named that their racial background, as Black and Hispanic students, made them more adamant about protecting the equal rights of others.

Student survey results indicated that students strongly supported equal and quality education for all children. This result is not surprising considering that teachers specifically named the injustice in educational inequity relating to school funding and racial segregation. In all three classrooms I observed, teachers talked about students' right to a quality education. In each of these conversations students named race and class as reasons for educational inequity. Students were very supportive of equal rights as they related to educational opportunities. During interviews all three participating teachers expressed that it was a goal to teach students about the educational inequalities in schools. Ms. Hampton and Mr. James recognized the current state of U.S. public schooling was one of the easiest ways to help students recognize racial and class inequality and discrimination.

Jesus was the only Hispanic, and non-Black, student to participate in the student

interviews. Because he was an English Language Learner, our interview was a bit difficult and I believe several of my questions and his answers were lost in translation. However, there was a spark in my interview with Jesus. When I asked him about current events, protesting, petitioning, and voting he did not offer much. When I first asked Jesus if believed he could influence the opinions of others he answered no. I probed by asking, "What if it was something really important about something that mattered to you? What matters to you Jesus?" Jesus shrugged and said, "The Dream Act[10]." Jesus was very supportive of the Dream Act and educational opportunities for Hispanic youth because, "Immigrants should have rights…We should have rights in America" (SI6:SF).

Political trust. Using the items from the ICCS student survey, the *Political Trust Scale* included five-items that required students to rate their level of trust ("completely," "quite a lot," "a little," "not at all") in a number of political and civic institutions, including the federal and local governments, courts, and police. Generally, students indicated low levels of political trust, in which they tended to trust the government "a little" (M=2.32, SD= .76).

This study took place when the United States was undergoing several racially charged incidents surrounding law enforcement and Black men. Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin, and Eric Garner were names that were constantly mentioned in the news, classrooms, and by students themselves as young Black men who were shot by police. Melody was one of several students who cited one of these incidents to explain why she did not have faith that the United States' democracy was responsive to the will of the people, "They're always going to be controversial laws that some people agree with and some people don't. Like Trayvon Martin; the people

[10] The Dream Act is the legislation that addresses the future of young people who grew up in the United States and have graduated from U.S. schools, but whose future is circumscribed by current immigration laws.

thought that George Zimmerman should have been found guilty. [But he was not]" (SI2:ST).

In Ms. Hampton's class several students shared that they constantly had negative experiences with police officers at the local shopping mall that many youth frequented. When studying about the crime of "loitering" in the unit on "the rights of juveniles," several students shared that they felt targeted when they hung out with their friends at the mall. Students used words like "unfair" and "mistreated" to describe how they felt when police officers "harassed" them for "hanging out with my friends." Ms. Hampton sympathized with the students. She offered, "If somebody treats me bad I am not going to go to that place again. But then I think, 'Does that solve the problem?'" She added that she remembered being a teenager and not having many options as to where she hung out, so she understood why the children would continue to go back to the mall (O19:W). I observed the increased police presence at the mall and noted the mall adopted a curfew that required unsupervised minors under the age of 17 to leave the premises after 8:00 p.m.

I also think that race played a large part in how students perceived their treatment as U.S. citizens; especially because teachers aimed to help students understand that the world interacted with them differently because of their race. For example, Ms. Hampton shared statistical information to show the leading cause of death for black males between the ages of 15-34 is homicide. Although the passage on the provided worksheet said, "Staying on the right side of justice is as simple as avoiding trouble," Ms. Hampton told the students, "We know that's not true" and it seemed her students agreed (O21:W).

Dimitri was one of the few students to name a non-racial issue as the reason he did not trust the government. During the time of this study there was so much media attention on national events many students did not discuss the fact that the United States was at war. This was

not surprising considering that none of the teachers made any reference to conflicts outside of the United States during my period of observation. Dimitri held:

> Sometimes the government makes decisions that we don't approve on…And I think that that's … that's going to lose the trust of… of the US people…Like sending more troops inside Iraq. We… we didn't approve them to do that. They just did it because they felt like that was right (SI6:W).

Although Dimitri understood that the people elect their leaders, he disagreed with the lack of consideration for the will of the masses after leaders were elected to represent them.

Students' Political Efficacy

"Sense of political efficacy" is usually defined as the belief that citizens can make a difference in government decision making. It is often thought of as having two dimensions. The first dimension, external efficacy, is the belief that government officials are responsive to citizen input and the second dimension, internal efficacy, is the belief that the individual can mobilize personal resources to be effective. Collective efficacy, a third dimension, is not typically included on scales measuring efficacy in youth; however, because some researchers have shown that collective efficacy is especially important for youth of color I also measured it in this study.

In order to understand students' political efficacy I used two scales adopted from ICCS and IEA CivEd measuring internal and external efficacy the *Internal Political Efficacy Scale* and the *Citizenship Self- Efficacy Scale* (Schulz, et al. 2010; Torney-Purta, et al. 2001). I also included additional items to capture students' external and collective efficacy that I adapted from the *Political Efficacy and Trust Survey* (Craig, Niemi, & Silver, 1990), thus creating the collective efficacy scale.

Internal efficacy. The internal efficacy scale included six items that measured the extent to which students' reported that their knowledge, abilities, and skills enabled them to have an effect on the political system. Using a four-item Likert scale in which students "strongly agreed," "agreed", "disagreed," or "strongly disagreed" with statements such as "I have political opinions worth listening to," results showed that for the most part students "agreed" that they could influence political decision making (M=2.85, SD=.65). The item "I know more about politics than most people my age," however, yielded a lower mean in which students leaned toward disagreement with the statement (M = 2.59, SD = .87). Interviews supported this finding.

During interviews students' appeared to have a developing sense of internal efficacy in which they expressed that they could take part in political discussions if they had the information or that they could understand political issues when they learned about them. For example, Nicole said, "I consider myself political because I'm not the type of person that just sits there and lets stuff happen. I will give you my opinion on something" (SI1:W). Most of the 18 interviewed students reported that they learned about politics or issues from their teachers, parents, or social media outlets. Very few students said they actively sought to learn about political happenings; consequently they often credited their understandings of these issues to another trusted source. During the time of this study students named the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, the protest in Ferguson, Missouri, and the "Bring Back Our Girls" campaign about the Boko Harem kidnappings in Nigeria as current events that they understood and could confidently discuss. Referencing a third party, some students shared their opinions by offering, "my mother told me," "my teacher said," or "I saw a post on Instagram that read…" By referencing an outside source to share their thoughts about current events, it seemed that some students were still developing

their confidence in taking ownership over their thoughts and opinions as they related to politics and current events.

Still, there were other students who displayed higher internal efficacy. These students said they often watched the news with their families or read online news sources. Ashely expressed that she was very concerned about women's rights and she closely followed the "Bring Back Our Girls" story. She said that she watched the news every morning and would later see the same stories on Facebook and read about them to a better, or different, understanding on the issue. Her interest in the rights of girls was sparked by a project she completed in Mr. James' class that required her to learn about human trafficking, as the sexual exploitation of girls is a major issue in the state due to the international airport. Ashley said that her advocacy for the rights of girls could make a difference. Her modes of advocacy were "liking" stories about women's issues on Facebook and talking to her friends about them.

Overall, students expressed that they felt qualified to participate in politics as adults; however, very few of them showed interest in actually running for any political office. Jeffery said that he needed more time to learn about the world before running for office, "I don't necessarily know a lot of situations that go on. It takes experience. I'm not there yet" (SI5:W). Kayla said, "Personally, I don't like politics. It's complicated, but I think I qualify" (SI4:ST). Jeffery and Kayla's hesitations were echoed by many students who said that their lack of understanding, as it related to their age, caused them to doubt their abilities to feel fully qualified to make political changes as adults. It did not seem as if they were disinterested; rather, I felt as if they were unsure. The following interview transcript displays how most students responded to questions about internal efficacy:

Adrianne: Do you think that you could ever be someone that people vote for? Like a mayor or a superintendent? Or council representative? Do you think you could ever do that?

Kim: No.

Adrianne: Why not?

Kim: Because I'm not really into politics like that. So, I don't think it would.

Adrianne: But do you think you could be qualified to do it?

Kim: Yes.

Adrianne: So, if you wanted to do it, do you think you could do it?

Kim: Yes.

I often prompted students by asking them, "Would you run for your local school board if you could improve the conditions of schools? Or city council to ensure your community had access to what it needed?" Each time I asked this question, students seemed more willing, and often enthused, by the possibility of being in the position to improve their own communities.

External efficacy. External political efficacy describes how people feel their government responds to their needs and the communities in which they identify and how well the political system and government reflect their needs and concerns (M=2.83, SD=.50). The external efficacy scale originally demonstrated low reliability ($\alpha = .38$). Deleting the item "In this country, a few people have all the political power" moderately increased the reliability of the scale, however, the scale's reliability remained less than acceptable ($\alpha = .53$). Due to the low reliability of the scale, students' interview responses were the sole consideration for capturing external efficacy.

Of the 18 students interviewed, 14 students expressed low levels of external efficacy. They

tended to identify a recent event or policy to explain why they were unsure if the government cared about people like them. Jeffery disagreed the government cared about the poor, "[Wealthy people] control the whole entire nation…They want all the power. They want everything and all it's going to do is decrease our rights" (SI5:W). Kim shared, "I feel like some things, like the Mike Brown situation and Trayvon Martin, show us we just don't have enough justice. There's just not enough justice in this country" (SI5:ST). Melody questioned the integrity of the United States' democracy. When asked to respond to the statement, "In this country, a few people have all the political power and the rest of us are not given any say about how the government runs things" she responded:

> *Melody*: The people who are in power, they're most likely rich people who have all their needs [met]; and the people who wouldn't have a lot of power, those most likely would be the lower class, middle class citizens who don't have a lot of say. And the people who are in power, they make the decisions on what they think.
>
> *Adrianne*: Do you think our government is like that?
>
> *Melody*: Kind of. Sometimes I do.

Dimitri echoed Melody's sentiments saying, "Sometimes the government makes decisions that we don't approve on" (SI6:W) and Jake noted, "The people may want pizza but the government may say, 'No, I want to give you a hamburger, instead'" (SI3:SF).

Jake responded to the same question I asked Melody and he expressed that the people always have the power, "We voted for them to become an elected official anyways, so, I mean, of course we have a say. We vote." He added that the people's consent does not end with their vote. Even after the elected officials make decisions, the people still have the power to change executive decrees, "If 95% of the country was protesting at the same time, then they'd have to

change" (SI3:SF). Jake did not think that people's political power is taken away; he believed that people always have the power but choose not to use it. Rebecca agreed that the government did not respond to her community's needs well but it was because "…there are those people who care about voting. Then, there are those people who don't. You can't be mad about something that you don't even try to do" (SI3:W).

Jeffery recognized that there were structures within the United States that made it difficult for people to exercise their personal power because their power was taken away:

> *Adrianne*: How can we make our country more democratic?
>
> *Jeffery*: I believe that we should let all the people vote. You know, right now, they're trying to stop black people from voting period in some states.
>
> *Adrianne*: How are they doing that? How is that happening?
>
> *Jeffery*: Because we don't fight for what we believe in, because, you know, I have a great-great grandfather who got shot, I think, seven times for trying to vote and that's what my parents tell me all the time. We don't fight for what we believe in anymore. We believe that everything should be given to us.

Even after recognizing that there were structures in place that made it difficult for people to exercise their power, Jeffery and most students, returned to the personal power of the people.

Collective efficacy. Collective efficacy is defined as the feeling that individuals can work together to make changes in their condition within a circumscribed area of the political realm (Bandura, 2000; Billings, 1970). The scale measuring collective efficacy had low reliability (α = 68). Overall, students agreed with statements such as "It takes several people working together to bring forth change in the United States" and "Students acting together to reach a political goal can have more influence than when students act alone" (M=3.2, SD=.56). Due to the

comparatively low-reliability of the scale, I relied on students' responses in interviews to capture their sense of collective efficacy.

Although students recognized the power that one person possessed and expressed a willingness to act alone if necessary, each of the 18 students favored collective action. Some offered cliché statements like "Majority rules" (SI1:SF), "the more people you have, the more people will listen" (SI6:W), or "Team beats individual" (SI4:ST). Others had various experiences that they noted when expressing the importance of the collective. Several students shared that one student decided to start a petition in school, and others had to sign the petition for it to be effective. Melody said, "I think the petition was good… it takes one good person to have a really sharp idea, but it takes a group of people to actually enact that idea" (SI2:ST). Rebecca admitted that she signed the petition but was not courageous enough to start it on her own, "I'll do it by myself, but a lot of times, I'm iffy about things like that. I would want like somebody to back me up on it" (SI3:W).

Students at Scholastic Academy, the only school with a student government, expressed that one student decided to run for office but it took the help of their campaign party and the votes from other students for them to be elected. Antonio voiced that for any action to be accomplished it takes a community. In his opinion, no one accomplished anything great on their own. Antonio said, "One person can make some changes, but they can't make any big changes because they have to have people behind them, supporting them" (SI3:ST). Overall, students' internal, external, and collective efficacy was greatly affected by their position, or perspective, as youth of color. This is further explored in the next section on students' civic engagement.

Students' Civic Engagement

According to the IEA CivEd researchers (Torney-Purta, et al., 2001) the items in the

"students' civic engagement in political activities" section of the survey examined students' interest in politics and the extent to which students reported exposure to civically socializing agents in the classroom, school, and in their communities. First, I discuss students' commitments to participation in conventional civic acts. Next, I discuss students' civic engagement as it relates to their experiences in school and in their classrooms. Finally, I report on students' expected political participation as adults.

Conventional citizenship. The *Civic Attitudes Survey* included four items from the *Concepts of Citizenship* scale describing conventional citizenship behavior such as voting and participating in partisan politics. Students were asked to rate the importance of each behavior for being a good adult citizen as "very important," "quite important," "not very important," or "not at all important." Overall students agreed that conventional citizenship was quite important (M=3.10, SD= .71). Looking at responses to individual items on the *Conventional Citizenship* scale, students agreed voting in every national election was very important to being a good citizen (M = 3.48, SD = .77). This was also reflected in interviews with students, in which voting was privileged above all other forms of civic participation. Students also agreed that it was quite important to follow political issues in the newspaper, on the radio, on TV, or on the Internet (M = 3.22, SD = .92) and to engage in political discussions (M = 3.05, SD = .95). Survey results indicated that students considered joining a political party was less important to being a good citizen (M = 2.67, SD = .97).

Rubin (2007; 2012) offers a relevant typology that I used to code the ways in which the 18 students I interviewed identified themselves as citizens and their attitudes toward civic participation. Rubin described students as aware (change is needed for equity and fairness), empowered (change is a personal and community necessity), complacent (no change is

necessary, all is well in the United States), and discouraged (no change is possible; life in the United States is unfair). Using Rubin's typology I found that most students I interviewed fit the categories of aware and empowered. Additionally, I used Osler and Starkey's (2005) definition of citizenship as status, practice, and feeling to code interviews.

Students tended to define a citizen as, "A person that lives in their state or city" (SI5:ST). These students recognized that a citizen was a person who held a particular residential status. Typical of those responses were two students who offered definitions of 'citizen' that included a legal status. Chris described a citizen as, "A person in the United States that has either been born there or got their citizenship there" (SI5:W); and Naomi expressed, "If you're not a citizen, [you] can't get certain jobs" For these students, a citizen was someone who had access to the opportunities in the nation through their legal status. Three students went beyond the definition of citizenship as a legal status to defining citizenship as a practice or action. Dimitri described a citizen as, "A person who takes their responsibilities to hand and does what they need to do" (SI6:W); and Amber echoed, " A responsible person who completes their duties in their community" (SI1:ST). Students who offered these more advanced definitions of citizen recognized the power in the position. By describing citizenship as an action, something they could choose to do or be, they had access to citizenship regardless of their residence or legal status. Amber and Dimitri displayed empowered citizenship even from the way they defined the word.

Students offered varied responses for what a good citizen does and what a good citizen does not do. For the 18 students I interviewed, the most common traits students agreed that good citizens display is that they "vote" and "pay their taxes." Students differed in the ways they explained how citizens interact with established laws. Ashely said, "Good citizens obey

executive orders" (SI1:SF); Brinisha reported that they, "Follow laws they don't like" (SI2:SF) and Bob shared, "They don't disturb other good citizens" (SI4:W). According to Rubin (2012) students with responses such as these showed a complacent view of citizenship in which they determined that life in the United States is generally fair for everyone; this assumption causes them to feel that America does not need to change. However, several other students provided responses that displayed empowered civic identities. Kim shared that good citizens, "Help to make a better community and improve the city" (SI4:ST) and Melody added, "If there is something that they don't like about their community, they don't sit there and ignore it and wait for someone else to step up. They fix it" (SI1:W). Students with responses such as these, recognized that the criteria for good citizenship was not obedience, but action for the common good. Overall, students agreed that good citizens do not commit crimes, break laws, or destroy their own communities.

The school context. On a four-item Likert scale students were asked to indicate the extent to which they thought they could influence decision-making processes ("large," "moderate," "small," "not at all"), students indicated that they had a moderate influence in the school (M=3.02, SD=.76). Despite the variance in school culture I observed, there was little difference in student response to questions in this scale.

When I asked, "Do you feel like you have a voice in school? Can you influence school outcomes?" most students responded by saying they did have a voice. All six students at Scholastic Academy said that the student government provided them a voice in the school. Omari expressed, "[The student government] is supposed to tell the administrators things that we aren't able to tell them" (SI1:ST). Five of the six interviewed students at Westside Academy told me that they had a voice through petitioning. They explained that because eighth grade students

at Westside Academy were not permitted to use mechanical pencils they all signed a student-created petition and gave it to the administrators. Naomi's interview provides an example of the story the students at Westside Academy told:

> *Adrianne*: Do you feel like you have a voice in your school that you can influence things that happen here at Westside?
>
> *Naomi*: I feel like I can.
>
> *Adrianne*: How so?
>
> *Naomi*: How so? Well, I know with the mechanical pencil issue that we had during summer school. At first, we weren't allowed to [use mechanical pencils], but since we had a petition going round saying 'Should we use mechanical pencils.' We [also] had to write out like a whole essay sort of explaining why. We are able to use [mechanical pencils] now.

Only the eighth grade students at Westside participated in the petition, and therefore only the eighth graders were permitted to use mechanical pencils. Many of the students at Westside Academy seemed very proud of their accomplishment. Another student at Westside Academy expressed that her voice was heard because she was selected to participate in a school evaluation. Nicole recalled her experience:

> I did an interview last year. They asked us, they asked me, what I thought they could change. They asked me like what did I want to change about the school hours and stuff, what would be more fun to do…they actually asked us about a variety of things that we [might] want to do (SI1:W).

Nicole said that she saw changes in the school the next year, "We have been able to have more freedom." She saw the most change in the hallway policy. The previous year students were not

permitted to be in the hallway unless they had a written hall pass from a teacher. Some students abused the freedom by making their own pass and it seemed like everyone was penalized for it. Nicole said that now students have more freedom to be in the hallway because all of the teachers have to sign their agendas, and thus all students have a similar hall pass.

The classroom context. Importantly, the classroom context scale was the only scale on the *Civic Attitudes Survey* for which I did not need to reverse direction for analysis. Using a Likert-scale, students rated their agreement with the frequency teachers taught about political and social issues ("Never," "rarely," "sometimes," "often") in which a score of one correlated with "never" and a score of four correlated with "often" (M=1.87, SD=.70). Students tended to disagree with all of the statements on this scale. In descending order, students reported that they brought up current political events for discussion in class (M = 2.09, SD = .95); teachers presented several sides of the issues when explaining them in class (M = 1.89, SD = .86); students shared opinions in class even when their opinions are different from those of the other students (M = 1.88, SD = .87); teachers encouraged students to make up their own minds (M = 1.79, SD = .88); and, teachers encouraged students to express their opinions (M = 1.79, SD = .91).

As previously discussed, these data support what I observed in Mr. Ali, Mr. James', and Ms. Hampton's classrooms. The prominent form of instruction in classrooms was teacher-centered in the form of lectures and worksheets. The expectation was that students regurgitated facts, dates, and definitions that would assist them succeeding on standardized tests. Classroom discussion was rare and occurred for only short periods of time.

Across the three classes, current events were mentioned in class and brought up by teachers and students; however, current events were not explained in depth and appeared as additions to lessons that were based on state standards. Students appeared comfortable in sharing their opinions during moments of discussion and often stood their ground when a classmate held

a different opinion; however teachers mediated how much interaction students had with each other. Students often talked through their teacher and not directly to one another. An observation from Mr. James' class depicts how this occurred:

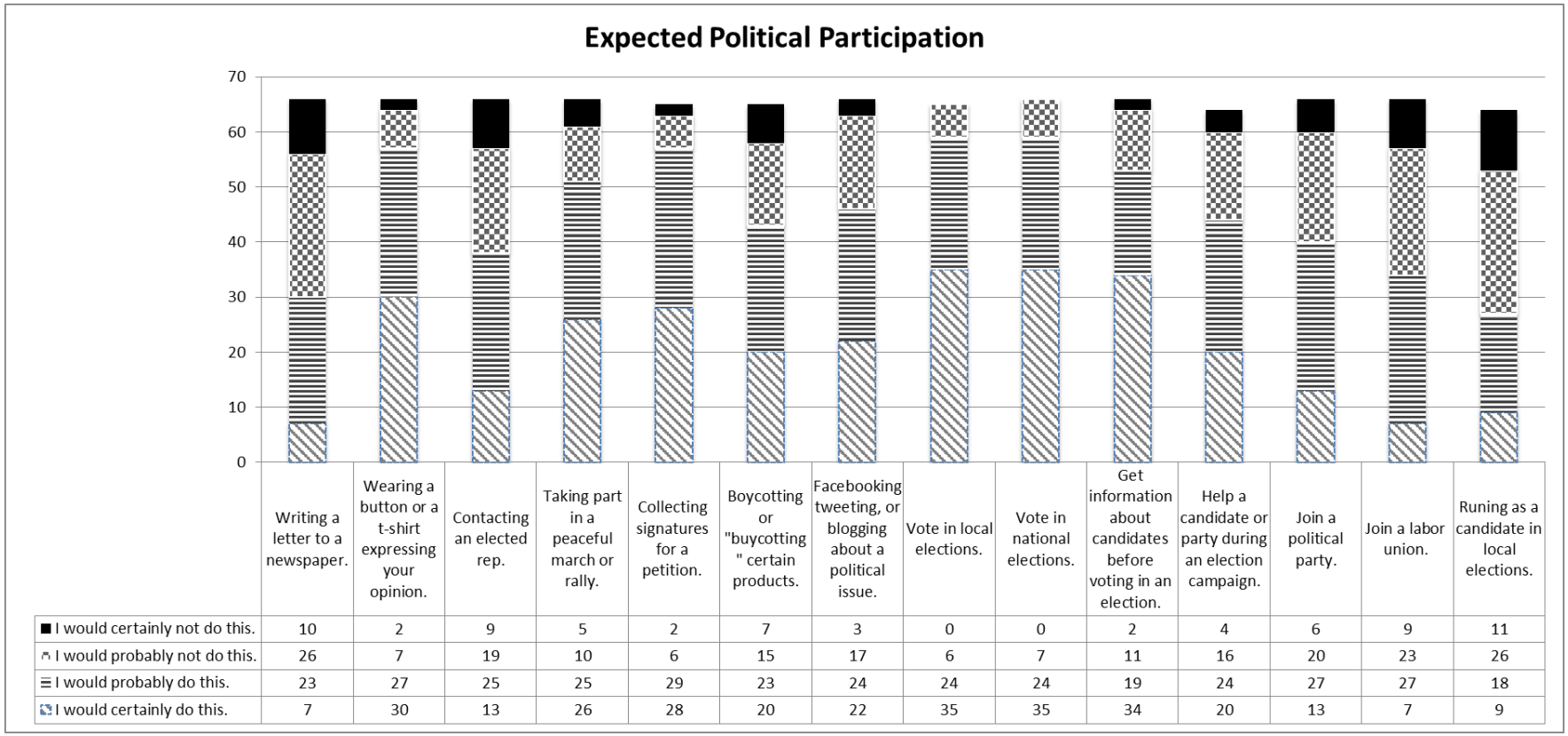
> Mr. James shares that there is an organization called the "Campaign for Juvenile Justice" that is against children being tried as adults in any circumstances. He asks students their opinions on the matter. The students are to answer if they still feel that youth should be tried as adults; first they answer the question on their worksheet before sharing their answers with the class. After students begin writing, Mr. James' asks a few students to share their opinions. Halle says, "They should be tried as adults, especially if they commit one of the seven deadly sins. Because if you commit one of those, that is really extreme. I believe nine times out of ten students do know what they are doing and it was done on purpose. So they should be tried as an adult." Mr. James calls on another student. Maurice says, "I do not think juveniles should be tried as adults. If you are a juvenile your brain is not fully developed." Stephanie is called on. She said, "I feel like they shouldn't be but then again they should because they are kids and they are not fully mature. And if they can do something like that then they should be treated as adults." Many hands are raised. Mr. James encourages the students to finish writing their answers on their worksheets. I walked around the room to read students' answers. Almost every student supported children being tried as adults. Their answers vary: "If they are brave enough to commit the crime they should be brave enough to receive the consequences," "They should feel the pain," and "If Black and Hispanic kids are committing crimes they should go to jail."

This dynamic occurred in a very similar fashion in Mr. Ali's and Ms. Hampton's classes. Students shared differing opinions, but rarely justified their differences to each other. Teachers' randomly selected students to answer questions, thus mediating and hindering their ability to share ideas with one another.

Expected political participation. Due to the variance in responses to the items on this scale, I will discuss the results of particular items alongside findings from student interviews (M=2.96, SD=.56). Students rated the likelihood they would participate in selected activities as an adult on a four-item Likert-scale ("I would certainly do this," "I would probably do this," "I would probably not do this," "I would certainly not do this"). The majority of students agreed they would "certainly" or "probably" participate in most civic activities including voting, petitioning, or wearing buttons or shirts with political messages. Students' were divided in their willingness to write a letter to a newspaper (55% expected they would not, 45% expected they would), join a labor union (48% expected they would not, while 52% expected they would), and run as a candidate in a local election (with 58% expecting they would not, but 42% expected they would). Table 5 displays the variances in students' responses on their willingness to participate in particular political activities.

Table 5

Distribution of Students' Expected Political Participation in Civic Activities



	Writing a letter to a newspaper.	Wearing a button or a t-shirt expressing your opinion.	Contacting an elected rep.	Taking part in a peaceful march or rally.	Collecting signatures for a petition.	Boycotting or "buycotting" certain products.	Facebooking tweeting, or blogging about a political issue.	Vote in local elections.	Vote in national elections.	Get information about candidates before voting in an election.	Help a candidate or party during an election campaign.	Join a political party.	Join a labor union.	Runing as a candidate in local elections.
I would certainly not do this.	10	2	9	5	2	7	3	0	0	2	4	6	9	11
I would probably not do this.	26	7	19	10	6	15	17	6	7	11	16	20	23	26
I would probably do this.	23	27	25	25	29	23	24	24	24	19	24	27	27	18
I would certainly do this.	7	30	13	26	28	20	22	35	35	34	20	13	7	9

Voting. Voting in local (M = 3.45, SD = .66) and national (M = 3.43, SD = .68) elections were the most common ways that students expected to participate as adult citizens. Many students said that their first experience with voting was accompanying their parent. Kayla went to the polls with her parents almost every time they voted; although she did not believe they took her to the polls to teach her about voting, she learned that voting was important to her parents (SI4:ST). Melody was aware that her mother voted in local elections, "I want to go with her if she's voting. I want to see how it works" (SI2:ST). Students who did not accompany their parents to vote referenced their guardians' "I voted sticker" as proof that they went to the polls.

Seventeen of the 18 interviewed students said that they would have voted in the 2012 presidential election, and some regretted they were not yet old enough to vote. They also expected to vote in local elections. Ashley was the sole student I interviewed who did not support voting in national elections. She said, "I wouldn't vote on the next President, I don't think. I don't think I would want to…I don't really care about Democrats or Republicans. I'm not a partisan." I followed up by asking Ashley what she cared about. She responded, "Based on government? Nothing" (SI1:SF).

Social media. Students reported that they would probably Facebook, tweet, or blog about a political issue (M = 2.99, SD = .88). In interviewing students, I learned many of them used social media as a news source to find out about current events, both local and international. Among eighth grade students, Facebook was not their primary social media source. Rather, many reported using Vyne, Instagram, Snapchat, and Kick. Two other students shared that their parents did not allow them to use social media at all. Those who used social media either found out about current events or shared information about current events through their social media pages. My interview with Omari provides an example:

Adrianne: How do you find out about current events?

Omari: Social media.

Adrianne: Social media? What social media sites?

Omari: I'm on Instagram and Vyne.

Adrianne: And so you're scrolling, and then, you see a story about Mike Brown?

Omari: Yeah. It was like, 'My man, Mike Brown, he was shot. And he was shot for no reason, and we need to raise awareness'.

Adrianne: Right. Do you post these stories? Do you repost this stuff or you just "like" other people's stories?

Omari: I be posting them (SI5:ST).

Using social media as a news source sometimes lead students to have information from news sources that was not accurate. During classroom discussions, students often referenced "facts" that they learned from a social media website that seemed unreliable. However, students still viewed participation through social media as a mode of political participation that they planned to continue as adults.

Petitions. Interviewed students reported that they were very comfortable with signing petitions and on the surveys students reported they would probably collect signatures for a petition as adults (M = 3.28, SD = .76). Students in the four Education First schools in this study were very familiar with petitions, as many students used petitions to request particular rights or privileges in school. I believe this was likely because three of the four schools did not have student governments. Even though Kayla got in trouble for signing a petition requesting the right to wear colored jeans, "Because they said it was disrespectful and we weren't staying in our lane, I guess. [They said] we were being adults" (SI4:ST) she still planned to sign petitions as an

adult. Melody attended an Education First elementary school where she started a petition to object to group consequences for the disrespectful behaviors of a few students. In fifth grade, her class had to earn "Reach" points by earning a letter for each time the class did something well. There were a few students in her class who struggled with behavior and "the whole class had to stay inside for like the whole week, and I didn't think that was fair" (SI2:ST). Melody started a petition and collected 40 signatures when, "…one of our friends passed it to me in the hallway, and a teacher… I don't know what the teacher thought, but she asked to see my notebook. She took it from me, and gave it to the other teacher and the teachers were really mad at me" (SI2:ST). Students at Southside Academy and Scholastic Academy who reported starting or signing a petition in an Education First school had negative experiences because they "got in trouble;" yet, they supported signing petitions as a peaceful way to bring forth change. Students in Education First schools petitioned against uniform policies, whole-class and whole-grade consequences, and other policies they felt were "really unfair." Students also petitioned for certain privileges, such as the right to use mechanical pencils.

Students' awareness of and experience with petitioning resulted in them being very comfortable with the process. Jeffery, who signed the mechanical pencils petition, said that he would only sign petitions for causes he supported. His willingness to do so as an adult, "depends on what it is for" (SI5:W). Robert had also signed the mechanical pencil petition but had not signed another student's petition requesting the right to bring phones to school, "Because it's obvious that they're gonna say no" and he did not want "to be associated with that because they are going to get in trouble" (SI4:W). After voting, students spoke most highly of petitioning as a form of political participation that they would feel comfortable with as adults. Students were not only willing to sign petitions, they were also open to starting one.

Protests. The majority of students reported that they would certainly or probably take part in a peaceful march or rally (M = 3.09, SD = .92). Many interviewed students emphasized that they would only take part in peaceful protests and some students hesitated to participate in these types of events at all for fear that that they would become violent. When I asked Omari "Do you think rallying or protesting or marching is a good way to bring about change?" He said, "Nope. It just brings more controversy" (SI6:ST). He was the only student who seemed adamantly against any participation in marches. Other students were obviously hesitant. Kim shared that protesting created more problems than it solved, "Some protests can get a little crazy, some turn out good, and then some you just get hurt or don't get what you want" (SI5:ST). Tony said he might participate in a rally because they could be peaceful, "Because Martin Luther King, he protested nonviolent and Gandhi, also" (SI3:ST); however, ensuring that the protest was going to be peaceful was a must for Tony to attend.

Students who had personal experience participating in marches or rallies were willing to do so again. Ashley attended "Moral Monday" lobbying state legislators with her aunt in North Carolina. She said, "We had to go downtown and talk to people about [issues] and stuff. Yeah. It was fun though" (ST1:SF). Jake attended a protest about Trayvon Martin, "I think I've done a couple of like rallies and protests with my mom before. I know I did one for Trayvon Martin, and I did this other one. I think someone was in jail, and they thought it was unfair that they were in jail. And we went to a rally, protest, to get them free" (SI3:SF). Jake was one of three students who had attended a protest about Trayvon Martin. Jake, echoed the sentiments of the other five students who had previously attended any sort of march; he knew that he would attend a protest again.

Variance in Student Responses by Gender, Socioeconomic Status, and School

In addition to exploring the ways that eighth grade students attending "no excuse" charter schools conceive of and enact their roles as current citizens and imagine their roles as future citizens and understanding students' civic and political attitudes, and current and projected civic/political behaviors, I also questioned how those attitudes and behaviors vary by gender, socio-economic status, and school. Overall, I found that there were very few differences in students' civic behaviors and attitudes according to gender, SES, and school assignment. Exceptions included female students showed more positive perceptions of democracy and citizenship and were more supportive of equal rights than male students. Also, males reported feeling less trusting of the police than females. Students of lower-SES had more positive perceptions of democracy and citizenship and held more positive attitudes toward the United States than students of higher-SES. Students at Westside Academy, in Ms. Hampton's class, showed a higher sense of internal efficacy than those attending Southside and Scholastic Academy, in Mr. James' and Mr. Ali's classes, respectively. Students at Scholastic Academy were most supportive of equal rights and students at Southside Academy had the strongest sense of collective efficacy. Table 6 presents variances in students' responses on each scale according to gender.

Table 6

Comparisons of Students' Political and Civic Attitudes and Behaviors by Gender

	Mean	SD	SE	95% Confidence Interval		Tests of Between-Subject Effects		
				Lower	Upper	F	Sig	η2
Perceptions of Democracy/Citizenship***						12.962	.001	.175
Female	3.85	0.27	0.04	3.75	3.94			
Male	3.51	0.46	0.09	3.34	3.69			
Attitudes Toward the United States						.027	.871	.000
Female	3.12	0.72	0.12	2.87	3.38			
Male	3.10	0.58	0.11	2.87	3.32			
Equal Rights**						6.447	.014	.096
Female	3.82	0.37	0.06	3.70	3.95			
Male	3.53	0.53	0.10	3.33	3.74			
Political Trust						3.327	.073	.051
Female	2.48	0.82	0.14	2.20	2.75			
Male	2.13	0.66	0.12	1.88	2.39			
Internal Efficacy						.000	.984	.000
Female	2.84	0.62	0.10	2.63	3.05			
Male	2.84	0.67	0.13	2.58	3.10			
Citizenship Efficacy						.089	.766	.001
Female	2.65	0.66	0.11	2.42	2.87			
Male	2.60	0.75	0.14	2.30	2.89			
External Efficacy						.199	.657	.003
Female	2.81	0.44	0.08	2.65	2.96			
Male	2.87	0.57	0.11	2.65	3.09			
Collective Efficacy						.224	.637	.004
Female	3.24	0.63	0.11	3.02	3.45			
Male	3.17	0.48	0.09	2.98	3.35			
Conventional Citizenship						.001	.976	.000
Female	3.10	0.78	0.13	2.82	3.37			
Male	3.09	0.62	0.12	2.83	3.35			
School Context						.001	.975	.000
Female	3.02	0.81	0.13	2.75	3.30			
Male	3.03	0.70	0.13	2.76	3.30			
Classroom Context						.038	.847	.001
Female	1.87	0.79	0.13	2.13	1.61			
Male	1.90	0.57	0.11	2.12	1.68			
Expected Political Participation						.287	.594	.004
Female	2.98	0.62	0.10	2.78	3.19			
Male	2.91	0.49	0.09	2.72	3.09			

Note: *significant at the .05 level, **significant at the .01 level, ***significant at the .001 level

Gender. With only a few exceptions, overall there were no statistically significant differences by gender for students' concepts, attitudes, and behavior. Indeed, only responses to two scales showed statistically significant differences between male and female students. Although, students of both genders had a positive perception of democracy overall, responses to the *Perceptions of Democracy/Citizenship* scale indicated that females (M= 3.85) tended to have a more positive perception of democracy than males (M=3.51). Within that scale, females (M= 3.89, SD= .53) reported a statistically significant higher mean than males (M= 3.64, SD= .49) on the item regarding whether all people should have their social and political rights respected, t (61) = -1.872, p = .066. There was also a statistically significant difference between males' and females' responses to the item addressing whether all citizens should have the right to elect their leaders freely. Females (M= 3.94, SD= .23) reported an overall higher mean than males (M= 3.46, SD= .74), *t* (61) = -3.591, p = .001. That is, on these two items, females tended to strongly agree while males tended to agree that all people should have their rights respected and all citizens should have the right to elect leaders.

The *Equal Rights* scale also showed that females (M= 3.82, SD= .37) were more supportive of equal rights for minorities, women, and immigrants than males (M= 3.53, SD= .53). Females (M= 3.71, SD= .8) were more likely to strongly agree than males (M= 3.54, SD= .84) on items addressing the equal rights of men and women. There was a statistically significant difference between males and females on the item "All racial groups should have an equal chance to get a good education in the United States"; females reported a higher mean (M= 3.89, SD= .4) than males (M= 3.41, SD= .8) *t* (60) = .000, p = .003. Also, there was a statistically significant difference between males and females on the item addressing whether immigrant children should have the same opportunities for education that other children in the country have.

Females reported an overall higher mean (M= 3.83, SD= .45), than males (M= 3.39, SD= .98) t (59) = .000, p = .022. Again, on these items female students were more likely to strongly agree while males were more likely to agree.

Although findings on the *Political Trust* scale overall did not yield statistically significant differences by gender, it is important that I note statistically significant differences between males and females on one item on the *Political Trust Scale*, $F(58) = 3.327$, $p = .183$. There was a statistically significant difference between males and females in response to the item addressing trust in the police, with males reporting an overall lower mean (M= 1.72, SD= .81) than females (M= 2.11, SD= .95), t (62) = .989, p = .082. Boys' responses leaned toward "not at all" trusting the police whereas females tended toward trusting the police "a little."

Reinforcing the survey results, during classroom observations, I observed that overall there appeared to be no gender differences in students' beliefs, attitudes, and reported civic/political behaviors. However, In Mr. James' and Ms. Hampton's classes male students were more vocal and also more likely than females to respond to questions without being called on by the teacher. This was especially true during moments of classroom discussion. In Mr. Ali's class, the opposite was true; female students were especially vocal and I identified two female students who seemed to be classroom leaders. I selected one of those leaders, Kayla, to interview. Analyzing Kayla's interview, I noticed that she used words such as "community" and "others" often when describing her ideas about citizenship and her civic commitments. Thus, I ran a simple text analysis in *NVivo* on the words "community" and "others" and I found that those words appeared on six of seven interviews with female students. Statements such as "do good things for the community" (SI4:ST), "beneficial to our community" (SI3:W), and "…you would live in a very one-sided community and that would be… it wouldn't be affective for everyone"

(SI2:W) were made by females. In contrast, four out of eight male students used the words "community" and "others" in their interviews.

Socioeconomic status. In examining possible SES differences, I ran *t*-tests to examine the means between lower-SES and higher-SES students' responses. I found that on 10 of 12 scales, there were no statistically significant differences in responses between groups by SES (as measured by eligibility for the free or reduced price lunch program). Table 7 reports the variances in students' political and civic attitudes and behaviors according to socioeconomic status.

Table 7

Comparisons of Students' Political/Civic Attitudes by Free/Reduced Price Lunch Status

	Mean	SD	SE	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Test of Between-Subject Effects		
				Lower	Upper	F	Sig	η2
Perceptions of Democracy and Citizenship*						4.06	.048	.062
Low-SES	3.76	0.34	0.05	3.66	3.86			
High-SES	3.54	0.49	0.12	3.30	3.79			
Attitudes Toward the United States*						4.14	.046	.066
Low-SES	3.20	0.67	0.10	3.00	3.41			
High-SES	2.83	0.58	0.14	2.55	3.12			
Equal Rights						2.32	1.33	.036
Low-SES	3.75	0.41	0.06	3.63	3.88			
High-SES	3.56	0.58	0.14	3.27	3.84			
Political Trust						2.44	.123	.037
Low-SES	2.41	0.78	0.11	2.18	2.64			
High-SES	2.08	0.66	0.16	1.74	2.42			
Internal Efficacy						.006	.939	.000
Low-SES	2.86	0.58	0.08	2.69	3.03			
High-SES	2.84	0.86	0.22	2.37	3.32			
Citizenship Efficacy						.422	.518	.007
Low-SES	2.61	0.66	0.09	2.42	2.80			
High-SES	2.74	0.84	0.21	2.29	3.19			
External Efficacy						.738	.394	.012
Low-SES	2.80	0.50	0.07	2.65	2.94			
High-SES	2.92	0.50	0.12	2.66	3.19			
Collective Efficacy						.392	.534	.006
Low-SES	3.23	0.49	0.07	3.08	3.37			
High-SES	3.13	0.74	0.18	2.73	3.52			
Conventional Citizenship						.427	.516	.007
Low-SES	3.14	0.67	0.10	2.94	3.34			
High-SES	3.00	0.82	0.21	2.54	3.46			
School Context						.443	.508	.000
Low-SES	3.06	0.69	0.10	2.86	3.27			
High-SES	2.93	0.92	0.22	2.47	3.38			
Classroom Context						2.28	.136	.034
Low-SES	1.80	0.64	0.09	1.98	1.61			
High-SES	2.08	0.82	0.19	2.49	1.68			
Expected Political Participation						.592	.444	.009
Low-SES	2.99	0.55	0.08	2.84	3.15			
High-SES	2.87	0.61	0.14	2.57	3.18			

Note: *significant at the .05 level, **significant at the .01 level, ***significant at the .001 level

Two scales showed significant differences for responses between students who received free/reduced price lunch and those who did not. First, on the *Perceptions of Democracy and Citizenship* scale low-SES students (M= 3.76, SD= .34) were more likely to support democratic principles such as free speech and open elections than high-SES students (M=3.54, SD= .49). These statistically significant differences also occurred in response to individual items on the *Perception of Democracy* scale. Low-SES students (M= 3.87, SD= .34), were more likely than high-SES students (M= 3.45, SD= .61) to strongly agree that everyone should always have the right to express their opinions freely, t (62) = -3.526, p = .001. Additionally, students of lower-SES (M= 3.83, SD= .44) were more likely to strongly agree that all citizens have the right to elect their leaders freely than students of higher-SES (M= 3.50, SD= .78); this finding was also significant, t (62) = -3.591, p = .039. Overall, students from less privileged backgrounds were more likely to endorse democratic values than more fortunate students in that they were more likely to "strongly agree" with statements.

On the *Attitudes Toward the United States* scale there was a statistically significant difference between responses from students who received free/reduced price lunch and those who did not $F(59) = 4.14$, $p = .046$. Students who did not receive free lunch reported a statistically significant lower mean (M= 2.83, SD= .58) than students who did (M = 3.2, SD = .67). This result indicates that students who did not receive free and reduced price lunch, had less positive attitudes toward the United States. Although students of higher-SES had less positive attitudes toward the United States on all items on this scale; only, two items yielded statistically significant differences. Students of lower-SES had more positive attitudes toward the United States (M= 3.19, SD= .88) than higher-SES students (M=2.50, SD= .78), t (59) = -2.862, p = .006 on the item "I have great respect for the United States." Lower-SES students also strongly

agreed that "I am proud to live in the United States" (M= 3.46, SD= .67), whereas higher-SES students only somewhat agreed with the same statement (M= 2.61, SD= 1.09), t (57) = -3.669, p = .001. I cannot offer any additional qualitative data in this section because I was unaware of students free/reduced price lunch status during observations. Also, I did not request that students disclose their free and reduced price lunch status during interviews.

School. On nine of 12 scales there were no statistically significant differences in responses among students from the three schools as can be seen in Table 8. Only three scales yielded statistically significant differences when comparing students' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. Students at Scholastic Academy, in Mr. Ali's class, were most supportive of equal rights; students attending Westside Academy, in Ms. Hampton's class, had the highest sense of internal efficacy, and students attending Southside Academy, in Mr. James' class, displayed the highest sense of collective efficacy. First, although the students at Scholastic Academy (M=3.81, SD= .48) and the students at Westside Academy (M=3.75, SD= .28) "strongly agreed" with equal rights for gender groups, races, and immigrants, students at Southside Academy (M=3.46, SD= .61) tended to "agree" that individuals from those groups should have equal rights, $f(61)=3.013$, $p=.057$. On almost every item on the *Equal Rights* scale, students at Southside Academy were more likely to "agree" with particular rights, whereas students at Scholastic and Westside Academy tended to "strongly agree" with equality in education for racial groups, equal opportunities for good jobs, and the same rights and responsibilities of all racial groups.

Table 8
Comparisons of Students' Political and Civic Attitudes and Behaviors by School

	Mean	SD	SE	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Tests of Between Subject Effects		
				Lower	Upper	F	Sig	η2
Perceptions of Democracy/Citizenship						.693	.504	.022
Southside	3.64	0.49	0.12	3.38	3.90			
Westside	3.67	0.39	0.08	3.50	3.83			
Scholastic	3.77	0.32	0.07	3.64	3.91			
Attitudes Toward the United States						.383	.684	.013
Southside	3.00	0.75	0.19	2.60	3.40			
Westside	3.19	0.60	0.13	2.92	3.45			
Scholastic	3.07	0.67	0.14	2.78	3.36			
Equal Rights*						3.01	.057	.090
Southside	3.46	0.61	0.15	3.13	3.79			
Westside	3.75	0.28	0.06	3.63	3.87			
Scholastic	3.81	0.48	0.10	3.61	4.01			
Political Trust						.395	.676	.013
Southside	2.31	0.89	0.22	1.85	2.77			
Westside	2.43	0.75	0.15	2.11	2.74			
Scholastic	2.23	0.68	0.14	1.94	2.52			
Internal Efficacy **						4.867	.011	.138
Southside	2.84	0.69	0.17	2.47	3.21			
Westside	3.12	0.43	0.09	2.95	3.30			
Scholastic	2.57	0.71	0.15	2.26	2.88			
Citizenship Efficacy						1.16	.319	.036
Southside	2.74	0.63	0.15	2.41	3.06			
Westside	2.74	0.59	0.12	2.50	2.98			
Scholastic	2.46	0.85	0.18	2.09	2.83			
External Efficacy						.858	.429	.028
Southside	2.93	0.45	0.11	2.70	3.16			
Westside	2.73	0.55	0.11	2.50	2.96			
Scholastic	2.86	0.47	0.10	2.65	3.07			
Collective Efficacy*						3.12	.051	.094
Southside	3.35	0.51	0.12	3.09	3.61			
Westside	3.31	0.42	0.08	3.13	3.48			
Scholastic	2.97	0.67	0.14	2.67	3.27			
Conventional Citizenship						.174	.841	.006
Southside	3.20	0.53	0.13	2.92	3.47			
Westside	3.07	0.72	0.15	2.75	3.39			
Scholastic	3.07	0.84	0.18	2.69	3.45			

School Context						.059	.943	.002
Southside	3.04	0.57	0.14	2.75	3.33			
Westside	3.06	0.83	0.17	2.71	3.41			
Scholastic	2.99	0.82	0.16	2.65	3.32			
Classroom Context						1.26	.290	.038
Southside	1.79	0.70	0.17	1.44	2.15			
Westside	1.75	0.66	0.13	1.48	2.03			
Scholastic	2.05	0.72	0.14	1.75	2.35			
Expected Political Participation						.171	.843	.005
Southside	2.95	0.53	0.13	2.68	3.22			
Westside	3.01	0.49	0.10	2.81	3.22			
Scholastic	2.92	0.66	0.13	2.65	3.19			

Note: *significant at the .05 level, **significant at the .01 level, ***significant at the .001 level

Students attending Westside Academy, in Ms. Hampton's class, indicated a statistically significant higher sense of internal efficacy f(63)= 4.867, p=.011 than students attending Southside and Scholastic Academy. Further the difference between means for Scholastic and Southside were significant at the .05 level $f(46) = 3.988$, $p = .052$. Overall, Ms. Hampton's Westside students "agreed" that they had political opinions worth listening to and that they could effectively participate in political discussions (M=3.12, SD= .43), whereas, Mr. James' and Mr. Ali's students "somewhat agreed" with their ability to participate (M= 2.57, SD=. 71; M=2.84, SD= .69), respectively. Looking at individual items, there was also a statistically significant difference among school/class groups on the item, "I am able to understand most political issues easily" F(61) = 2.461, p = .094. The highest mean was reported by Ms. Hampton's Westside Academy students (M = 3.24, SD = .44) and the lowest mean was reported by Mr. Ali's Scholastic Academy students (M= 2.78, SD= .74). On the item "I have a good understanding of the political issues facing the United States", F(2, 59) = 1.793, p = .17, students attending Westside Academy and Southside Academy both "agreed"; (Westside, M= 3.12, SD= .48; Southside, M = 3.13, SD = .83; Scholastic M=2.78 SD=.90). Notably, the high standard

deviations for student responses at Southside and Scholastic indicate a wide range of responses, with some students agreeing and some disagreeing.

There was a statistically significant difference in *Collective Efficacy* by school F(62)-3.119, p=.051, and the effect size of school membership (eta squared) is .094. Students at Southside Academy (M=3.35, SD=.51) reported a higher sense of collective efficacy than did students at both Westside (M=3.31, SD=0.42) and Scholastic Academy (M=2.97, SD=.67). Additionally, a post hoc Tukey test indicated marginally significant differences between Southside and Scholastic student responses (p=.081) and between Westside and Scholastic student responses on this scale (p=.098).

Interestingly, there was not a statistically significant difference by school on the scale addressing *School Context*, F(2, 63) = .059, p = .943. Overall, students reported they had a "moderate" influence on the decision-making processes within their school (Westside, M=3.06, SD= 0.83; Southside, M=3.04, SD= 0.57; Scholastic, M=2.99; SD= 0.82).

Also, there was not a statistically significant difference by school on the scale addressing *Classroom Context*, $F(2, 64) = 1.261$, $p = .290$, which supports my qualitative findings that students at all three schools did not have many opportunities for civic engagement in their classrooms. The lowest mean on the Classroom Context scale was reported by Ms. Hampton's Westside Academy students (M=1.75, SD= 0.66) and the highest mean was reported by Scholastic Academy students (M=2.05, SD= 0.72). Overall, students at all of the schools seemed to feel they rarely had input to what occurred in the classroom.

In answering research question three, the interviewed students' conceptions of citizenship and their civic/political attitudes were varied. Various students' defined *citizen* as a residential status, legal status, and an action. Overall, students had positive attitudes toward the nation and

toward equal rights for all, with females strongly agreeing that all should have rights where males tended to agree. Additionally, students overall displayed low levels of political trust with males in particular indicating lower levels of trust in the police than females. Interviewed students showed varied levels of internal efficacy, low external efficacy, and higher collective efficacy. For the most part students agreed that they had some influence in their school, but rarely discussed issues and they were not encouraged to express their views in classes.

The 18 students participating in the interviews and the 69 students surveyed were politically socialized by several agents including school, social media, teachers, and their families. Many students already voted, petitioned, and participated in protests and expected to continue these behaviors as adults; however, voting was the most salient. Many of the opportunities to participate in political and civic social action, such as voting, petitioning, or discussing current events, occurred in schools. Families also encouraged youth to vote, follow the news, protest, and be active citizens in their communities. On most scales, there were no differences by gender, SES, and school. Indeed with respect to gender only two scales, *Perceptions of Democracy* and *Equal Rights*, yielded statistically significant results. With respect to SES, only two scales, *Perceptions of Democracy* and *Attitudes Toward the United States*, yielded statistically significant differences; on 10 scales there were no significant differences by SES. And somewhat surprisingly, in light of my observational data on school ethos, there were only three differences by school on scales, including *Equal Rights*, *Internal Efficacy*, and *Collective Efficacy*. Most surprisingly, there were no significant differences by school on the *School and Classroom Context* scales.

In summary, the four Education First schools I observed similarly adopted the structured culture often associated with “no excuse” schools but varied in their implementation of the

Education First model. The four observed schools were also similar in their lack of attention to civic education as a part of the schools' overall mission and culture. Within the three social studies classes I observed, teachers explicitly taught the state standards, as required by their schools, but also said they wanted students to become critical thinkers and active citizens. However, direct-instruction was the primary form of instruction and teachers offered limited opportunities for students to engage in learning beyond completing worksheets or listening to lectures. Finally the 69 students I observed and surveyed in the three eighth grade social studies classes reported a desire to become active citizens; they were already engaging in civically enriching activities in their communities and, sometimes, in school. Students were excited about becoming future voters and, overall, supported and trusted the democratic process.

Chapter V: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the ways in which students attending "no excuse" charter middle schools are prepared for democratic citizenship through school ethos and the intended, implemented, and received social studies curriculum. I also explored the ways in which students attending such schools conceived of and enacted their roles as current citizens and imagined their roles as future citizens. I investigated students' civic and political attitudes, and current and projected civic and political behaviors, exploring the variance in those attitudes according to students' gender, socio-economic status, and school.

In order to answer the three research questions that guided this study, I observed the school culture in four middle schools in one "no excuse" charter school network, which I called "Education First," in the urban Southeastern United States. I observed one eighth grade social studies classroom in each of three of the participating schools for three months per classroom. I interviewed the teachers of the three observed classes and six students enrolled in each class. I also surveyed all 69 students in the observed classrooms and interviewed the school leaders in each of the four participating schools. I triangulated data as I analyzed interview transcripts, observation notes, survey responses, and research memos for emerging themes. The findings from this study are limited to the four charter schools belonging to the same network within one Southeastern school district. Nevertheless, they may provide insights to similar schools in other settings.

Civic Education through School Ethos

Civic education organizations emphasize the original purpose of public schools in the United States was to prepare an educated citizenry to participate in the governing of the nation (Gould, 2012). However, none of the four schools in this study had explicit goals to educate

students to that end. There were several factors that influenced the lack of attention to civic preparation including: 1) the omission of civic goals in the mission statements of the overall network and of the four schools I observed; 2) emphasis on test performance and competition; 3) lack of racial and economic diversity in charter schools; and, 4) punitive discipline policies that promote unquestioning conformity. Still, Education First's commitment to involving students in extra-curricular activities and mandating character training could have some positive outcomes. Overall, in the "no excuse" context I studied, the civic purpose of schools seemed to be sacrificed to prepare students to succeed in and perpetuate a neo-liberal society.

Omission of Civic Missions

Overall, the Education First network was not focused on the preparation of participating democratic citizens. Although the four pillars guiding the Education First network (high-expectations, more time, focus on results, choice and commitment) might assist in getting students to college, they do not necessarily prepare students for civic life. The network leader published articles stating that he envisioned students becoming civic actors by teaching students to have upstanding character traits.

Similarly, although school leaders acknowledged that preparing students for citizenship was a worthwhile ideal, none of them expressed that the preparation of students for citizenship was an explicit goal of his or her school. Three of the four participating schools' mission statements stated intents to prepare students to succeed in the "competitive" world and "attend college." Education First schools were not unique in their adoption of competitive and college-ready language. The local public school district in which this study took place also had an explicit goal that "every student will graduate ready for college and career." The absence of civic goals in the school missions of both charter and traditional public schools in districts in this study

supports the claim that the civic mission of schools has waned in many states (Gould, 2011; Ravitch, 2013).

Importantly, the Education First network successfully met, and constantly measured, their stated goals. All four of the schools I observed were mission aligned as they enforced behavioral codes, prepared students to succeed on standardized tests, and extended time in school. If Education First made it a network goal to prepare students to become active citizens, I believe that the task would be accomplished. However, because civic education is not part of a high-stakes state test that affects school funding, network leaders are not incentivized to include civic goals in their mission. The lack of emphasis on civic education is not unique to the Education First network; researchers have found that even charter schools that have civic goals as their chartering missions often fail to concentrate on civic outcomes because of their emphasis on math and reading test performance (Lake & Miller, 2012).

Test Performance and Competition

The Education First schools I studied were similar to many urban traditional public and charter schools in their emphasis on obtaining high literacy and mathematics test scores (Hoxby, et al., 2009; Lake & Miller, 2012; Simburg & Rosa, 2013) because these scores are used to affect future funding under NCLB. Like many other CMOs, Education First was explicit in their emphasis on test-performance. As recommended by Whitman (2008), Education First and other charter school networks (KIPP, Uncommon Schools, YES Schools, Success Academies, Achievement First, and the National Heritage Academies) required "a rigorous, college-prep curriculum." I observed teachers explicitly informing students of what they "had to know for the test" and drilling facts for students to memorize.

Perhaps Education First's goal to get students to graduate from high school and enroll into a college is a first step toward civic engagement. Researchers have consistently shown that those who receive more education are more likely to be civically engaged (CIRCLE, 2010; File & Crissey, 2010). Getting students to college could be an important outcome of attending Education First schools. However, I am unsure if schools like Education First adopt language around college-admissions to attract parents or if they are truly committed to students' success in institutions of higher education. If Education First, and other "no excuse" schools, are truly committed to providing a pathway to successful completion of college, then encouraging conformity instead of creativity and compliance instead of curiosity will not assist in reaching this goal. Eighty-nine percent of students who complete an Education First middle school enroll in college but only 31% of them graduate (*College Completion Report*, 2011). Though the network has quadrupled the rate of low-income students who attend college, its policies and practices do not ensure college completion.

Many urban schools serving poor students of color are taking on neo-liberal language by emphasizing competition and accountability. Evans (2015) is one of many scholars who critiqued the ways in which accountability reform has damaged civic education by applying the practices that are associated with successful businesses, such as repeated measurement, to schools. He states, "The accountability movement…has served to make the economic purposes of education paramount, making the well-prepared worker its chief product and largely neglecting the social and aesthetic dimensions of schooling" (Evans, 2015; p. 30). Ravitch (2013), who was once a proponent of school reform that encouraged testing to measure accountability for teachers and schools, has become a critic. She now conducts research that

reveals the intentions behind and long-term consequences of educational reforms that encourage privatization of public schooling. She wrote,

> Though they speak of "reform," what they really mean is deregulation and privatization. When they speak of "accountability," what they really mean is a rigid reliance on standardized testing as both the means and the end of education. When they speak of "effective teachers," what they really mean is teachers whose students produce higher scores on standardized tests every year, not teachers who inspire their students to love learning…When they speak of "no excuses," they mean a boot-camp culture where students must obey orders and rules without question…When they speak of "achievement" or "performance" they mean higher scores on standardized tests. When they speak of "data-driven instruction," they mean that test scores and graduation rates should be the primary determinant of what is best for children and schools. When they speak of "competition," they mean deregulated charters and deregulated private schools competing with highly regulated public schools (p. 34).

Additionally, Ravitch (2013) and others have expressed concern that both Democrats and Republicans support the neo-liberal agenda towards privatization (Dingerson, Miner, Peterson, & Walters, 2008; Evans, 2015). Conservatives encourage the free-market approach to education and support charter schools as providing families with educational choices (Dingerson, et al., 2008; Ravitch, 2013). Liberals' positions toward charter schooling are mixed. Many liberals encourage the opportunity for innovation and/or for marginalized families to access better schools. Those states with strong teachers' unions lament the comparisons made between charter schools and nearby traditional public schools. Many teachers' unions have also been critical of teachers who work in charter schools with little legal protections. The three recent U.S.

presidents, from both political parties, have all promoted legislation that encouraged testing and charter school creation. Some critics regret that the original innovative intent of charter schools has been lost by neo-liberals who use charter schools to privatize public education by competing with, and shaming, traditional public schools (Dingerson, et al., 2008; Elliot, 2013)

Lack of Racial and Economic Diversity

The four Education First schools in this study, like many urban charter schools, were racially isolated and served poor Black and Brown students (Frankenberg, et al., 2010; Grady & Bielick, 2010; The state of public, 2012). The lack of racial and socioeconomic diversity could have varied affects on students' civic development. When considering the lack of racial diversity, scholars concerned with the preparation of democratic citizens agree that diverse classroom settings can promote tolerance and help students learn how to deliberate with others across difference (Hess, 2009; Parker, 2003). Without diversity those opportunities are missed. Recent researchers have shown that many youth are growing up in politically homogenous communities. And although political homogeneity of schools and classrooms can lead to increased political participation, it does not foster respect for differing views (Hess & McAvoy, 2015). Based on the findings in my study, I believe that the racial homogeneity of the classes I observed allowed teachers and students to discuss topics that impacted the lives of Black youth. I noticed that teachers specifically raised topics to interest their students, as they related to both students' race and class. Previous research has shown that students who attend racially isolated schools are more likely to vote and discuss current events than those in racially diverse schools (Campbell, 2007).

Considering that approximately 70 percent of the youth enrolled in the four Education First schools in this study qualified for free and reduced price lunch, and were therefore

considered socioeconomically disadvantaged, the role of schools as a civically socializing agent is important. I am concerned that these students who likely have less access to the social and political capital of more privileged students might be further disadvantaged by attending a charter school that focuses on test performance in math and reading and neglects civic education. However, my concerns are somewhat eased because many students who attend charter schools have involved and engaged parents. Some researchers have shown that the minority and low-income students who attend charter schools are socioeconomically better off than their peers in public school (Carly, Jacobson, Mishel, & Rothstein, 2005). Students' parents or guardians who seek alternative educational opportunities complete long application processes, commit to 20 hours of service to the school each year, and buy school uniforms reflecting their commitment to their children's educational success. These parents may also be connected and engaged in their communities. Thus, attending a charter school could mean that these students, who are economically disadvantaged, have social capital through their parent's advocacy for their education.

Discipline Policies and Practices

Finally with respect to school ethos, like Lack (2009; 2011) I was especially concerned that the strict-behavioral codes in the "no excuse" environment hindered preparation for democratic citizenship. "Culture week," the two-week orientation in which students earned their chair, desk, classroom, and school uniform, was jokingly called "legal hazing" by teachers and administrators in all four participating schools. I agree that I witnessed a hazing process that, in many ways, mirrored the hazing process of many college fraternities and sororities. Although students had to line up repeatedly until the line was perfect, when they did create a perfect line, they rejoiced. When students earned their right to a chair, they smiled, with a look of

accomplishment, as they sat down. The students and teachers appeared to be very proud of what they accomplished with the "Education-matizing" process. Researchers of hazing processes on college campuses similarly found that harsh treatment and fun predicted group identity. They also found that discomforting inductions increased social dependence on group opinion and approval and "results across studies suggested that hazing's task masters are schooling skills and attitudes, conveying hierarchy, and promoting social dependency" (Keating, Pomerantz, Pommer, Ritt, Miller, & McCormick, 2005). Students in the four Education First schools expressed a strong kinship with their classmates and teachers, many expressed feeling proud and lucky to be attending an Education First school.

Other researchers who studied "no excuse" charter schools, like me, identified the "softer side" of a "no excuse" ethos, such as an increased sense of teamwork amongst students and faculty (Boyd, 2014). All four of the Education First schools I observed had a close and comfortable environment, this was especially true of Westside and Southside Academy. Because students and teachers spent so much time together, in both instructional spaces and casual environments, in the midst of "no excuses" there was an atmosphere of trust, affection, and love. I was cautioned by the principals of two schools not to think that what I witnessed in their schools was widespread across the Education First network. One noted that the predominance of Black administrators and teachers in the schools I observed were due to the city in which the study took place. In contrast, nationally most of the Education First network is lead by White administrators and teachers who instructed Black and Brown children.

Boyd (2014) said, "It is true that an atmosphere of order generally prevails. We found that schools that begin by establishing a culture of strict discipline, in neighborhoods where violence and disorder are widespread, ease off once a safe, tolerant learning environment is secured" (p.5).

Boyd's statement attests to the assumption that students are inherently victims of their environment thus justifying the harsh treatment that they receive. I agree with Goodman (2013) that the "theory of broken windows" allows students to be treated as criminals before they ever step out of line and results in extreme expectations, such as children sitting with their hands clasped atop the desk at all times. Operating in fear of student misbehavior is not unique to "no excuse" charter schools, but also permeates many urban traditional public schools. Whereas students at Education First have uniform checks before starting the school day, students in the nearby public school district walk through metal detectors and have their book bags searched each day (Hankin, Hertz, & Simon, 2011).

Supporters of zero-tolerance and similar policies contend that strict uniform policies and metal detectors increase safety and well-being of school children by sending a powerful message of deterrence (Casella, 2003). Parents and students in my study cited safety as one of the reasons they were privileged to attend an Education First school. However, policies such as these have resulted in the criminalization of youth, particularly urban youth, by increasing the suspension and expulsion rates of these students throughout the nation (Cregor & Hewitt, 2011; Gregory, et. al, 2010). Charter schools serving poor Black and Brown students consistently show higher suspension rates than nearby public schools (Brown, 2013), because they can adopt additional academic and behavior standards. This was true of two of the schools in this study. Overall, the charter schools in this study varied in their suspension rates; however they were consistent with the already high suspension and expulsion rates in the district (Fortner, Faust-Berryman, & Keehn, 2014). Many students in charter school settings are subject to more rules and more consequences for breaking rules than their peers in traditional public schools (Baker, et al., 2012; Vasquez-Heilig, et al., 2011).

Contrary to Boyd's (2014) claim that the "no excuse" expectations taper off throughout the school year, in the four schools featured in this study, expectations remained high. Though the "culture week" had the strictest atmosphere, the administrators and teachers I observed consistently reinforced behavioral expectations. Teachers might allow a sloppy line because the class had to hurry to an assembly, but if the students seemed to have forgotten what the expectation was, teachers and administrators would stop to drill the routine back into students' minds and bodies. When school started, each of the four participating schools ran flawlessly. Students had learned how to greet an adult by giving a firm handshake, making eye contact, and speaking up. Each student practiced this as they greeted the school leader each morning before proceeding to the uniform station where their uniforms were checked. This process reminded me of a historical time in which other marginalized groups, specifically Native Americans, who were viewed as a threat, or nuisance, to society were educated in such oppressive ways (Adams, 1995). The goals of the Carlisle School, and like schools, were to, "kill the Indian and save the man" by removing the family culture from Native youth so that they could join into society by taking on the language, practices, and religion of their oppressors. There are several parallels between what happened to Native American students in those schools and what happened to students in the four "no excuse" schools I observed. Posters forbidding students to use slang conveyed their home language and dialect was "inappropriate" and worthy of consequences if used within the school setting. Requiring students to wear uniforms and strictly enforcing how those uniforms are worn, is not just about the conformity that uniforms provide but also about the control of bodies and culture and sends messages about what behaviors are valued and worthy and which are not. Lack (2011) writes that White and upper class Americans, who often fund and support many "no excuse" schools would not

subject their own children to the discipline policies or the instructional practices that they support for low-income and minority students. I, too, believe this is true.

Extra-curricular Activities

Education First was like most "no excuse" schools in adopting Whitman's (2008) recommendation of "more time." Education First joined other "no excuse" schools by implementing a 10-hour school day, Saturday school, and summer school. All four Education First schools in this study offered students opportunities to be involved in extra-curricular activities and clubs. Due to extended hours, Southside Academy and Scholastic Academy incorporated these activities into the school day. Scholastic Academy students enrolled in Student Government or Debate Club as a class and every student at Southside Academy had to learn to play an instrument in "music appreciation." Students who played sports practiced after school. Importantly, students who struggled academically, especially in math and reading, often had their extracurricular class replaced with a "reading support" or "math enrichment" class and were therefore unable to participate in extra-curricular activities during the school day. Victorious and Westside Academy offered after-school clubs that were well-attended; however, some students stated that they did not get involved in clubs because the day was already too long and they wanted to go home. Students and teachers often complained of being tired.

Participating in extra-curricular activities in school is associated with increased civic engagement. Putnam (2015) notes the importance of extra-curricular activities igniting civic and political interest in youth. Researchers have found that participating in extra-curricular activities in high school is associated with adult civic engagement and participation (McFarland & Thomas, 2006; Metz, McLellan, and Youniss, 2003; Thomas & McFarland, 2010). Students at Education First were encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities because participation

related to college admissions. This could ultimately have a positive effect on adult civic engagement, making this something that Education First schools do well.

Character Training

Additionally, I believe Education First's explicit messages about character are in many ways positive. Researchers have shown that many youth are not being politically and civically socialized by many of the agents, such as church and extra-curricular clubs, that once taught youth values such as caring for oneself and others, kindness, and teamwork (Flanagan, Levine, & Settersten, 2009; Godsay, Kawashima-Ginsberg, Kiesa, & Levine, 2012; Levine, 2013). Each Education First school I observed taught students a variety of character strengths that are outlined in the popular book *Character Strengths and Virtues* (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Integrity, social intelligence, grit, and self-control were a few values that were promoted by the schools. Though these values are admirable and might benefit students if adopted in their lives, the ways that these values were reinforced throughout the school day implied that students lacked them and needed to develop such skills. A student who wiggled while in line would be reminded to, "Remember our value and show some self-control" or if the teacher left the room, she would ask the students to "show integrity" by not talking when she stepped out. The ways in which these values were taught implied the students were deficit in virtue and needed to obtain such habits. This finding was echoed by Goodman (2013) who noted that elementary students attending "no excuse" schools internalized views of themselves as "bad" and deserving of the harsh treatment they received.

Understanding that students often internalize their role as citizens from their experiences in schools and communities (Campbell, 2012). I am concerned that students in the "no excuse" charter schools I studied are learning to prioritize competition over community, personal

accountability over social welfare, and slave-like hard-work over a balanced lifestyle. In this context, students are learning to play the game instead of learning to change the game. Playing the game includes taking on the values, language, and assumed desires of the White power structure in order to earn admission to colleges and jobs. However, the education that students are being offered may not prepare them to successfully compete with students of more privileged backgrounds because they are not being prepared as creative thinkers who create knowledge, but as workers who are unquestioning order-takers. In an environment where everything is earned through their behavior, students are trained to be consumers for the free-market. Changing the game involves raising students' awareness that "the game" is built on a system that oppresses the Black, Brown, and poor. Alternatively students could be taught to change the political and socioeconomic system in which they exist through their own civic advocacy and action.

Citizenship Education in Three Eighth Grade Social Studies Classes

The three teachers who participated in this study, Ms. Hampton, Mr. Ali, and Mr. James, were alike in several important ways that aligned them with many urban school teachers and more specifically, charter school teachers. First, the three teachers that participated in this study were not certified in traditional teacher education programs. Also, they taught at least one year as an uncertified teacher, thus supporting the oft-cited concern that urban school districts that serve poor children of color are more likely to have uncertified teachers in the classroom than more White and affluent schools (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Further, these teachers did not have strong backgrounds in the subjects they taught, limiting their pedagogical content background. Second, all three teachers created their classroom curricula using state standards as a guide; thus succumbing to standards-based instruction which has become commonplace in U.S. public schooling. Also, "best practices" recommended by scholars in social studies such as controversial issues discussion (Hess, 2008; Hess & McAvoy, 2015) and incorporation of issues-

centered instruction (Hahn, 1996) were scarce; despite, teachers saying these were important practices. Third, teachers recognized the importance of guiding students to become active citizens but struggled to figure out the appropriate way to influence their political outcomes without appearing to indoctrinate.

Teachers' Preparation

Mr. James and Mr. Ali embodied the concerns that many researchers have about Teach for America (TFA) teachers in urban schools. Like many urban school teachers, Mr. Ali and Mr. James were both young, less experienced, TFA teachers (Carruthers, 2012; Smith, 2005) who had been assigned to the "no excuse" school in which they taught. TFA places one-third of its teachers in charter schools (*Teach for America,* 2014). The two teachers' decisions to leave Education First schools after just two years reflected the alarming statistics indicating teacher turnover in charter schools is twice as high as in traditional public schools (Stuit & Smith, 2012). Mr. Ali joined the 50% of TFA teachers who stop teaching altogether and enter into another profession after completing the mandatory two-years of service (Donaldson & Johnson, 2011). Of the remaining 50% of teachers who continued to teach, Mr. James joined the two-thirds of them who leave high-needs urban districts to continue teaching in traditional public schools in high-performing suburban districts (Donaldson & Johnson, 2011). Ms. Hampton represented another concern that many critics of charter schools voice, as she taught for several years without any teaching certification (Harris, 2006) which is allowed in charter schools whereas many public schools cannot hire uncertified teachers (Exstrom, 2012). Although I experienced Ms. Hampton as a master teacher, I did have concern about her earlier experiences teaching several years without proper teaching credentials.

I join several other researchers in expressing concern about the injustice teacher-turnover

causes poor children of color (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Ravitch, 2013). At the end of the year Mr. James and the entire eighth grade team, all second year TFA teachers, left Southside Academy complaining of burn-out, which is the most commonly cited reason charter school teachers leave the profession (Stuit & Smith, 2009; 2012). Yongmei (2012) also found charter school teachers perceived that they had a significantly heavier workload than traditional school teachers, which might explain why some charter school teachers' like Mr. James, choose to continue his teaching career in more traditional schools.

My conversations with Mr. Ali and Mr. James revealed that they were somewhat disheartened by their experience with urban charter schooling. Though they expressed a strong affinity toward students and teaching; they said they could not continue to work from seven in the morning until six in the evening. Instead of joining with other teachers to require that the school change its policies to accommodate their needs, they left. The extremely long hours exploits young professionals who are in need of jobs and are just learning what they should expect as teachers and as professionals.

Still, all three teachers felt privileged to be in their Education First school and considered the Education First network better than traditional public schools and other charter school networks in the area. Mr. Ali, who came from public schools in another city, said, "this is nothing" in comparison to the lack of order and safety he previously experienced. Ms. Hampton, who taught in another start-up charter school network, appreciated the professionalism, funding, and support that Education First provided as a more established network. Mr. James valued the professional training that he received from Education First and TFA and planned to use those skills to benefit traditional public school students in the suburban county in which he planned to teach.

Notably, researchers have also noted the ways in which teachers' lack of content knowledge and content specific pedagogy also creates educational inequality (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Darling- Hammond (2010) is especially critical of the fact that less prepared teachers are often teaching students in schools that have the most need. In a comparative study on a novice and a veteran social studies teacher Gudmundsdottir and Shulman (1987) found:

> The important difference between the novice and the expert is manifested in a special kind of knowledge that is neither content nor pedagogy *per se.* It rests instead in pedagogical content knowledge, a form of teacher understanding that combines content, pedagogy, and learner characteristics in a unique way.

Thus, an important aspect of supporting teachers in their practice is ensuring they have a strong content background, are grounded in content specific pedagogy, and have a deep understanding of who their students are and what they need. None of the three teachers in this study were history or political science majors; indeed none were teaching in their content area (international relations, comparative religions, and sociology) nor had they received formal instruction on social studies methods.

Standards-Based Instruction

Teachers were explicit in their desire to prepare students to do well on tests. Ms. Hampton said that ensuring her students performed well on tests provided them a better, well-funded, school. Mr. James said it was his job to prepare students for the test, and he planned to do his job. Almost every assignment students were given directly correlated with a state standard. In all three schools, teachers began class by having students read the state standard they were to master for the day, and ended class checking for mastery through question and answer or a "ticket-out-the-door." The emphasis on test-performance encouraged teachers to prepare students for the

end-of-year test through rote memorization and fact-drilling.

Although I agree that standards are useful for creating a cohesive curriculum and aligning instruction and assessment, the results remain somewhat problematic because the state standards represent the lowest level of mastery that students should have at the completion of each grade. According to the state, "The performance standards provide clear expectations for instruction, assessment, and student work. They define the level of work that demonstrates achievement of the standards, enabling a teacher to know 'how good is good enough'" (State Standards, 2015). Teaching students to reach standards that are "good enough" will not prepare them to be truly competitive in society. Lack (2011; 2012) critiques the expectations in "no excuse" schools touting that their policies and practices are praised as "good enough" for minority and low-income students but would not be tolerated by White or middle class parents. I agree that educating students to meet the minimum standards is insufficient. Teaching beyond the standards best prepares students to succeed in college, careers, and as citizens; nonetheless, this requires teachers to have strong pedagogical content knowledge (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987), which the three teachers in this study did not seem to have.

Teacher Practice

Teachers' classroom practices were greatly affected by the context in which they taught. "No excuse" charter schools are similar in their implementation of teacher practices suggested in books like *Teach like a Champion* (Lemov, 2010) and *The First Days of School* (Wong, 1991), such as "SLANT," "right is right," and "do nows." Each of the three classrooms I observed adopted similar classroom structures and behavioral expectations; however, they differed in their ability to execute those expectations. Although these uniform classroom practices created a consistent classroom culture, which enabled students to focus and learn without distractions, the

well-managed classrooms were not often used to provide students with more enriching opportunities. Students spent the majority of classroom time completing worksheets, taking guided-notes, or regurgitating facts. This finding mimicked findings in other "no excuse" schools that showed standards-based direct instruction was the primary form of classroom instruction (Ellison, 2012; Lack, 2011; Ross, et al., 2007). Like the teachers in my study, many teachers in urban charter schools most often use direct instruction because they are evaluated on their students' performance and behavior (McDonald, Ross, Bol, & McSparrin-Gallagher, 2007).

I join others who critique the dominance of direct-instruction practices used in "no excuse" charter schools and many traditional public schools that serve marginalized populations (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Lack 2011; 2012). Direct-instruction, particularly in the form of lectures and excessive worksheets, limits students' ability to become critical thinkers, as these skills are often developed during authentic experiences and deliberation with others (Hess, 2009; Hess & McAvoy, 2015). I am concerned that the minority and low-income students who attend urban charter and public schools that rely heavily on direct instruction will be harmed by not learning critical, or higher-order, thinking skills. Richard Shaull (2000) wrote:

> Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world (p. 34).

The ability to think critically is pertinent to the ability to reform and restructure society to serve the needs of all of its citizens; critical-thinking skills are increasingly important for all youth, including those from historically and currently marginalized groups. Although the three teachers

in this study expressed desires for students to become critical thinkers, their classroom pedagogy did little to facilitate these life-skills.

I believe there were several factors that influenced the three teachers' decisions to rely heavily on direct instruction, although they all recognized that discussion was important in a social studies classroom. Some of those factors might include teachers' weak content background as I previously mentioned. Many "no excuse" charter schools are becoming leaders in teacher accountability through performance pay and the four schools in this study offered several performance incentives and the network was adopting performance pay in the coming school year.

Teachers in my study seemed very interested in ensuring their classrooms and their students "looked right" in the event that an administrator or potential funder walked into their classroom. Teachers spent a considerable amount of classroom time reminding students to sit up, tuck their book bags underneath their chair, or raise a "scholar hand." McNeil's (1988) famous phrase, "cover and control," describes the way in which teachers attempted to quickly cover the curriculum while controlling students. Understanding that teachers' classroom practices often result from the context in which they teach, I think there must be a structural shift in the policies that govern schools serving poor, Black, and Brown students. I second Paulo Friere (2000), "If the structure does not permit dialogue, the structure must be changed."

Although direct-instruction was most common, the three teachers made some attempts to facilitate discussions, particularly around current events and issues that pertained to the lives of Black youth. Ms. Hampton was intentional about making her classroom a space where students could express their reactions to the death of a black youth, Michael Brown. In this moment, the classroom became an important space to talk about a public issue that was on the minds of many

of the students. However, these classroom talks rarely rose to the level of discussion recommended by Hess (2009) or critical dialogue encouraged by Freire (2003). At the three Education First schools, all discussions were mediated by the teacher, even when a student responded to another student they rarely addressed them directly. The moments of dialogue in the classrooms I observed could have been enhanced by teaching students how to have discussions with each other. Hess (2009) discusses the importance of teaching effective discussion skills before opening the classroom for discussion. As intentional as Education First teachers are about teaching students how to ask or answer a question, more could be done to teach students how to formulate and effectively communicate an argument, listen carefully, and respond to others.

Researchers have also found that racially homogenous classrooms often allow for more open classroom discussion than classrooms with more diverse student populations (Campbell, 2005). Mr. Ali and Ms. Hampton both used the all-Black classroom to discuss racial issues facing Blacks in the United States. However, in discussing these important topics students often were not equipped with materials from various sources and viewpoints that might expand their knowledge and increase their willingness to consider alternatives. Discussions about the mass incarceration of Black men, media reports of the protestors in Ferguson, Missouri, and police brutality toward Black men rarely lasted more than 10 minutes and were riddled with personal stories or students sharing what they heard from another adult or media source. Also, there always seemed to be an assumption that everyone in the class was in agreement, and, seemingly, they were. Previous researchers have stated, in homogenous classrooms teachers must do more to bring in alternative views and find the divergence in student opinion on issues (Hess, 2009; Parker, 2003). It is beneficial for students to know the diversity of views in their own ethnic or

racial group concerning controversial issues and to consider varied views. Discussing controversial issues is critical for students like those attending Education First schools who have likely spent the majority of their formal schooling, and their social lives, in racially homogenous spaces.

Ms. Hampton frequently exposed students to political cartoons about current events involving Black citizens and students often struggled to find the deeper meaning. Because students struggled to understand the cartoons, Ms. Hampton's explanations of the cartoons gave students the skills to begin to think more critically about subliminal messages in photos and other sources. Researchers have found that political cartoons can be effective teaching tools in the middle school setting as they can foster students' understandings about current events (Bickford, 2011) and increase literacy skills (Gallavan, Webster-Smith & Dean, 2012). Bickford described how this approach can elicit engagement and thinking, particularly when students create their own political cartoons (2011). I agree that political cartoons served as a catalyst for helping Ms. Hampton's students understand the nuances of American politics and public opinion. They might be similarly useful in other classes.

Mr. James once allowed his students to perform skits to display their mastery of the in-take process in the juvenile justice system. Sheldon (1996) found that students report that skits are enjoyable and helpful for learning and remembering material. Admittedly, I noticed that the students in Mr. James' class appeared to be having fun when performing their skits and I appreciate the way in which skits offer students an opportunity to interact with each other and with the material. However, I was concerned that the critical nature of the issue could be lost when students were trying to entertain their classmates with their performances.

Mr. Ali incorporated an episode of a popular television show, *Scared Strait!* to teach

students about the juvenile justice system. Russell (2012) encourages teaching with film in social studies classes and asserts that film can be a powerful and meaningful instructional strategy. I would agree that Mr. Ali's use of a popular show captured students' attention and it could have served as a catalyst for meaningful discussion had students been given additional time and tools to foster classroom discussion.

Additionally, another pedagogical approach that the three teachers in this study adopted, to a limited extent, was culturally relevant pedagogy. Culturally relevant instruction acknowledges students as whole people, who are gendered, raced, classed, and sexed (Ladson-Billings, 1994; 1995) and creates a classroom environment that responds to the unique needs of students based on those identities. In culturally relevant classrooms, students' experiences are acknowledged as valuable beginnings to build upon in an academic setting. Ms. Hampton was culturally relevant in her teaching practice, by incorporating local and important Black issues, and through her "warm demanding" instructional style (Ware, 2006). Mr. Ali sought to refute negative images of Black youth in media by presenting them with alternatives (Delpit, 2010). Mr. James also attempted to raise students' awareness of issues that are important to their communities. Teachers' incorporation of culturally relevant instruction can foster educational equity. When teachers recognize difference and make adaptations to the curriculum based on those differences, students have better access to education (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto, 1992).

Social Studies and Civic Education

All three participating teachers agreed that social studies is an important subject; however, it was devalued in the schools in which they taught. Mr. James complained that in math and reading classes students with special needs had a special education teacher to support instruction; however, social studies and science teachers were not given the same support. The devaluing of

social studies, in comparison to math and reading is occurring in many schools, particularly those serving marginalized students (Gould, 2011; Grant, 2010; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008).

The three teachers in this study expressed a desire to prepare students as participating citizens through the social studies curriculum. They supported democratic principles and explicitly named voting and community involvement as behaviors that students should adopt. Additionally, they chose not to share their personal opinions on social issues or their political affiliations. Fear of unfairly influencing students caused these teachers to desire to appear neutral, particularly in expressing opinions on current events. However, on social issues of the past that still affect the present, such as school segregation, the teachers explicitly stated that the re-segregation of U.S. public schools is unjust. They appeared more comfortable critiquing past events and sharing opinions on former social injustices than current social issues. However, I felt that although Ms. Hampton also taught a standards based curriculum, her lectures had a social justice leaning. Hess and McAvoy (2015) found that 50% of teachers who taught issues-centered classes felt it was appropriate to share their views with their students and 50% said it was not. I understand teachers' reluctance to disclose their views. Researchers have reported that 50% of Americans think that social studies teachers use their classrooms to indoctrinate students towards their personal political beliefs (Lautzenheiser, Kelly, & Miller, 2011). However, 79% of high school students in one study supported teachers sharing their personal views and 77% doubted they would be influenced by their teachers' views (Hess & McAvoy, 2015). The middle school students in this study were interested in their teachers' opinions, and questioned or assumed what teachers believed. When teachers would not disclose their personal views students used teachers' facial expressions, clothing choices, and racial identity as clues about their teachers' political leanings.

Hess and McAvoy (2015) add that teachers play an important role in students' development; thus, they encourage teachers to make beneficial judgments about their practice based on the context in which they teach, the available evidence, and their educational aims. They urge teachers to strategically disclose and withhold their political views as pedagogical tools that can have a profound effect on classroom dynamics. Teachers who share in ways that are unintentional diminish the aims of the political classroom by diverting students from articulating their own views in meaningful ways; therefore weakening the power of discussion. Although all three participating teachers leaned toward withholding their views on most issues, they strategically shared their opinions on a few issues for which they desired students' acute awareness. For example, the re-segregation of public schools was an issue that all three teachers named as problematic.

The goals of the newly adopted *C3 Framework for the Social Studies State Standards* to prepare students for "college, career, and civic life" (NCSS, 2013) were only partially reached in the three classes I observed. In the state, at the time of the study, the eighth grade social studies standards that related to civic goals focused on content about the executive, judicial, and legislative branches of the state with an additional section on local governments and the juvenile justice system. Students were drilled on facts about checks and balances, how a bill becomes a law, and how old a citizen must be to run for president. Though this learning was rote, I believe that the Black students in these classes were being prepared to break the long-standing trend in which Black and Hispanic students scored lower than White and Asian students on tests of civic knowledge (NCES, 2007, 2011, 2014). However, the C3 framework advocates going beyond merely instilling facts. It recommends the use of inquiry to develop deep understanding, disciplinary processes, and civic action, which were not evident in the classes I studied. Further,

the instruction was inadequate as it was not equal to what Kahne and Middaugh (2008) noted was offered to many White and more affluent students, such as in depth discussion, simulations, and service learning. Importantly, the inequity in high-quality civic instruction was not being challenged; rather, it was reinforced through the instruction students received in the "no excuse" charter schools I observed. Researchers have shown that unequal opportunities are particularly unfortunate because high-quality civic education is often found to provide the greatest benefit to least advantaged students (Torney-Purta & Wilkenfeld, 2009).

I was impressed with the ways in which Ms. Hampton focused on students knowing their rights and responsibilities as active citizens in their communities. In all three classes, students were especially excited to learn about their rights as youth, as many expressed that their rights had been violated in their past experiences. I cannot predict how these lessons will affect students' behaviors; but I believe that students knowing their rights as Black, Brown, and low-income youth might be powerful and important. Hess (2008) and Kahne and Sporte (2004) suggest that what happens in civic education classes impacts students' civic behaviors throughout their lives. Teaching students about their rights as youth and exploring issues in their communities, as well as teaching basic structures of the government in which they could play an active role, may have a positive impact on their political actions; however, that remains for future researchers to determine.

Political Attitudes and Behaviors of Eighth Graders

The 18 students I interviewed and 69 students who participated in the survey offered insights into the political attitudes and behaviors of some eighth grade youth of color. The Black and Brown students who participated in this study reinforced many findings from previous studies on U.S. youth and Black youth; yet they differed from some findings as well. Student

surveys and interviews showed the youth in this sample were politically interested, efficacious, and involved. Sampled students supported democratic values and had somewhat positive attitudes toward the United States. Displaying high-levels of political efficacy, these students tended to envision themselves as capable citizens who could effect change through their political action. Finally, the students in this study were already civically engaged, as eighth graders, and expected to increase their involvement as voting adults.

Values, Beliefs, and Attitudes

On the *Perceptions of Democracy and Citizenship* scale, sample students' responses mirrored those of U.S. ninth graders who participated in the IEA CivEd study (Baldi, et al., 2001) and 14-year olds internationally (Schulz, et al., 2010; Torney-Purta, et al., 2001) in that students in this study were very supportive of democratic principles including freedom of expression, free elections, and political rights for all like students in the larger studies. Low-SES students in this study were more supportive of democratic ideals than high-SES students. Unfortunately, earlier studies did not explore such a possible difference between socioeconomic groups so I am unable to compare my results on this. Further, students in this study defined democracy using similar understandings as those identified by Flanagan (2013) and Hahn (1999) including individual rights and freedoms, representative government, and civic equality. Similarly, some students defined democracy as a representative government in which all people governed; however, some students here offered more critical definitions of democracy when explaining their levels of trust.

Researchers have shown that since the 1970s political trust in America has been on a slow decline (Hahn, 1998; Putman, 2000; Syvertsen, Wray-Lake, Flanagan, Wayne-Osgood, & Briddell, 2011). Students who were interviewed and surveyed in this study displayed low levels

of trust; thus somewhat supporting previous findings that show that Black and Hispanic U.S. students' trust of government institutions is lower than that of their White peers (Baldi, et al., 2001). Several studies of Black students' political attitudes have shown that negative interactions with representatives of governmental power, such as police and courts, contribute to low levels of trust (Cohen, 2010; Levinson, 2012). Similar to students in the IEA CivEd Study (Baldi, et al., 2001), female students in this study were more likely to report that they trusted government-related institutions than did their male counterparts. Also, these students' low-levels of trust are consistent with findings that youth from low-income families tend to be more distrustful of government institutions than youth from higher income families (Putman, 2015). In the aftermath of the Trayvon Martin verdict and increased police violence toward unarmed Black men, including Michael Brown, Eric Garner, and Walter Scott, youth in this study were especially skeptical of the police and courts. Issues such as police brutality, the mass incarceration of Black citizens, and inequity in the justice system are issues facing the next generation of voters and might inform their levels of trust toward American politics and governing institutions. This is especially salient for Black youth from low-income families considering that they are already members of two groups, minority and low-income, that tend to be skeptical of U.S. governing institutions.

Students in this study were like many youth, nationally and internationally, in that they had relatively positive attitudes toward their country (Schulz, et al. 2010; Torney-Purta, et al, 2001). American students in previous studies reported having overall positive feelings toward the United States (Baldi, et al., 2001); however, overall students in my study only "somewhat agreed" that the U.S. political system worked well. This is consistent with previous studies that showed Black and Brown students had less positive attitudes toward the United States than

White students (Baldi, et al., 2001). Unlike 9th graders who participated in the IEA CivEd study who showed no differences by socioeconomic group, students in this study who did not receive free or reduced-price lunch, or comparatively higher-SES students, had less positive attitudes toward the country than did low-SES students. Flanagan (2013) found that adolescents from low and middle-income schools were more likely than those from higher income schools to use individual accountability to explain poverty, homelessness, or unemployment. They were more likely to believe that the United States is an equitable society. Perhaps the low-SES students in this study had more supportive attitudes toward the country because they, too, saw themselves as personally accountable for the ways in which inequities manifested in their lives. Thus, these students were less critical of the sociopolitical structures in which they lived.

As reported in the IEA CivEd and ICCS studies, students in this study supported the equal rights of individuals from different groups including racial, gender, and immigrant groups (Schulz, et al., 2010; Torney-Purta, et al., 2001); however, the students in this study supported a variety of rights for all groups whereas previous studies found that U.S. students were less supportive of immigrant rights to speak their own languages and to vote than of educational rights (Baldi, et al., 2001). Students in this study strongly supported equal education for all children and were acutely aware of the educational inequality of schools in the city where they lived. This awareness likely resulted from teachers emphasizing educational inequality as an important issue. Putman (2015) joined other researchers in noting that racially and socioeconomically marginalized youth were aware of the inequality in American schooling and knew that there were better public schools than the schools they attended (Flanagan, 2013; Levinson, 2012).

Political Efficacy

Unlike the earlier researchers of political efficacy in Black youth (Button, 1972; Rodgers, 1974) who showed Black students as having lower political efficacy than White students, the students I interviewed were internally politically efficacious and believed that they could influence American politics through voting, petitioning, and protesting. Not only did students indicate that they were able to understand politics, they also expressed that they were qualified to participate in their own governing. Importantly, the students in this study lived in a city with a Black mayor, Black police chief, and a Black fire chief at a time when the president was also Black. These experiences with Blacks in political positions might have contributed to the higher levels of internal political efficacy in this study. None of the students in this study seemed cynical toward American politics; yet, all seemed somewhat skeptical of their government's willingness to care for them and their communities. Other researchers have found that when skepticism toward government is combined with a healthy sense of political efficacy, political participation remains steady and sometimes increases (Mollenkopf, Holdaway, Kasinitz, & Waters, 2006).

On the scale measuring *Internal Efficacy* students in this study agreed that they could influence political decision-making; however, many of them also expressed that they needed additional information to better understand major political issues. Students attending Westside Academy, in Ms. Hampton's class, reported a statistically significant higher sense of internal efficacy than students at Scholastic and Southside Academy. Perhaps this resulted from Ms. Hampton's lessons using political cartoons, mentioning of current events, and carefully sharing her political views. Consequently, I believe students' developing sense of internal efficacy might rise when they develop skills to understand complicated news stories, analyze political cartoons, and decipher legitimate news sources from opinion news. My findings are consistent with Levy's

(2011a) finding that students' efficacy increased when they were interested in an issue. Additionally, I found students' confidence and interest increased when they discussed issues facing youth of color. Also, student interviews revealed that parents played an important role increasing students' internal efficacy by exposing them to news and helping them think critically about the stories being presented. Unlike previous studies outside the United States that showed that males reported higher levels of internal efficacy than females (Schulz, et al., 2010), both males and females in this study shared similar levels of internal efficacy.

Because the *External Efficacy* scale demonstrated low reliability, I relied on qualitative data from student interviews when exploring students' external efficacy. Fourteen of 18 interviewed students expressed low confidence that the government cared about them or people in their communities; however they did not express disempowered sentiments. Levinson (2013) echoes Rodgers (1974) when she writes that minority and poor students are correct to have a lower sense of political efficacy as they are "educationally underserved, economically disadvantaged… students living in neighborhoods with limited social and political capital" (p.10). However, some researchers insist that the less efficacious one feels the less likely he or she is to participate and this is correlated with both race and class (Gould, 2012).

Bandura (1997) presents an interesting concept that might explain why some Black students maintained high efficacy in the face of limited political power. Bandura writes, "Social change efforts call for high efficacy to manage perturbing emotions because the pathways to changing the character of the environment are usually strewn with institutional barriers, stiff social resistance from vested interests, and even coercive threats and punishments" (p.30). Simply stated, it is rational for those who feel disempowered by the social structure and who try to change it to experience unwavering high-efficacy when not reaching their goals. Considering this, perhaps

Blacks who maintain high-efficacy when failing to reach their political goals become political activists.

This study is consistent with Billings' (1970) finding that Black students are politically efficacious in terms of effectiveness in groups and Levy's (2011a) finding that collective efficacy plays an important role in students' individual efficaciousness. Similarly, in another previous study, I, too, found Black high school students displayed a willingness to act in groups and they said that they are more powerful in groups than individually (Pinkney, 2014). Additionally, in this study, some students had positive experiences with collective action when they resisted the norms of Education First schools, including signing petitions for the right to use mechanical pencils. Students here reported a higher sense of collective efficacy than internal and external efficacy. Similarly, Epstein (2009) found that Black youth and adults viewed education and citizenship as individual and collective responsibilities to challenge racism for the benefit of the Black community. The more efficacious, and involved, young citizens become I believe their external efficacy might increase as well, as they would be involved in their own governing. They would be actors in creating the reality that their needs would be honored and met.

Civic Engagement

Interviewed students demonstrated an array of civic orientations. Like youth in the IEA CivEd and ICCS studies (Baldi, et al., 2001; Schulz, et al., 2010; Torney-Purta, et al., 2001), youth in this study privileged voting above all other forms of conventional citizenship and rated joining a political party as less important to being a good citizen. Using Rubin's (2012) typology as a guide, I found most interviewed students were "aware" and "empowered" citizens who recognized that change is needed for equity and fairness and saw themselves as agents of change. Much like the urban students in Rubin's (2007) study on youth civic identity, the students I interviewed "pointed

to a disjuncture between civic ideals and the reality of their lives" (Rubin, 2007, p. 478). Many youth of color in other studies have expressed similar sentiments (Levinson, 2012; Putnam, 2015; Rubin, 2012). Though students were knowledgeable of democratic ideals, many told personal stories of how these ideals did not play out in their everyday lives. Offering students enriching opportunities, such as engaging with local issues and service-learning, might help them realize the power they have in deciding what communities *can* be with their full participation.

In addition to voting, most students offered definitions of citizenship as the practices done in a classroom or a school such as "following the rules." I believe their understanding of citizenship was greatly affected by the "no excuse" context. Students expressed that they had a moderate influence within the school and very little influence in the classroom. Students reported that they were not encouraged to make up their own minds and express their opinions. Considering that students learn their roles in societies partially through what happens in school, students were learning that they should be silent and were not expected to develop attitudes toward public issues. Additionally, school practices implied that students could not be trusted to influence the spaces in which they were present (Goodman, 2013). These are oft-cited concerns about the consequences of learning in the "no excuse" environment. Interestingly, the strict behavioral culture in Education First schools might have influenced students' willingness to take civic actions, such as signing petitions, at an early age. Many students in the study who attended Education First schools since elementary school spoke of using petitions more than once to acquire specific rights and privileges within the school. When student voice was suppressed or ignored, students were empowered to undertake civic acts.

As noted by other researchers (Putnam, 2015), the students in this study seemed to have strong political socialization experiences through their families. Parental involvement seemed to be

very high in the Education First schools I observed, as it was in other charter schools (Ravitch, 2013). Often students learned about current events from their parents, as well as their teachers. The choices parents make greatly influence students' political exposure and outcomes. For example, some students in this study were not permitted to have social media pages and therefore learned about current events from traditional news sources, such as nightly television news broadcasts.

The majority of eighth grade students in this study seemed partial to political participation online. Students said they learned of current events, signed petitions, and engaged in political talk with their friends using social media and other online sources. Social studies researchers are beginning to explore the potential of social media for enhancing civic outcomes for youth (Kahne, Hodgin, & Eidman-Aadahl, 2015). As social media are new political spaces, research in this area is limited. Researchers have found that online political activity, particularly using Facebook, exposes youth to people who might hold divergent views, which can have positive outcomes for students who have little opportunity to be exposed to those with differing views (Kahne, Ullman, & Middaugh, 2012); however, there is also concern that these online spaces become echo-chambers in which people only interact with those with similar political ideas (Kahne, Hodgin, & Eidman-Aadahl, 2015). Also, the expansion of Smartphones has allowed low-income Americans, who might not have home computers, to access information online and to participate in social media in increased numbers (Brenner & Smith, 2013).

Young adults who participated in Cohen's (2010) study on the political behaviors of Black youth held many of the same political sentiments as the 18 students I interviewed. Students in the three Education First schools identified disparate punishment, prisons, poverty, and racism as prevalent issues in their personal lives and in their communities. These issues were also discussed by the young adults that participated in Cohen's study. Additionally, students in my study appeared

most concerned with local news and local issues and seemed most interested in impacting change in their communities.

I conclude, like many researchers who have explored charter schooling, that the "no excuse" charter schools I studied offer a mixed bag of pluses and minuses, particularly in educating marginalized youth toward active citizenship. In celebrating the successes of the four Education First schools I studied, I first highlight that the increased overall academic achievement when compared to nearby public schools is commendable. Also, although still relatively low, the Education First network has tripled the number of low-income students enrolling in college in comparison to traditional public schools. The expectation of and exposure to higher learning is praise-worthy, particularly as college attendance correlates with increased civic action through voting among adult populations. Also, exposing students to extra-curricular activities by incorporating them into the school day allows all students to have the opportunity to join clubs and organizations and participating in such opportunities tends to increase the likelihood of adult civic involvement. The success of these, and all, schools is heavily reliant on active parent involvement and Education First utilizes parental support to achieve behavioral and academic successes. Importantly, all four Education First schools had a strong sense of community in which students and parents expressed an affinity for, and belonging to, their respective school. This "family feel" permeated the schools and contributed to the J-factor (Lemov, 2010), or joy, in which students had organized fun in school. Each of the four schools also provided a physically safe environment and went to great lengths to protect the learning community from the distractions of the impoverished neighborhoods in which the schools were located; this was appreciated by students, parents, and teachers. These are the pluses, or positive aspects of the schools I studied.

At the same time, I identified a number of minuses, or negative aspects. First, though increasing test scores for marginalized youth is commendable, the passive learning and reliance on fact drilling is problematic and may fail to encourage students as critical thinkers who can succeed in college. The structured classroom environment was not used to allow students to engage in enriching learning opportunities, such as deliberation about public issues in a democracy. Second, students in the "no excuse" schools in this study are acquiring a "thin" sense of citizenship, in which they privilege voting and obeying the law, and not a "thick" sense of citizenship in which they are prepared to deliberate about public issues and influence change in their communities (Kennedy, Hahn, & Lee, 2007; Walzer, 1994). Admittedly, educating students for "thick" citizenship is a challenge for all schools, but charter schools enjoy the additional curricular freedom to meet this challenge. Third, in ensuring a safe school environment, some of the expectations for student behavior seemed extreme, militaristic, and unlikely to create healthy self-esteem in which students can trust their ability to make decisions for themselves. Fourth, increased time in school minimizes students' ability to involve themselves in other enriching activities within their communities, to spend time with family, or to enjoy their childhood. The high teacher turnover in such schools, which is often a function of the workload, robs students of the opportunity to learn from teachers who have a long-term commitment to contributing to the welfare of the community. Finally, the lack of content specific preparation can limit a teacher's ability to develop deep understanding, disciplinary processes, and civic action.

Overall, what the "no excuse" Education First schools I studied offer to students is necessary to get more students to college by reaching the minimal educational standard: teachers who teach students the basics of what they need to know within a structured and safe environment. Reaching the minimum standard of education is often celebrated when students cannot access schools that

will prepare them to reach even the lowest standard. Reaching the minimum standard is often celebrated for poor, Black, and Brown students. However, I am careful not to celebrate schooling that reaches the lowest-expectation when this level of schooling is not sufficient to prepare students to have full-access to whatever opportunities they choose. Again, the minimum will get students to college, but it does not provide them with the skills to succeed as college graduates. Ensuring students pass tests is important to ensure schools are funded but it will not create critical thinkers and citizens who are active in democratic communities.

Implications for Research, Theory, Policy, and Practice

This in-depth case study occurred in one calendar year in four schools of one national charter school network in an urban city in the Southeastern region of the United States. Through teacher and student interviews, school and classroom observations, and student surveys, I learned about the daily routines, classroom practices, and goals of four "no excuse" charter schools. I also explored the civic attitudes and current and future civic behaviors of Black and Brown youth in three of the four observed schools. The in depth nature of this study provides a detailed description of four "no excuse" charter schools in one network. Findings from this case study, while not generalizable, may provide some insights to understanding occurrences in other "no excuse" charter schools serving low-income youth of color in urban areas. Although the in depth nature of this study provides important insights, it needs replication to determine if the findings apply elsewhere. If other researchers obtain similar findings, then there are potential implications for theory, policy, teacher learning, participation, and practice in charter schools specifically, and in K-12 institutions, generally. In addition, I recognize that there is much yet to be learned about the relationship between social studies instruction and the current and projected

political behaviors of urban youth. The following sections explore implications from this research study's findings.

Future research. Relating to charter schools, first, future researchers can extend this particular study to other studies in different schools, school districts, and regions to see if the findings of this study hold in other settings. Second, more research should be conducted on civic education in varying charter school contexts including: conversion charter school districts, charter schools serving marginalized students that do not adopt a "no excuse" model, and charter schools that serve White families of high-SES. Third, there should be more extensive qualitative research within charter schools, of all contexts, to learn more about what happens within these schools, especially considering that they are rapidly increasing in number. Fourth, similar research is needed on the extent of democratic citizenship preparation in neighborhood schools near charter schools exploring the impact of charter schools on traditional schools. Such research might answer important questions such as: Are traditional public school students being left behind civically, as involved parents enroll their children in charter schools?

In exploring social studies classrooms and practices in urban charter schools, researchers could learn more about the teachers' education, especially their preparation to teach students of diverse backgrounds and to develop participating citizens. I also think researchers should offer more specified practices for teachers who choose to work in urban contexts. This extends beyond classroom management strategies and lesson preparation to include learning about teachers' philosophy toward education and their practice, specifically regarding their role in preparing youth for democracy. Possible guiding questions could include: How do teachers view their students as current and future political actors and how do these opinions affect their practice? What is the impact of perceived injustice toward youth of color, such as the Trayvon Martin

verdict, on the civic attitudes and behaviors of youth? What political conversations do students have when not supervised, or guided, by an adult? Also, more detailed information is needed on how social studies is valued and taught in charter schools.

In addition, future researchers could examine Black students' political socialization in suburban, rural, and racially diverse classroom settings. Black students should be considered as a specific group with unique histories and circumstances, as individuals and as a collective; therefore more research should be conducted on Black students without comparative purposes. Beyond studying Black students, other marginalized groups, such as Hispanics, Asians, Native Americans, and the poor could be the focus of future projects.

Theory. The IEA Octagon Model was useful in capturing the areas in which students were socialized as citizens. Like the model suggests, students constantly showed signs of socialization through several agents such as school, church, family, and the wider political context. For example, when commenting in class they mentioned what they learned on the news or from their parents; and, during interviews, students discussed what they learned in class. I could easily use the model to situate each social agent; however, the pervasive influence of digital technology creates an additional medium of socialization that needs to be added to the model.

Further, the IEA model does not sufficiently center the role of race and class in youth's political learning. For that reason, I would also like to explore "no excuse" schooling and civic outcomes using Critical Race Theory, as I think race and class greatly influence the practices and policies of "no excuse" schools, as well as students' civic learning.

Policy. The increasing number of charter schools throughout the nation makes them an important topic in educational policy. I, like many scholars and citizens, am torn about the issue.

As a proponent of public schools, I think that the increase of such schools could contribute to public school "failure" as students with active parents will choose charter schooling and traditional public schools will become the dumping-grounds for those who could not get out. As an advocate for quality education, I understand why parents without quality public schools support the expansion of charter schools in their cities, especially if they believe that these schools will grant their children a safe environment and a quality education. I am apprehensive about the "no excuse" model becoming normalized in public education for poor, Black and Brown students as I think it allows for abuses of student agency which could result in "breaking[11]" these citizens.

As charter schools are recipients of public dollars, they should be expected to participate in the civically enriching mandates of traditional public schools within the state or city. Charter schools should not only have to participate in the same accountability tests, they should also have to offer civically enriching opportunities. For example, if local traditional public schools all recite the Pledge of Allegiance each morning, celebrate Constitution Day, or have a student council, I think charter schools should be required to do the same, simply because they use the same public dollars.

Teacher education and professional development. Pre-service teachers need opportunities to reflect on the purpose of teaching social studies in a democracy. Specifically, they need support in developing skills to lead enriching discussions. In-service teachers also need such opportunities. Social studies teachers have the potential to help students grapple with the

[11] During slavery in the United States "breaking" was a technique for taming and subduing a man to behave like a slave using a system of severe punishments and, sometimes, rewards. The process was designed to enslave the mind of the black man making him easier to control physically. If the process was done correctly it would create an endless supply of easy to control slaves who would take whatever identity their master gave them.

difficult issues facing society in a democracy. As the nation continues to require much testing, teachers need more support in preparing students to be successful on standardized tests while being creative, innovative, and allowing students to have voice in the classroom, actively participate in their own learning, and create knowledge. The goal should be to create critical and reflective citizens who care about the common good and diverse "others" within the society. Additionally, teachers should be supported in creating lesson plans that reach the basic goal of teaching the standard, while also going beyond that to fulfill the ultimate purpose of schools: preparing citizens to participate in their own governing.

Considering the increased political, racial, and socioeconomic polarization of the nation, teachers also need support in using the classroom as a space to introduce students to divergent ideas and groups when those of different backgrounds are not present or easily accessible. Dewey (1916) believed that the school is a microcosm of society, not to be separated from the child's familiar context of family, community, social norms, or daily life, which are all areas that children need to confront and comprehend. According to Dewey, education is a process of living in the here and now, not a preparation for future life. The three teachers in this study all said that they shied away from sharing too much about their personal political stance, which is a matter of choice. However, all teachers need to be competent to prepare students as citizens who reflect on issues facing their multiple communities. The eighth grade state history curriculum provided the opportunity for students to learn the significance of local and state politics in their daily lives; yet, the teachers lacked the pedagogical content knowledge to take full advantage of the opportunity.

As social media are such a pertinent part of youths' social development and political socialization, it is important that social studies teachers emphasize media literacy skills. The

ability to discern credibility of sources and "newsfeeds" is an important skill for citizens (Bennett, 2008; Kahne, Ullman, & Middaugh, 2012; Rheingold, 2008). In 2009 the National Council of Social Studies amended its position statement to include a commitment to educating future teachers to teach media literacy as a pedagogical strategy (Media Literacy, 2009). Students would greatly benefit from these sorts of lessons, as online media sources are a pervasive source of information for youth and are the space of much political discussion among citizens.

Future teachers should also learn more about charter schools. Though charter schools serve a small percentage of public school students, charter schools play a pivotal role in many urban school systems. Also, many beginning teachers are hired by charter schools. Teacher education programs should include more conversation about the role, realities, and possibilities of charter schools in American public education. These conversations should extend beyond watching *Waiting For Superman*, and should include critical consideration from professors and teacher candidates about such topics as teachers' rights and democratic education.

Teacher practice. Educational policies have affected social studies curriculum and the classroom climate, as high-stakes testing has influenced teachers' pedagogical and content choices. In the wake of this ever-changing environment teachers need support in learning how to be effective in this context. In addition to having professional development opportunities as noted above, teachers need support in creating quality learning opportunities that are engaging yet efficient to plan and execute and that help them develop specific content pedagogical knowledge. Teachers who opt to teach in urban settings will likely need additional coaching and on-going support to meet the unique challenges that urban schools present: teaching more students, with fewer resources, less time, and increased student need.

Black youth as citizens. The changing political climate in the United States has resulted in changes in the political behaviors of many Black youth. The election of the nation's first Black president, the death of Michael Brown and other unarmed Black men, and changes in voter laws throughout the nation have peeked the interests of many Black citizens. As these changes are recent and are of particular importance to young Black Americans, more research is needed to better understand their impact on youth civic engagement.

Conclusion

The success of democracy depends not only on citizens exercising their right to vote but also participating in their own governance by being informed, critical, and engaged in their multi-layered communities (local, state, national, and global). Black students must recognize that as minorities, in number and in political representation in the United States as a whole, they risk much when they fail to contribute to political processes. Schools are responsible for making sure students, especially those who are often marginalized by political decisions, fully understand the threat of losing political voice and power as it relates to their communities and the magnitude of their choice to exercise, or not to exercise, their political power. Citizens and the officials they elect to represent them must work together to maintain, or reach, the ideals of true democracy in action. Charter schools, along with traditional public schools, have yet to fulfill the opportunity to contribute to that goal; however, they remain hopeful spaces of preparation, deliberation, and activism.

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Appendix A: Examples of Guiding Questions for Student Interviews

Civics Messages in Class

- Of all of the things that you learned in social studies this year, what were the major ideas/concepts that you remember?
- What do you believe that your teacher really wants you to know? Do you believe that these things are useful in your life today? Later in life? Why or why not?
- What do you think good citizens do or do not do? Do you imagine yourself doing those things in the future? Do you do those things now?
- Have you ever democratically decided, or voted, on anything in your class?
- What is democracy?

Civic Messages in School

- Have you ever democratically decided, or voted, on anything in school? Where do you feel you have the most influence as a student (clubs, class, sports)?
- Do you believe that you have rights as a student? What are your rights as a student?
- Do you feel like you have a voice in school? Can you influence school outcomes?
- What does "Work hard. Be nice" mean to you?
- What does it mean to have "no excuses"? Do you believe there are some situations in which students should be "excused"?

Political Behaviors

- Would you consider yourself up-to-date on current events? Why or why not? Do you watch the news? Read the newspaper or online news? How often? Can you give me some examples of current events you care about?
- Do you learn about current events and politics through social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram?
- Have you ever voted? Where? When? Have you participated in any protest activities? Signed a petition? Blogged or Facebooked about a political event of importance? Can you tell me which of these (Voting, protesting, petition, Facebooking) are most important to you? Why?
- Do you discuss current events or political issues with your friends/family? When and how often? Example?
- Have you ever accompanied your parents or guardian when they voted in a local, state, or national election? Have you accompanied your parents or guardians to other political activities? Can you give me an example? How did this feel?

Internal Political Efficacy

These questions were adapted from Niemi, Craig & Matte's 1988 internal political efficacy scale and Hahn's 1998 political confidence scale.

- Do you believe that you are well qualified to participate in politics? Why or why not?
- Are you able to influence decisions in groups? Why or why not? How do you influence groups?
- Do you feel that you have a pretty good-understanding of the important political issues facing our country? Where do you get this information?

- Do you see yourself as the type of person who can influence how other people decide to vote in elections?

External Political Efficacy

These questions were adapted from Craig, Niemi, & Silver's 1990 political efficacy scale.

- Respond to this statement: "In this country, a few people have all the political power and the rest of us are not given any say about how the government runs things."
- Do you believe that voting is an effective way for people to have a say about what the government does? Why or why not?
- Is this statement true: "Under our form of government, the people have the final say about how the country is run, no matter who is in office." Why or why not?

Collective Political Efficacy

These questions were adapted from Billings' collective efficacy questionnaire.

- Do you feel that students acting together to reach political goals can have more influence than when students act alone? Why or why not?
- Would you be more likely to be politically involved if you were joined by others? Why or why not?
- Have you ever worked with others or joined others to bring about change? Example?

Political Future

- What are some of the ways you plan to participate as an adult citizen?
- If you were old enough, would you have voted in the recent presidential election? Why or why not?

Appendix B: Examples of Guiding Questions for Teacher Interviews

Background

- What are your current teaching credentials? Are you teaching in your content area?
- How many years have you been teaching? In what types of schools have you taught? How long have you been teaching at this school?
- What is your teaching philosophy? What is your main belief(s) about teaching?
- How would you describe your teaching style? What type of relationship do you have with students? Is this your ideal relationship?
- What are the things you want every student in your classroom to know? What behaviors do you want every student to display in his or her personal life?
- What extra-curricular activities do you support?

Social Studies Education

- Why do you teach social studies?
- Is teaching political?
- What are the most important things for every student to get out of a social studies class? What are the most important things for every student to get from your social studies class?
- What does good social studies teaching look like?
- How often do you discuss current events or political issues with students? Would you like to do it more than you do now? What factors contribute to the frequency in which you have these types of discussions?

Perceptions of Political Behaviors of Youth

- Who are your students? What do your students need? How do you adjust or modify your teaching to meet their needs?
- Are your students civically engaged? How do they act as citizens?
- Are your students "political"? What behaviors do they display that would allow you to support your opinion?
- Do you think Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and other social media sites have an influence on students' political socialization? Why or why not?

Political Socialization through School

- What influence does the community service requirement have on students? Are these experiences worthwhile for students?
- How does the school prepare students for democratic citizenship? How respected are school election processes?
- In which ways are students permitted to have a voice in school? What decisions, if any, are they allowed to make or have input to?
- What does "Work hard. Be nice" mean to you?
- Are you familiar with the "no excuses" philosophy? Do you feel it has a place in urban schools? In this school? Does it support or contradict messages you teach about citizenship and democracy?

Lesson specific questions

- What are the specific standards being addressed in this week's lesson? Do you feel this standard addresses something that your students need to know? If not, how do you make sure that it is beneficial for students?
- What are your goals for the lesson this week? What do you want students to "take away" from this lesson?
- How successful do you feel that you were in teaching this lesson and reaching your aforementioned goals? How do you feel that the students responded to this lesson?
- Do you have any personal investment in this lesson? Do you feel that this is something students must know?

Appendix C: Examples of Guiding Questions for Principal Interviews

Background

- What is your educational background?
- What former public school was in this school building?
- Can you tell me a little about the history of this school?

School Culture

- What are the most important parts of school culture?
- What makes this Education First school unique?
- Using names/slogans, how would you describe your school and the other three schools?

Civic Goals

- What are your goals around civic education?
- Some people say that Education First schools, or "no excuses schools" are militaristic and anti-democratic. What would you say to them?

Appendix D: Observation Guide

Date/Time:_____
Period/Teacher/Number of Students_____

Is the teacher teaching the lesson that was indicated in the lesson plans? What is the primary teaching strategy that is being used in the lesson (reading, lecture, film/video, simulation, discussion, etc…)?

How are the students expected to work (Individually, in groups, in pairs, silently, quietly, etc…)?

How is the teacher checking for mastery/understanding (Verbal questioning, worksheets, test, homework, etc…)?

Which, if any, of the following recommended social studies teaching strategies are implemented in today's lesson? Be sure to indicate how much time was spent using this strategy.

Recommended Teaching Strategy	YES	NO	Time	Details
Controversial Issues Discussion				
Service Learning				
Historical Counternarratives				
Issues-Centered Instruction				
Current Events				
Democratic Opportunities				

Appendix E: Student Survey

	Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:	I strongly agree	I somewhat agree	I somewhat disagree	I strongly disagree
Perceptions of Democracy and Citizenship	Everyone should always have the right to express their opinions freely				
	All people should have their social and political rights respected				
	People should always be free to criticize the government publicly				
	All citizens should have the right to elect their leaders freely				
	People should be able to protest if they believe a law is unfair				
Equal rights	Men and women should have the same rights in every way				
	Men and women should get equal pay when they are doing the same jobs				
	Men and women should have equal opportunities to take part in the government				
	All racial groups should have an equal chance to get a good education in the United States				
	All racial groups should have an equal chance to get good jobs in the United States				
	Members of all racial groups should have the same rights and responsibilities				
	Immigrant children should have the same opportunities for education that other children in the country have.				
	Immigrants who live in a country for several years should have the opportunity to vote in elections				

Attitudes Toward the United States	The political system in the United States works well				
	I have great respect for the United States				
	In the United States we should be proud of what we have achieved				
	I am proud to live in the United States				
	Generally speaking, the United States is a better country to live in than most other countries				
Rate your level of trust in the following civic institutions:		**Completely**	**Quite a lot**	**A little**	**Not at all**
Trust	I trust the federal government of the United States				
	I trust the local government of my city				
	I trust the courts of justice				
	I trust the police				
	I can trust the government to do what is right				
Rate the importance of each behavior for being a good adult citizen:		**Very important**	**Quite important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**
Conventional citizenship	Voting in every national election				
	Joining a political party				
	Following political issues in the newspaper, on the radio, on TV or on the internet				
	Engaging in political discussions				

	Indicate your level of interest in the following political and social issues:	**Not interested at all**	**Not very interested**	**Quite interested**	**Very interested**
Civic Interests	Political issues within my city				
	Political issues with the United States				
	Social issues in the United States				
	Politics in other countries				
	International politics				
	Rate the following statements to best reflect your beliefs about your capacity to engage in politics:	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
Internal Efficacy	I know more about politics than most people my age				
	When political issues or problems are being discussed, I usually have something to say				
	I am able to understand most political issues easily				
	I have political opinions worth listening to				
	As an adult I will be able to take part in politics				
	I have a good understanding of the political issues facing the United States				
External Efficacy	In this country, a few people have all the political power and the rest of us are not given any say about how the government runs things				
	Voting is an effective way for people to have say about what the government does				
	Under our form of government, the people have the final say about how the country is run no matter who is in office				
	Leaders in my community care what people like me think				

Collective Efficacy	Students acting together to reach a political goal can have more influence than when students act alone				
	I would be more likely to get politically involved if I were joined by others				
	It takes several people working together to bring forth change in the United States				
Indicate the extent to which you think that you can influence decision-making processes at your school:		**Large**	**Moderate**	**Small**	**Not at all**
The School Context	The way classes are taught				
	What is taught in class				
	Teaching and learning materials				
	Classroom rules				
	School rules				
Rate the Frequency with which the following events occur during regular lessons about political and social issues:		**Never**	**Rarely**	**Sometimes**	**Often**
The Classroom Context	Teachers encourage students to make up their own minds				
	Teachers encourage students to express their opinions				
	Students bring up current political events for discussion in class				
	Students express opinions in class even when their opinions are different from those of the other students				
	Teachers encourage students to discuss the issues with people who have different opinions				
	Teachers present several sides of the issues when explaining them in class				

Rate *how well you think you can* perform different activities related to citizenship participation at or outside of school:		**Not at all**	**Not very well**	**Fairly well**	**Very well**
Citizenship Self-Efficacy	Discuss a newspaper article about a conflict between countries				
	Argue about your point of view about a controversial political or social issue				
	Stand as a candidate in a school election				
	Organize a group of students in order to achieve changes at school				
	Write a letter to a newspaper giving your view on a current issue				
	Speak in front of your class about a social or political issue				
State whether you have participated in one of the following activities *outside of school:*		**Within the last 12 months**	**More than a year ago**	**Never**	
Civic Participation in the Community	Assisted with a political campaign and/or supported a candidate or issue				
	A voluntary group doing something to help the community				
	An organization collecting money for a social cause				
	A cultural organization based on ethnicity/race				
	A group of young people campaigning for an issue				
State whether you have participated in one of the following activities *in school:*		**Within the last 12 months**	**More than a year ago**	**Never**	
Civic Participation in	Voluntary participation in a school-based music or drama activity outside of regular lessons				
	Active participation in a debate				

	Taking part in decision-making about how the school is run				
	Taking part in discussions at a student assembly				
	Becoming a candidate for class representative or school government				
Rate the likelihood that you would participate in the following actions as *an adult*:		**I would certainly do this**	**I would probably do this**	**I would probably not do this**	**I would certainly not do this**
Expected political participation	Writing a letter to a newspaper				
	Wearing a button or a t-shirt expressing your opinion				
	Contacting an elected representative				
	Taking part in a peaceful march or rally				
	Collecting signatures for a petition				
	Boycotting or "buycotting" certain products				
	Facebooking, tweeting, or blogging about a political issue				
	Vote in local elections				
	Vote in national elections				
	Get information about candidates before voting in an election				
	Help a candidate or party during an election campaign				
	Join a political party				
	Join a labor union				
	Running as a candidate in local elections				

Do you receive free/reduced price lunch?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

What is your sex?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Please select your racial background

- ☐ Black/African-American
- ☐ Hispanic/Latino/a
- ☐ White
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Bi-racial
- ☐ Native-American
- ☐ Other