Dissertation

ASHLEY WOO

The Implementation of Anti-Bias Education in K-12 Public Schools

This document was submitted as a dissertation in June 2024 in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the doctoral degree in Public Policy Analysis at the Pardee RAND Graduate School. The faculty committee that supervised and approved the dissertation consisted of Stephani Wrabel (chair), Elaine Wang, and Kathryn Struthers Ahmed.

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Abstract

As the American student body becomes more diverse, the capacity for children of all backgrounds to see the worth within different facets of their own identity and to navigate relationships with others across lines of difference are becoming increasingly important skills and mindsets. A body of research demonstrates that teaching students explicitly about issues of identity, diversity, equity, and bias can lead to positive academic, attitudinal, and behavioral outcomes. Yet, there is little research on whether and how educators across the nation engage in such instruction. Moreover, although teachers likely need an array of supports to engage in such instruction, we have little information on the types of supports that teachers need most or how the provision of these supports are associated with teachers' instructional practice.

This research presents the first national understanding of teachers' implementation of anti-bias education (ABE), an approach to education that prioritizes students' positive social identity formation, ability to interact comfortably and empathetically with diverse groups, understanding of bias and systemic inequities, and capacity to act against injustice, bias, and discrimination. Using survey data drawn from nationally representative samples of K-12 public school teachers, I explore the prevalence of ABE across the nation, the approaches and instructional materials that teachers use to provide ABE, teachers' perceptions about ABE's impacts on students' learning experiences, and ways that policymakers and education leaders can support teachers' provision of ABE. I pair my survey data with an in-depth case study of how one school created a system of supports to implement the tenets of ABE, thus providing other schools and school systems with an illustrative model for what the systematic implementation of ABE could look like.

The results of this research will provide policymakers, curriculum developers, school and school system leaders, and teachers with an evidence base on the state of ABE in the United States. My findings contribute to research on best practices such that these stakeholder groups will be equipped with more knowledge on how to enhance the provision of high-quality ABE.

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Abbreviations

ABE	Anti-bias education
AIRS	American Instructional Resources Survey
ATP	American Teacher Panel
CASEL	Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CMO	Charter management organization
EASEL	Ecological Approaches to Social and Emotional Learning
IDJA	Identity, diversity, justice, and action
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, and more
OPSI	Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
PL	Professional learning
SEL	Social and emotional learning
SWD	Students with disabilities
tSEL	Transformative social and emotional learning
U.S. ED	United States Department of Education

Chapter 1: Introduction

Students of all identities and backgrounds deserve equitable opportunities to learn and realize their full potential. Ensuring all students have access to the experiences and resources critical for their academic, social, and emotional development is important given the demographic shifts taking place within the U.S. education system. Already, students of color comprise over half of public-school students, a share that is expected to increase over time (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023a). The U.S. education system is not only becoming more racially and ethnically diverse but is also becoming increasingly diverse across other dimensions as well. English Learners (ELs) and students with disabilities (SWDs) comprise an increasing share of public-school students and now account for roughly 10 and 15 percent of students respectively (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023b; National Center for Education Statistics, 2023c). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students also make up about 10 percent of high school-aged youth (Conron, 2020), and younger generations are even more likely than older generations to identify as LGBT (Jones, 2023), suggesting that the student population may also become more diverse across the domains of gender identity and sexual orientation over time (Mpofu, 2023). The percentage of students experiencing poverty has similarly increased over time; in the 2021-2022 school year, nearly half of students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, in comparison to 38 percent of students in the 2000-2001 school year (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023d). As the U.S. student population becomes more diverse across all these different dimensions and others, the education system must adapt to meet the varied needs of all types of students, to cultivate learning environments that value students' identities and promote safety and belonging, and to foster students' ability to navigate a diverse, multicultural society. Yet, students from historically minoritized groups—such as students of color, students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning, and more (LGBTQ+), ELs, SWDs, and students experiencing poverty — continue to encounter barriers to accessing identity-affirming learning environments and the resources that would fully support their academic and social and emotional development (Welner and Carter, 2013). Students who are not from these minoritized groups may also be missing opportunities to interact with and learn about people who come from backgrounds different than their own, which can have consequences for how they too learn about and view diverse identities and perspectives (Hughes et al., 2007; Perry et al., 2020).

Achievement gaps— or differences in student achievement by demographic characteristics— are a longstanding result of students' uneven access to supportive learning experiences and resources tailored to their needs. An examination of national achievement data suggests that achievement gaps, such as those between White students and Black students, White students and Hispanic students, students with and without disabilities, and ELs and non-ELs, have existed for

decades and continue to stubbornly persist even now (National Assessment of Educational Progress, nd). Even as Asian American students outperform White students on national assessments, the performance of Asian-American ELs lags behind that of White students (Carnoy and Garcia, 2017; National Assessment of Educational Progress, nd). Existing achievement gaps have been exacerbated by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Students in schools with higher levels of poverty and higher proportions of students of color were more likely than their counterparts to experience reduced access to in-person learning during the height of the pandemic, leading to reduced curriculum coverage and more student absenteeism (Kaufman and Diliberti, 2019; Oster et al., 2021). Declines in student achievement were more acute in districts that remained remote for longer (Halloran et al., 2021), resulting in widening racial achievement gaps (Gee, Asmundson, and Vang, 2023; Kuhfield et al., 2022).

While the achievement gap focuses on disparities in students' academic outcomes, the opportunity gap shifts the focus to students' disparate access to the opportunities and resources would support their learning. As such, the body of literature on the opportunity gap explores the many drivers of achievement gaps. As Welner and Carter (2013) write, achievement gaps "can best be understood as a predictable result of systemic causes. Where engaging, culturally relevant instruction is lacking, expectations minimal, and resources scarce, students from disadvantaged groups tend to be outperformed by their more privileged counterparts" (Welner and Carter, 2013, p. 9). These systemic causes that comprise the opportunity gap range from large-scale structural inequities like school segregation to the interactions that students from historically minoritized groups experience every day in the classroom.

For instance, housing and school segregation contribute to inequitable gaps in school funding (Darling-Hammond, 2013) and concentrate Black and Latinx students in schools with greater levels of poverty and fewer resources (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Orfield, 2013; Reardon et al., 2019). Moreover, segregation—and desegregation— has important consequences for student mindsets by shaping students' access to interactions with others from diverse backgrounds. Research on how desegregation impacts students' attitudes is mixed; some studies find that desegregation and more intergroup contact can help students feel less prejudiced and more empathetic towards minoritized groups (Hallinan, 1998; Turner, Chingos, and Spievack, 2021), while others find that desegregation efforts may be associated with more racist attitudes or biases (Chin, 2022). Yet, these mixed results highlight the importance of ensuring that students from different membership groups have the opportunity to engage in authentic, meaningful interactions under conditions that foster cooperation or shared goals (Turner, Chingos, and Spievack, 2021). However, as schools become increasingly segregated once again decades after *Brown versus Board of Education* first ruled school segregation unconstitutional (Chang, 2018; Frankenberg et al., 2019; Harris and Curtis, 2018; United States Government Accountability Office, 2022), students across the nation have increasingly fewer opportunities to engage in these meaningful interactions across groups. Meanwhile, schools have few levers to reduce segregation given regulations against integrating schools across districts lines (Chang, 2018) and

Supreme Court decisions stating that schools cannot explicitly use race for the purpose of desegregation (Greenhouse, 2007; Rothstein, 2014).

Educational inequities stem not only from broad structural factors like segregation but also from the instruction and interactions that students from minoritized groups face at school. Carter (2013) discusses the "the unequal treatment of various student cultures in mainstream schooling" (Carter, 2013, p.143). Curricular content often privileges "Euro-American historical and cultural perspectives" while framing other cultures as an "other" (Carter, 2013, p. 151). Research examining the content of textbooks suggests that, while some progress has been made with regard to eliminating overtly racist stereotypes (Gay, 2018; Reed Marshall and Rodick, 2023), textbooks still have considerable room for improvement. White authors and characters are still more prominent in curricula than people of color (Reed Marshall, 2023). Even when depicting characters of color, books do not equally represent different groups or cultures and tend to focus on stereotypes or depictions of people of color that lack richness and depth (Gay, 2018; Reed Marshall and Rodick, 2023). They also privilege "safe" or "sanitized" issues rather than help children understand broader "structural realities" (Gay, 2018, p. 146; Reed Marshall and Rodick, 2023, p. 5).

Incongruence between the cultures of minoritized students and that of mainstream schooling is not limited to textbooks and curricular content. A "cultural mismatch" occurs when students from historically minoritized backgrounds enter schools that reward students for exhibiting the dispositions, interaction styles, or language of the dominant culture while labeling students who come from minority cultures as "deviant" (Carter, 2013, p. 148). This mismatch can then lead to reduced student engagement and diminished understanding and communication between educators and students (Carter, 2013). During the COVID-19 pandemic, this mismatch may have grown even more acute for some student groups. Both Asian American and Black students experienced elevated levels of racial discrimination in the midst of the pandemic, leading to poorer mental health and a reduced sense of belonging at school (Mpofu et al., 2022; Toro and Wang, 2022).

While overtly racist attitudes have broadly diminished, some educators still hold attitudes that may convey negative messages to students of color. These attitudes often take the form of "color-blind racism" or "racial apathy" (Diamond, 2018, p. 351). McKenzie and Scheurich's (2004) work on equity traps provides concrete examples of how these covert forms of racism can operate in schools. They define equity traps as the "conscious and unconscious thinking patterns and behaviors that trap teachers, administrators, and others, preventing them from creating schools that are equitable, particularly for students of color" (McKenzie and Scheurich, 2004, p. 601). They describe how some teachers take a "deficit view," in which they attribute "the lack of success of their students of color" to "inherent or endogenous student deficits, such as cultural inadequacies, lack of motivation, poor behavior, or failed families and communities" (McKenzie and Scheurich, 2004, p. 608).

Racial erasure is yet another narrative that works against equity in schools. Teachers profess color blindness and, in doing so, fail to understand the role of systemic racism in promoting educational inequities. They may also fail to see how their own beliefs and their perceptions of their students might be influenced by race. By taking race out of their understanding of both how they are teaching and how students are learning, teachers engaging in racial erasure are unable to address their own implicit or explicit biases. These biases can then lead to more inequitable outcomes for students. Black students receive more severe consequences for committing disciplinary infractions than White students, even for the same infraction (Okonofua and Eberhardt, 2015). Black students are also more likely than White students to experience consequences for subjective rather than objective disciplinary infractions (Skiba et al., 2022), suggesting the role of educators' own biases in administering disciplinary actions.

These equity traps can make students more vulnerable to stereotype threat. Stereotype threat arise when students from historically minoritized groups perceive that others may view them through the lens of negative stereotypes, leading to heightened stress and anxiety which harms their ability to perform on academic tasks because they fear confirming negative stereotypes about their identity group (Hernández and Darling-Hammond, 2022; Steele and Aronson, 1995). By conveying an affirming attitude to students that communicates high expectations and confidence in students' abilities, teachers are able to protect students from stereotype threat, thus ameliorating one contributor to the achievement gap (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

Students from other historically minoritized groups experience similar challenges as students of color. Many of the nation's estimated 2 million LGBT students (Conron, 2020) experience a dearth of positive representation in their learning experiences and face unwelcoming environments at school. A 2021 national survey of LGBTQ+ students found that nearly three-quarters of LGBTQ+ students reported that they did not have access to LGBTQ+ topics through their classes. Only about 16 percent of LGBTQ+ students received positive messages about LGBTQ+ topics in class, and nearly 15 percent of LGBTQ+ students reported that they received *negative* messages. Moreover, roughly 70 percent of LGBTQ+ students reported feeling unsafe at school, and about 75 percent of LGBTQ+ students reported experiencing harassment because of their identity (Kosciw, Clark, and Menard, 2022; Pendharkar, 2022). LGBTQ+ students who face greater levels of victimization based on their sexual orientation or gender expression were more likely to miss more school, have lower grade point averages, and report that they do not plan to pursue post-secondary education (Kosciw, Clark, and Menard, 2022). Perhaps as a result of these unwelcoming learning environments, people who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual are slightly less likely to graduate from high school and to attend college (White et al., 2020).

Both ELs and SWDs—groups that are both disproportionately comprised of students of color—not only experience persistently lower levels of achievement than their counterparts (Arundel, 2022; Carnoy and Garcia, 2017; Gilmour, Fuchs, and Wehby, 2018; Office of Special Education Programs, 2024) but are also vulnerable to stigmatization and stereotype threat (Haft, Greiner de Magalhaes, and Hoeft, 2022). One study found that ELs were less likely than their

counterparts to feel confident in their academic abilities, which may contribute to the persistence of the achievement gap between ELs and non-ELs (Soland, 2019; Wasserberg, 2022). A small number of studies have also found that stigma relating to having a learning disability was associated with worse academic outcomes, although this relationship may be mediated by the relationship between stigma and psychological outcomes like self-esteem and requires more research (Haft, Greiner de Magalhaes, and Hoeft, 2022). However, efforts to build relationships with SWDs and provide them with the opportunities to engage in learning opportunities that leverage their personal interests can help SWDs engage in their schooling and overcome feelings of stigmatization (Hayward and Gill, 2021).

Overall, the body of literature described herein demonstrates how drivers of the opportunity gap are deeply embedded in multiple layers of the education system, spanning structural factors like housing and school segregation to uneven representation in curricula, educators' mindsets, and students' experiences of stigmatization and anxiety stemming from negative stereotypes.

The Current Sociopolitical Context

The current sociopolitical context has likely exacerbated students' uneven access to content and learning environments that affirm their identities as well as access to opportunities to develop the skills necessary to engage with others across lines of difference. In the wake of the national racial reckoning sparked by the murders of George Floyd and others, there has been a renewed call for the education system to address systemic racism and social inequities (Gewertz, 2020). This call for greater sensitivity and attention to diversity and equity has also met significant pushback. As of the writing of this paper, 19 states have enacted policies restricting how teachers can discuss issues relating to race, gender, or sexual orientation in their classrooms (PEN America, 2024). These efforts are widespread; there have been attempts to pass such policies in nearly all states across the country (Schwartz, 2021a). Advocates of these state restrictions purport that teaching about topics like race, gender, or diversity "indoctrinate[s]" students, is inappropriate, and takes time away from the teaching of "reading, math, science and other essential academic skills" (Aldrich, 2021; Bertrand et al., 2024). These criticisms are not new. Even prior to the passage of these restrictions, critics have decried social justice-oriented reforms as "unnecessary, ill-suited to the goals of public education, and politically biased" (Dover, 2009, p. 507).

As described earlier, students from historically minoritized backgrounds often lack adequate representation of their own social identities at school and, moreover, experience unwelcoming learning environments that include instances of discrimination, harassment, and stigmatization. State restrictions may exacerbate some of these issues. Research on how these state restrictions are influencing teachers' instruction suggest that the majority of teachers are now shying away from classroom discussions about political and social issues (Woo, Diliberti, and Steiner, 2024). In response to limitations on their instruction, teachers report that they are hesitant to address a

wide array of topics that may be considered "controversial" or "sensitive," including civil rights, stories about historical figures of color, and people who identify as LGBTQ+ (Woo et al., 2023). Meanwhile, data from the American Library Association suggests that book challenges in school and public libraries are more frequent than ever; in 2022, the American Library Association documented over one thousand attempts to remove access to books in libraries, targeting roughly 2,500 unique book titles (American Library Association, nd). Book challenges most often target books that depict the stories and experiences of people of color and people who identify as LGBTQ+ (Meehan et al., 2023). As a result, students now have reduced access to books, stories, and information about diverse groups in two critical spheres of public life—schools and libraries.

Because of the types of topics targeted by state policies, book restrictions, and limitations on teachers' instruction, teachers' reports suggest that limitations may be especially detrimental to students of color and students who identify as LGBTQ+, who may now have fewer opportunities to see themselves represented in their learning. Teachers also expressed that these limitations may make it more difficult for students from culturally dominant groups to learn about the experiences and perspectives of others from more minoritized groups, hampering their capacity for empathy and understanding for others. For all types of students, teachers worried limitations rendered the learning environment less conducive to open discourse, ultimately leaving students ill-prepared to navigate a diverse society as adults (Woo and Diliberti et al., 2024).

Importantly, these state restrictions, while in existence in four out of ten states, have a national reach. They influence instruction not only in the states where they are present but also in state and localities that lack any restrictions, often because teachers are wary of conflict with families (Woo, Diliberti, and Steiner, 2024; Woo et al., 2023). Given the pervasive influence of the current sociopolitical climate on both teachers' instructional practices and students' access to content about diverse perspectives, it is important that we take stock of how teachers provide ABE and the supports they need to do it well.

The Role of Anti-Bias Education

Anti-bias education (ABE) presents an opportunity to destabilize some of the drivers of the opportunity gap described above. ABE centers around four main goals, divided into the domains of identity, diversity, justice, and action (IDJA):

- Supporting children in the development of a positive social and personal identity
- Fostering children's ability to interact comfortably and empathetically with diverse groups
- Promoting children's understanding and awareness of bias and injustice
- Empowering children to stand up against injustice, bias, discrimination, and prejudice (Derman-Sparks et al., 2020; Learning for Justice, 2022).

Derman-Sparks and colleagues developed this framework for ABE in early childhood settings, rooted in "the need to identify and prevent, as much as possible, the harmful emotional and psychological impacts on children from societal prejudice and bias" (Derman-Sparks et al., 2020, p. 4). The organization Learning for Justice then took the ABE framework developed by Derman-Sparks and colleagues and translated it into a set of Social Justice Standards, which outline developmentally appropriate student outcomes for each domain, organized into anchor standards for grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12 (Learning for Justice, 2022). For instance, the identity domain in the K-2 grade band includes outcomes such as, "I know and like who I am and can talk about my family and myself and name some of my group identities" (Learning for Justice, 2022, p. 4). The corresponding outcome for the 9-12 grade band in the same domain is "I have a positive view of myself, including an awareness of and comfort with my membership in multiple groups in society" (Learning for Justice, 2022, p. 10). Additional examples from the K-2 grade band for the domains of diversity, justice, and action include statements such as "I like being around people who are like me and different from me, and I can be friendly to everyone," "I know when people are treated unfairly," and "I will join with classmates to make our classroom fair for everyone" (Learning for Justice, 2022, p. 4-5). I use this ABE framework developed by Learning for Justice as the foundation for this study because it has already formed the basis for instructional material development and professional learning (PL) in K-12 settings.

ABE defines diversity expansively by encompassing numerous dimensions of human diversity, including, for example, race and ethnicity, gender identity, religious identity, immigration status, sexual identity, socioeconomic status, and ability status (Derman-Sparks, et al., 2020; Learning for Justice, nd). This is important because students may observe or experience many different forms of discrimination (e.g., racism, sexism, ableism) as they move through the education system. In addition, as discussed earlier, students from many different types of historically minoritized groups experience challenges to accessing affirming and supportive learning environments.

Louis Derman-Sparks and colleagues, who are scholars on ABE in early childhood contexts, describe how ABE is an encompassing approach to education; they note, "rather than a formula for a particular curriculum, it is an underpinning perspective and framework that permeates everything… including your interactions with children, families, and colleagues" (Derman-Sparks et al., 2020, pg. 4). Thus, in describing the manifestation of ABE in early childhood education settings, they outline how ABE goals can shape curriculum development. Ideas for content and activities might be student-initiated, in that they arise from students' own interests, curiosities, or interactions, teacher-initiated, or prompted by events occurring in students' communities or the broader world. ABE could manifest in the books and instructional materials that students access in the classroom which reflect different identity groups within and outside of their school community in an accurate and non-stereotypical manner. Derman-Sparks et al. (2020) also stress that ABE is not just about planning the curriculum but also the cultivation of a safe learning environment and trusting relationships between teachers and students where

teachers can hold "clarifying conversations" with students when responding to children's questions or addressing "signs of pre-prejudice" (Derman-Sparks et al., 2020; pg. 54).

ABE calls for not only the development of student competencies, but also adult competencies. ABE requires that educators reflect on their own individual and social identities, assess their knowledge and assumptions about different dimensions of human diversity, and examine the biases or prejudices that they may have internalized about themselves or others (Derman-Sparks et al., 2020). This critical self-reflection can help educators avoid the racial apathy or deficit-oriented perspectives that hamper minoritized students' access to equitable learning opportunities. However, because Derman-Sparks and colleagues' work centers on ABE implementation in early childhood settings rather than K-12 settings, it may be useful to leverage understandings of how implementation plays out for other approaches related to ABE, such as those that also focus on equitable and whole child development.

Social and emotional learning (SEL) provides one such example. In the words of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), an organization that supports SEL implementation and policy, SEL is the "process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions" (CASEL, nd-a). While SEL implementation has not always centered students' diverse identities or equity, recent scholarship has emphasized how SEL can be a lever to support more equitable outcomes (Warner and Browning, 2021). CASEL notes that the implementation of SEL for equity requires the development of an equitable learning environment wherein adults reflect on the equity implications of their policies, practices, and actions, diverse identities are valued and affirmed, and students develop the capacity to use their voice to challenge existing inequities (Schlund et al., 2020). Jagers, Rivas-Drake, and Williams (2019) also offer a conceptualization of SEL, which they call transformative social and emotional learning (tSEL), that explicitly centers equity and issues of social justice. tSEL places an equity lens on CASEL's core SEL competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and decision making to emphasize equity-oriented elaborations on these competencies, such as identity, agency, belonging, collaborative problem-solving, and curiosity. tSEL is differentiated from other forms of SEL which emphasize personal well-being and interpersonal relationships, to focus on the broader development of inclusive and equitable communities (CASEL, nd-b; Jagers et al., 2019). It also shares key commonalities with ABE in that it promotes the development of students' positive identity formation, sense of belonging, and agency to promote positive social change (Jagers et al., 2019).

SEL implementation can take many different forms that can inform how schools and teachers approach ABE implementation in K-12 settings. Scholars have generally discussed SEL implementation as manifesting through several different types of approaches—curriculum-based SEL programs that use explicit instruction to teach SEL competencies, whole-school approaches

that emphasize the infusion and integration of SEL throughout the school day, including in academic instruction, and approaches that focus on school climate, which emphasize the cultivation of a supportive learning environment conducive to SEL development (Dusenbury et al., 2015; Elias, 2019). However, scholars note that these approaches are not mutually exclusive; rather, schools and school systems should consider how to integrate these approaches such that they form a coherent and comprehensive approach to student development (Elias, 2019). Teachers and schools working towards ABE in K-12 contexts might take a similar approach by considering how ABE can be implemented through explicit instruction, integrated into academic content areas, incorporated into pedagogical approaches, and embedded within school culture and policy to create a more equitable learning experience for students.

Culturally responsive pedagogy also offers insights into how ABE may manifest in K-12 schools and classrooms. Culturally responsive pedagogy focuses on both the actions that teachers can take and the attitudes that teachers adopt to guide their instruction (Aronson and Laughter, 2016). Similar to ABE, it emphasizes that teachers should affirm students' cultural backgrounds, help students develop their own cultural competence wherein they are able to understand and appreciate others' cultures, and develop students' critical sociopolitical conscious in pursuit of greater equity within society more broadly (Aronson and Laughter, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 1995). To better translate the theory of culturally responsive pedagogy into actual classroom practice, researchers have provided concrete examples of how culturally responsive pedagogy is operationalized. Studies have found that culturally responsive teachers communicate high academic and behavioral expectations, but also provide students with clear expectations and sufficient scaffolding and differentiating to help students meet those high expectations (Blazar, 2021; Morrison et al., 2018). Culturally responsive teachers make the effort to learn about students' lives, families, and cultures and leverage their knowledge of students to connect students' lived experiences to classroom activities and the provided curriculum. Culturally responsive teachers also develop students' critical consciousness by engaging in instructional activities that allow students to explore and examine issues of justice or equity, providing students with more agency and authority in the classroom, and focusing on students' opportunities for community service and civic engagement (Morrison et al., 2018).

Importantly—and perhaps distinct from ABE as described in early childhood contexts—culturally responsive pedagogy also stresses that these approaches must propel students' academic learning and achievement (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Culturally responsive teachers can do so by connecting students' cultural knowledge and background to academic skills. Explicitly connecting ABE and related approaches like culturally responsive teaching to academic learning is critical for ensuring that such approaches do not fall to the wayside, especially within the context of a broader push towards standards-based teaching (Sleeter, 2012).

There is one key that way ABE builds on the framework of culturally responsive pedagogy. Scholars of culturally responsive pedagogy have often focused on the experiences of racially and ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse students (Gay, 2018; Hammond, 2015; Ladson-

Billings, 1995). Yet, as described earlier, there are also other groups of minoritized students whose identities and experiences warrant greater attention in the education system, such as students who identify as LGBTQ+ or SWDs. While ABE is similar to culturally responsive pedagogy because they both emphasize the importance of affirming students' identities and lived experiences, ABE is more expansive in the types of diversity considered. This expansive conceptualization of diversity is important because multiple forms of identity can layer together in unique ways to influence an individual's lived experiences, including the way in which they may experience discrimination or inequity (Crenshaw, 1991).

ABE has the potential to address drivers of the opportunity gap described earlier by empowering students and educators to include rich and positive representations of diverse groups in students' learning experiences. Research suggests that students learn best when they experience identity safety in the classroom and when instructional content taps into their prior knowledge and lived experiences (National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development, 2018; Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). A focus on the positive representation of diverse students' identities in learning can address the lack of representation, stereotype threat, and deficit-based messages that students may experience at school—from prescribed curricula and disciplinary structures, for example— and from society more broadly. As Derman-Sparks et al. (2020) note, supporting students' sense of social identity can help them build resilience to these negative messages, as affirming students' values and sense of worth and supporting students' sense of social belonging can reduce the impacts of stereotype threat (Borman and Grigg, 2013; Hadden et al., 2020; Spitzer and Aronson, 2015). ABE may not be a lever well-suited for addressing some drivers of the opportunity gap like school segregation, but, by emphasizing students' capacity to navigate relationships with people from diverse backgrounds, it can help foster an open-mindedness that students might find more difficult to develop in segregated contexts. ABE also has the potential to enhance student learning, because connecting students' classroom experiences to their cultural backgrounds and lived experiences can promote student engagement in learning and create a safe environment for students to engage in academic challenges (Aronson and Laughter, 2016; Hammond, 2015).

ABE also emphasizes students' critical understanding of the world around them, which gives students the tools they need to identify and work against identity-based discrimination or biased behavior (Derman-Sparks et al., 2020). Importantly, ABE is an approach to education that holds value for all students—not just students from historically minoritized groups. ABE can help White children understand not only the value of diversity but also how they can benefit from the elimination of systemic racism and inequity (Derman-Sparks and Ramsey, 2011). Thus, as the result of high-quality ABE provision, students may experience a stronger sense of belonging and safety at school, a more welcoming school climate, greater engagement in learning, and a stronger sense of civic engagement. Because ABE holds the potential to remedy some of these facets of the opportunity gap, the promise and complexity of fully integrating and implementing ABE into policy and practice underlies the need for this study.

Contribution of this Study

Extant research has established the need for ABE and the potential for practices associated with ABE to address facets of the opportunity gap for students of many different minoritized groups. Yet, there is much that is still unknown about whether and how educators implement ABE. We do not yet know whether and the extent to which educators across the nation provide ABE. In the current sociopolitical climate in which conversations about diversity and equity have become increasingly contentious, it is possible that the prevalence of teachers' provision of ABE has shifted over time, and that the magnitude of these shifts may vary by teachers' state or local policy context. Moreover, although teachers likely need a variety of supports to implement ABE, we have little information on the types of supports that teachers need most or how provision of those supports is associated with teachers' implementation of ABE.

In spite of the growing demand for more equitable approaches to schooling and student learning, others working in related fields, such as tSEL, have noted that there is limited information on the types of programs that would support students' ABE competencies and implementation models that schools and school systems can draw from to implement the tenets of ABE. While Derman-Sparks and others have issued guidance on designing and putting into place anti-bias programs within early childhood centers (Derman-Sparks, et al., 2015), we have limited information about how these goals can and are being translated into the arena of K-12 education.

As such, the research I present herein is the first to generate, at the national level, an understanding of the prevalence of ABE as well as, in a local context, one school's approach to grounding students' educational experience in ABE.

This research is guided by two core research questions:

1. To what extent does ABE occur in K-12 classrooms throughout the U.S.? To what extent, if at all, has the prevalence of ABE shifted in the wake of state restrictions on classroom conversations about race, gender, and sexual orientation?
2. How is ABE implemented in a local context, and what are the enabling and restricting factors for such implementation?

The results of this research will provide policymakers, curriculum developers, school and school system leaders, and teachers with an evidence base on the state of ABE in the United States. My findings contribute to research on best practices such that these stakeholder groups will be equipped with more knowledge on how to enhance the provision of high-quality ABE.

Organization of this Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into six chapters. Chapter Two details the conceptual framework used to guide my analysis and to organize and frame study findings. In describing each aspect of the conceptual framework, I draw on literature on related equity-oriented approaches to schooling, such as culturally responsive teaching, SEL, tSEL, social justice

education, and others, to highlight the ways people, policies, and places may influence the implementation of ABE. In Chapter Three, I detail my data sources and analytic methods for the two separate lines of inquiry used to address my research questions: survey analysis and a single-case study design. Chapter Four presents results at the national level, using survey data drawn from nationally representative samples of K-12 public school teachers. I discuss the prevalence of ABE across the nation according to teachers' reports as well as changes in prevalence over time. In addition, I discuss teachers' access to supports like PL or teacher preparation and examine the relationship between teachers' access to supports and their provision of ABE. In Chapter Five, I present results detailing the local implementation of ABE leveraging the experiences of one case study school. I describe the school's conceptualization of ABE as well as the systems and supports it built to enable ABE implementation. In addition, I highlight the successes and challenges it encountered during the implementation process. Finally, in Chapter Six, I summarize key findings and present recommendations for policy and practice.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework for Examining Implementation of Anti-Bias Education

Most of the research about implementation of ABE is centered in early childhood contexts (Bullock, 2016; Derman-Sparks et al., 2020; Derman-Sparks et al., 2015; Kimura et al., 2021; Kok and Yang, 2021). Thus, to develop the conceptual framework underpinning this study, I draw on several bodies of extant literature to illuminate the factors that are likely to influence or enable the implementation of ABE in K-12 classrooms. I focus on literature related to 1) education policy implementation and the process of engendering and sustaining educational change and systemic reforms; 2) the influence of heightened political polarization on teachers' classroom discussions and instruction about political and social issues; and 3) the implementation of K-12 education programs and practices that share key commonalities with ABE. These programs and practices include those that focus explicitly on equitably supporting the learning experiences of historically minoritized students, non-cognitive skill development, or whole child development. Finally, I also highlight the literature describing the link between the teacher practices associated with ABE and student outcomes, because the goals of ABE are ultimately student-level competencies (Learning for Justice, 2022).

In Figure 2.1, I display the conceptual framework I developed which highlights factors that, based on the three bodies of literature mentioned earlier, likely influence or enable ABE implementation. As noted earlier, ABE is more than just the curriculum materials that teachers use or the specific content of instruction; rather, it is an overarching perspective on education that encompasses the school culture and interactions between teachers, leaders, students, and families, with the goal of developing students that have positive social identities, respect for and comfort with numerous dimension of diversity, an understanding of systemic inequities, and the ability to redress those inequities (Learning for Justice, 2022). Thus, some of the factors within the conceptual framework, if present, are indicators that ABE is occurring, while others are factors that influence whether and how teachers provide ABE.[1]

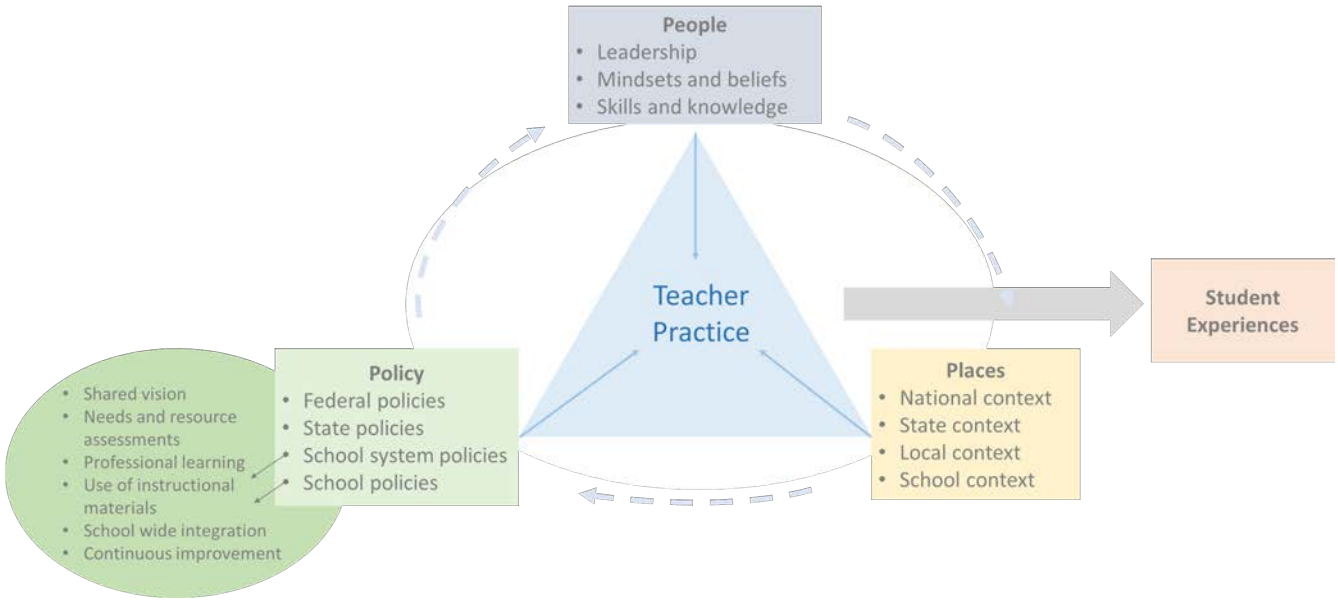
In my conceptual framework, I show that teachers' implementation of ABE is likely to be enabled or influenced by 1) the leaders and educators who are tasked with implementing ABE in the school community and the knowledge, skills, mindsets, and beliefs that they bring to their

[1] CASEL's conceptualization of schoolwide SEL implementation provides an instructive example. CASEL notes that explicit SEL instruction and integration of SEL into academic instruction are indicators of schoolwide SEL. Systems for collecting and using data for continuously improving SEL systems are also noted as an indicator of schoolwide SEL because such systems influence SEL implementation by identifying areas for growth in SEL policy or practice. Notably, supportive and equitable disciplinary systems are too noted as an indicator of schoolwide SEL; even though disciplinary systems may not directly influence the implementation of SEL, CASEL nevertheless recognizes them as a critical part of the learning environment that enables schoolwide SEL (CASEL, 2021).

practice; 2) the policies at the federal, state, and local levels that send messages to educators about how they should approach classroom instruction and discussions about diversity and equity, as well as the school- or school system-level policies that are likely important for supporting the systematic implementation of ABE; and 3) aspects of the national, state, local, and school context in which the educator is situated. These factors are deeply interconnected, as indicated by the arrows connecting these three boxes. For example, states' policies relating to teachers' instruction and discussions about diversity and equity are likely to influence the PL and curriculum materials that schools and school systems can or are incentivized to adopt. Schools and school systems operating in states that have restrictions on teachers' instruction are also likely to create different sets of school policies to support teachers' ABE practice than schools and school systems in states without restrictions. Or, teachers and leaders are likely to need and exercise different sets of skills depending on the demographics of their student body or the level of local community support for ABE. Teachers' provision of ABE, in turn, can lead to consequences for students' experiences at school, including their level of engagement in learning or their sense of belonging at school.

As I will explain further in Chapter Three, this conceptual model informed data collection and analyses throughout this study and is used to frame my research findings. In what follows, I provide a review of research and literature that informs each aspect of this model and explain why or how each aspect is likely to influence or enable teachers' implementation of ABE.

Figure 2.1. Conceptual Framework for Understanding Teachers' Implementation of ABE



The broad structure of this conceptual framework draws on literature on education policy implementation, which recognizes the complex interplay between people, policy, and places (Honig, 2006). That is, how a given policy is implemented and influences teacher practice is ultimately shaped by factors such as:

- the actors involved in implementation as well as their roles, responsibilities, and individual capacities, such as their beliefs, mindsets, skills, and knowledge, which influence how they carry out policies;
- policy goals and the mechanisms by which education leaders seek to enact those goals;
- and the features of the implementation site and the context in which implementation takes place.

As Honig (2006) notes, the implementability and success of policies are not necessarily "inherent properties of particular policies," but rather the "product of interactions between policies, people, and places—the demands specific policies place on implementers; the participants in implementation and their starting beliefs, knowledge, and other orientations towards policy demands; and the places or contexts that help shape what people can and will do" (Honig, 2006, p. 2). As such, examining how policies unfold and influence educator practice requires an examination of the dynamics between these factors to gain a deeper understand of the conditions under which polices may or may not achieve their aims as well as the individual capacities—including mindsets, beliefs, skills, and knowledge— that facilitate (or hinder) the implementation of policies.

To illuminate the specific aspects of people, places, and policies that might matter for teachers' provision of ABE in the classroom, I draw on strands of research and theory which speak to the ways in which schools and teachers can provide students with an education that substantively addresses issues of equity, social justice, and diversity in K-12 settings. These approaches include those such as culturally responsive teaching, culturally relevant pedagogy, social justice education, SEL, and tSEL (Carlisle et al., 2006; Gay, 2018; Jagers et al., 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

These equity-oriented approaches are fitting as they align with the ABE themes of IDJA. They emphasize the importance of providing accurate, positive, and rich representations of different ethnic and cultural groups, thereby elevating the role and value of diverse cultures and students' identities in schooling and shifting the focus away from a deficit orientation and towards the promise and potential of diverse students (Gay, 2013; Jagers et al., 2021; Ladson-Billing, 2009). Engaging in these equity-oriented approaches allows for a reduction in the cultural mismatch that students experience in schools, or, in other words, the dissonance between the cultural knowledge, interaction styles, or worldviews that students from minoritized groups bring to school and the "dominant cultural codes" that schools prioritize (Carter, 2013, p. 148). The reduction in this mismatch can therefore make learning more accessible to diverse students (Gay, 2018, Jagers et al., 2019).

Moreover, these approaches call for the development of students' critical consciousness (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995) and promote the teaching of social justice as a content area, which involves explicitly addressing issues of social oppression (Carlisle, et al., 2007). For instance, Ladson-Billings' (1995) conceptualization of culturally relevant teaching emphasizes the development of students' sociopolitical consciousness, such that they are equipped to critically analyze the norms and institutions that lead to inequity and engage as citizens to address inequities. tSEL similarly highlights students' agency and collaborative problem-solving to work towards positive changes (CASEL, nd-b). Altogether, these equity-oriented approaches are described as transformative and emancipatory; they move education away from simply helping students assimilate into the dominant culture and instead encourage students to critically examine the world around them and engender positive social change.

People

People are often the targets and implementors of policy. In responding to and carrying out policy directives, educators interpret the policies to which they are subject through the lens of their own motivations, existing funds of knowledge and expertise, and beliefs (Spillane et al., 2002). Thus, deep change—as opposed to superficial programmatic change—requires shifts in teachers' beliefs and assumptions, understandings about what instruction should look like, and interactions with students (Coburn, 2003). Additionally, school leaders play an especially important role in the implementation process because they are tasked with supporting teachers' instruction, nurturing a productive school culture, and effectively managing staffing and the allocation of resources (Grissom, Egalite, and Lindsay, 2021).

In what follows, I highlight leadership and individual capacities that are likely to matter for ABE implementation, drawing on literature from ABE in early childhood contexts and other equity-oriented approaches. The capacities—or mindsets, beliefs, skills, and knowledge—described herein are likely to be present when teachers and leaders provide ABE. At the same time, whether they are present and the degree to which they are present likely influence whether and how educators provide ABE.

Leadership

The literature on equitable, culturally responsive school leadership highlights key behaviors that characterize effective school leadership for equitable change. These behaviors include engaging in critical self-reflection and development, building the capacity of teachers to engage in equitable instruction, authentically partnering with families and communities, and developing school policies that actively seek to promote equitable outcomes for students. Through these behaviors and practices, leaders take responsibility for creating the institutional changes at their school to improve educational equity.

According to Fullan (2016), principals must act as "lead learners" (Fullan, 2016, p. 132) who invest in their own learning to successfully lead schoolwide change. Khalifa et al. (2016) and Derman-Sparks et al. (2015) further elaborate on this idea in the context of culturally responsive school leadership and anti-bias program leadership, noting that critical self-awareness and self-reflection are key behaviors of equity-focused leaders. Leaders must continually reflect on their own values and beliefs and the knowledge they do or do not possess about topics such as diverse cultures or how children develop and form ideas about identity. Critical self-reflection can steer leaders away from deficit views and racial erasure and towards high expectations for historically minoritized students (Galloway and Ishimaru, 2017; McKenzie and Scheurich, 2004).

Moreover, leaders working towards equity in schools should also strive to develop the skills and knowledge of teachers as part of their role as instructional leaders (Grissom, Egalite, and Lindsay, 2021). In the context of ABE, this might involve helping teachers develop the skills and knowledge for culturally responsive or anti-bias pedagogy through professional development or modeling behaviors for teachers (Galloway and Ishimaru, 2017; Khalifa et al., 2016). Building teachers' capacity to engage in ABE requires that leaders attend to teacher mindsets and help shift them away from biased or discriminatory perspectives. Another way leaders might build teachers' capacity is through the development of a community of learners (Galloway and Ishimaru, 2017; Khalifa et al., 2016). Indeed, Fullan (2016) stresses the importance of developing not only the individual capacity of teachers but also their collective capacity as a group. Professional communities can provide an invaluable space for educators to make sense of policy directives and determine the specifics of how to carry out those directives (Coburn, 2001). Yet, Derman-Sparks et al. (2015) raise the notion that engaging in conversations about complex topics like race or diversity with colleagues can sometimes feel uncomfortable for staff, therefore highlighting the need for leaders to set "ground rules" for how to interact and dedicated opportunities for collaboration, conversation, and reflection.

Building relationships and collaborating with families and the greater community are also key competencies of an equity-focused leader. Scholars have raised the importance of amplifying voices within the broader community and ensuring that families and community members have the opportunity to provide input into school decisions (Galloway and Ishimaru, 2017; Khalifa, 2012; Khalifa et al., 2016). These practices can ensure that voices that are traditionally marginalized have agency within the school community. Engaging with families and communities can also help school leaders develop a richer understanding of the experiences of students and families and to combat deficit-oriented perspectives. School leaders should not only create opportunities for communities to contribute to the school, but also advocate for and build the capacity of families and community members to advocate for their own positions and needs, thus strengthening the trust between the school and its local community (Galloway and Ishimaru, 2017; Khalifa et al., 2016; Khalifa, 2012). Building trusting, collaborative relationships with families and communities may be even more important as conversations about diversity and equity have become increasingly politicized (Woo and Diliberti, 2023). Teachers' most common

reasons for deciding to limit their classroom discussions of political and social issues in class is that they are uncertain about whether their leaders will support them in the face of parental conflict and that they are afraid of altercations with parents (Woo, Diliberti, and Steiner, 2024). Leaders therefore likely play a critical role in engaging with and educating families to reduce the potential for conflict about teachers' ABE practices.

Finally, leaders play a critical role in crafting school policies that can advance more equitable outcomes for students. As I discuss in further detail in the school-level policies section below, such policies might range from developing an inclusive school-wide vision supporting ABE, managing and allocating financial and human resources to support equitable student outcomes, hiring teachers that are invested in the school's vision for equity and teachers from diverse backgrounds, and actively attending to disparities in student outcomes.

Educator mindsets and beliefs

Extant research highlights the importance of educators' own individual capacity—meaning the mindsets, beliefs, skills, and knowledge— to successfully carry out school improvement efforts (Fullan, 2016; Floden, Goertz, and O'Day, 1995). These individual capacities are especially important given how teachers make sense of new reforms or initiatives; teachers draw on their prior knowledge, preexisting beliefs, and perceptions of policies when interpreting and implementing new initiatives (Coburn, 2001; Spillane et al., 2002). As such, teachers' mindsets and beliefs are key to enacting ABE.

Educational reforms often require teachers to adjust their beliefs in addition to their practices because beliefs go on to influence how teachers interpret reform efforts and therefore their decision-making and practices within the classroom (Shirrell et al, 2018; Spillane et al., 2018). ABE requires teachers to reflect on their own self-identities, which involves unpacking implicit biases, reflecting on the multidimensional and intersectional aspects of their own culture and identity, and understanding how their self-identity might impact expectations for students (Derman-Sparks, et al., 2020; Hammond, 2015). To implement ABE, educators must shift away from a deficit-oriented perspective to one that recognizes the "power, potential, creativity, imagination, ingenuity, resourcefulness, accomplishment, and resilience among marginalized populations" (Gay, 2013).

The importance of high expectations is another recurring theme throughout the equity-oriented approaches I examined. Teachers tend to hold student of color to lower expectations (Gershenson, 2015; Tenenbaum and Ruck, 2007) and teachers' expectations then go on to affect students' future outcomes (Gershenson and Papageorge, 2018). Consequently, it is imperative that teachers provide students with the challenging learning opportunities that will help them grow academically and that teachers truly believe in the potential for students to meet those challenges (Gay, 2002). Hammond (2015) contends that diverse students may "struggle not because of their race, language, or poverty," but rather because "we don't offer them sufficient

opportunities in the classroom to develop the cognitive skills and habits of mind that would prepare them to take on more advanced academic tasks" (Hammond, 2015, p. 14).

Yet, teachers do not all share uniform beliefs about the role or existence of systemic inequities and whether conversations about diversity and equity belong in the classroom. While about two-thirds of teachers do believe that systemic racism exists, about one-fifth of teachers believe that systemic racism does not exist (Woo et al., 2022). Accordingly, while 64 percent of teachers believe students should learn that the "legacy of slavery still affects the position of Black people in American society today," 23 percent of teachers believe that students should learn "slavery is a part of American history but does not affect the position of Black people in American society today" (Lin et al., 2024). Furthermore, there are also some teachers who believe that conversations about race or gender are disconnected from academic learning and too divisive or confusing for students (Woo and Diliberti et al., 2024). Instruction about gender—and specifically gender diversity—are even more polarizing than conversations about race; 8 percent of teachers believe students should not learn about the legacy of slavery, in comparison to 50 percent of teachers who believe that students should not learn about gender identity in school (Lin et al., 2024). This diversity in teachers' mindsets or opinions underscores the importance of understanding how teachers' beliefs may influence how they approach ABE.

It is also possible that teachers' own demographics may influence the beliefs and mindsets that they bring to the classroom. A body of research suggests that having a teacher of color benefits students, especially students of color (Cherng and Halpin, 2016; Egalite, 2024; Nevarez, Jouganatos, and Wood, 2019). One potential explanation is that teachers of color are more likely to have beliefs and engage in practices associated with culturally responsive teaching, like possessing a growth mindset about student intelligence, developing interpersonal relationships with students and their families, and differentiating instruction in response to student needs (Blazar, 2021). Teachers of color are also more likely to engage in practices that promote students' civic engagement and develop students' critical consciousness, because they themselves are more likely to "bring a critical, social justice orientation and consciousness" to their teaching which "stems from their real, lived experiences with inequality" (Quiocho and Rios, 2000, p. 522).

Educator skills and knowledge

Teachers need skills and knowledge to successfully carry out school improvement efforts such as ABE effectively. ABE requires that teachers develop their understanding of the sociopolitical context in which schooling takes place—in short, grasping the structural causes for the achievement and opportunity gaps outlined in Chapter One. By recognizing the impact of systemic racism and other inequities on students and families, the development of teachers' sociopolitical lens can support teachers in rejecting racial erasure and deficit-based narratives which assume historically minoritized students and families are unmotivated or that they do not value education (Hammond, 2015).

Gay (2002) also suggests that teachers must also develop an understanding of diverse students' cultures. This may entail learning about the contributions of different ethnic groups, or developing an understanding of how values, learning styles, and communication styles may vary across (or within) various groups. This same idea likely also applies to the histories and backgrounds of other minoritized groups, such as students who identify as LGBTQ+ or SWDs. This knowledge can support teachers in weaving multicultural or diverse content into their lessons and curricula.

Policy

Policies vary across dimensions such as their goals, targets, and tools—that is, they differ in terms of what they are trying to change, the desired scope of change, whose behavior they endeavor to influence, and the mechanisms by which they influence educator practice (Honig, 2006).

In this section, I highlight the various federal, state, and local (i.e., school system and school) polices that are likely to influence teachers' implementation of ABE. I first discuss state policies because they have been at the center of heated debates about whether and how teachers should address topics related to diversity and equity in the classroom. I then discuss federal policies that have arisen, often in response to state policies. Finally, I describe the school system or school policies that are likely to be important for supporting and enabling ABE implementation.

State-level policies

In the current sociopolitical climate, state policies play an important role in shaping how teachers provide ABE in their classrooms. Beginning in spring 2021, states began enacting restrictions on how K-12 public school teachers can discuss topics related to race, gender, or sexual orientation in the classroom. Nineteen states have enacted such policies as of the writing of this paper.[2] Many of these policies restrict instruction around "divisive concepts" related to race and gender, such as the notion that "one race or sex is inherently superior to another" or that "the United States is fundamentally racist or sexist" (Schwartz, 2021a; Schwartz, 2021b). Some restrictions also include references to other social identities, like religion, national origin, or ability status; bar instruction or the promotion of ideologies that purportedly stem from critical race theory; prohibit instruction related to gender identity and sexual orientation particularly in lower grade levels; bar staff training relating to prohibited divisive concepts; stipulate how

[2] The 19 states with some type of restriction on how teachers can discuss race and gender include Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and Virginia. Arizona had a restriction, but it was stuck down by the Arizona Supreme Court in November 2021. New Hampshire also had a restriction, but it was struck down by a federal judge in May 2024, as this manuscript was being finalized (McCormack, 2024; Natanson, 2023; PEN America, 2024).

teachers can discuss current events or controversial topics; or restrict teachers' ability to engage students in "political activism or advocacy" (Schwartz, 2021b; PEN America, 2024). These state policies have also facilitated book restrictions across the nation (Meehan et al., 2023).

Even while these twenty states have enacted *restrictions* on how teachers can discuss race, gender, and other dimensions of diversity in the classroom, other states have enacted policies to *support* such instruction. For instance, in April 2021, Washington enacted a bill which directs schools to provide staff with training on "cultural competency, diversity, equity, or inclusion" (Washington State Legislature, 2021). In May 2021, Washington's state department of education, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OPSI), also issued a statement alongside professional associations like teachers' and school administrations' unions calling on teachers and school staff to "facilitate and create space for discussions with [their] students about race, racism, racial injustice, and equity." In this statement and on the state department of education website, OPSI also provided educators and families with resources on how to have these discussions with students (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, undated). Similarly, in New York, the State Board of Regents adopted a policy on diversity, equity, and inclusion that encouraged schools to engage in culturally responsive teaching and learning, develop a diverse workforce, and promote programs that support students' self-identity and whole child well-being and development (The New York State Board of Regents, 2021). In 2023, New York's state department of education also issued a framework for supporting transgender and gender expansive students, which enumerated best practices for fostering an affirming school culture for these students (The New York State Department of Education, 2023).

California provides another example of a state that is crafting policies to support instruction around diversity and equity. In 2021, California became the first state to require all high school students to complete an ethnic studies course, which is intended to provide students with instruction about the histories of minoritized groups that are often neglected in traditional high school history courses. Although the mandate to offer an ethnic studies course is not in effect until the 2025-2026 school year, many high schools as well as some districts have already begun to offer or require such courses (Fensterwarld, 2021). Beyond its ethnic studies requirement, California has also integrated equity considerations throughout its new math framework, adopted in the summer of 2023. Although the framework was highly controversial and subject to much public debate and critique, the math framework integrates a focus on social justice by integrating students' cultures and authentic, real-world questions and applications (California Department of Education, 2023). Thus, states like California may be taking steps towards integrating anti-bias tenets into academic learning.

Some states have also passed policies to counteract the effects of restrictions passed in other states. In summer 2023, Illinois became the first state to pass legislation to stem book restrictions in libraries (Government in Illinois, 2023). Beginning in 2024, libraries which "ban" or otherwise restrict access to certain books for partisan reasons will no longer be eligible for state

funding. In fall 2023, California passed a similar policy, which "prohibits school boards from banning instructional materials or library books on the basis that they provide inclusive and diverse perspectives in compliance with state law" (Office of the Governor of California, 2023).

Federal policy

Relative to state governments, the federal government has had a less prominent role in these public debates. However, some actors and institutions at the federal level have made attempts to enact policies or have issued guidance on the interpretation of state policies. In fall 2022, a Republican congressman introduced a bill similar to the Parental Rights in Education law in Florida, colloquially known as the "Don't Say Gay" law, which would restrict instruction around topics like sexual orientation and gender identity at the elementary level (PEN America, 2024; Pendharkar, 2022b). In spring 2023, Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives also passed the Parents Bill of Rights Act, which would require schools to provide parents with greater transparency into school curricula, books, and library materials and to obtain parents' consent to allow students to change their pronouns (Sprunt, 2023). While these policies have not become law, they suggest that some federal policymakers are trying to emulate the policy environment of some states with restrictions.

The U.S. Department of Education (U.S. ED), under the Biden administration, has weighed in on these debates as well. In response to one district's decisions to remove books from its libraries about characters who identify as LGBTQ+ and people of color, the U.S. ED's Office of Civil Rights determined that such removals might have created a hostile environment for students. In response to the Office of Civil Rights' concerns, the district decided to explain to students its book removal process, "offer supportive measures to students who may have been impacted by that process," and administer a school climate to survey to students to "assess whether additional steps need to be taken" (Harris and Alter, 2023; U.S. Department of Education, 2023).

Together, federal and state policies—some of which act as countervailing forces pushing against ABE tenets and some of which support ABE principles— form the context in which school systems and schools build systems and structures to support ABE implementation.

School system- and school-level policies

School systems create the structures and policies that support school-level implementation of new initiatives. They play substantive roles in school reform efforts by generating greater commitment to change initiatives at the school level. They can do so by providing clarity around a vision and purpose, offering supports, and helping to build school capacity, as well as by establishing coherence and sustaining school improvement efforts (Rorrer et al., 2008; Seller, 2005).

As evidenced by the emergence of tSEL as a framework for understanding how SEL can be leveraged to promote equitable learning environments, ABE has overlap with competencies that

are core to SEL (Jagers, et al., 2019). As such, ABE is likely to face similar implementation challenges and share similar implementation strategies with SEL initiatives. I draw on an existing schoolwide implementation model that guides SEL initiatives (see: Meyers, et al., 2019). This implementation model, rooted in implementation science research, features six components—1) establishment of a shared vision, 2) assessment of needs and resources, 3) adoption of evidence-based programs; 4) embedding of PL, 5) integration of SEL schoolwide, and 6) use of data for continuous improvement.[3] Specifically, the model is designed to support school staff in building their capacity to implement school-wide SEL in the form of an evidence-based program and integration of SEL into school structures. This model, tested at several urban schools serving high populations of students of color, is feasible for schools to carry out and, as a result, schools demonstrate greater capacity for implementing schoolwide SEL (Meyers, et al., 2019). I describe each implementation component in turn, integrating literature on approaches related to ABE. As noted earlier, these factors can comprise both those that influence teachers' ABE practice (e.g., PL that develops teachers' skills and mindsets to provide ABE) as well as those which signify the presence of ABE within the school or school system (e.g., integration of ABE into academic learning).

Establishment of a shared vision

School leadership should develop a vision for ABE, including the motivation for and prioritization of ABE, what ABE looks like for students in the school, a plan for carrying out this vision, and an understanding of the anticipated impacts of ABE. Clarity in how a school's vision and mission relate to ABE is important given the critique that teaching for social justice is "anything and everything" (Dover, 2013b, p. 3). Studies highlight the importance of developing an inclusive, affirming vision in collaboration with the school community that recognizes the systemic nature of disparities and inequities (Galloway and Ishimaru, 2017). As Fullan (2016) notes, however, a shared vision is not necessarily just a "precondition for success" but rather can be an "outcome of a quality change process" as implementation supports continuously "build capacity and ownership among participants" (p. 39).

Needs and resource assessment

Schools might engage in an assessment of needs and resources for ABE implementation. Leaders can establish a "baseline for planning" which involves examining various elements of the program environment and landscape, including the culture and assets of the broader school community and readiness of stakeholders to engage in ABE initiatives (Derman-Sparks et al.,

[3] CASEL has since updated its implementation framework (see: CASEL, 2021). The new framework covers most of the same tenets using different groupings of implementation activities. For example, the new "Build foundational support and plan" focus area includes the establishment of a shared vision, and the "Strengthen adult SEL" focus area includes the development of staff capacity. In this study, I use the Meyers et al, 2019 framework because that framed the survey data collected in my study as well as interview protocol development.

2015, p. 34). This process of taking stock then goes on to inform strategic planning for implementation. After assessing needs and resources, school leaders can consider how to manage and allocate their resources appropriately to support school-level ABE initiatives (Carlisle, et al., 2007; Derman-Sparks, et al., 2015)

Use of high-quality instructional materials

Within the context of SEL implementation, adopting evidence-based SEL programming and strategies is important, especially because choosing practices with an established evidence-base will help schools achieve their desired outcomes (Oberle, et al., 2016). However, the evidence base behind ABE practices and programming is comparatively limited. While there are a number of ABE-focused instructional materials offered through various organizations, with a few exceptions (Jagers, et al., 2019), there is a lack of analysis demonstrating the impact of such materials on student outcomes (Dover, 2009).

Even so, ABE-related approaches such as culturally responsive teaching, culturally relevant pedagogy, social justice education, and tSEL all call out the importance of the content that students are exposed to, often operationalized through the curricula and instructional materials presented in the classroom setting. Even outside of the movement towards ABE and other equity-related initiatives, curriculum materials have been gaining currency as a critical lever for promoting education reform (Polikoff, 2018).

Across ABE-related approaches, scholars emphasize the importance of diverse representation in the materials to which students are exposed. Representation of multiple groups across the spectrum of human diversity, but especially minoritized and underrepresented groups, is important because it allows students to see themselves reflected in their education, and also provides educators with the opportunity to actively work against any negative portrayals that students may experience outside of the classroom (Gay, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Sims Bishop, 1990). Yet, exposure to diverse or multicultural representations to support students' positive social identity and comfort with diversity is only one piece of anti-bias instruction. Scholars have also named explicit instruction around inequity, justice, oppression, and activism and development of students' critical consciousness as another key component (Carlisle, et al., 2007; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Another critical component of enacting ABE entails actively using and adapting instructional materials to generate greater alignment to the goals of IDJA. Gay (2002, 2013) asserts that teachers should be trained to critically assess the materials in front of them and modify or supplement them to better represent the complexity of cultural diversity and to redress problematic issues. One study of the enactment of tSEL in middle schools found that teachers adapted their district-adopted SEL curriculum to more strongly center their students' identities and communities within SEL instruction. Teachers also supplemented their given SEL curriculum with additional instructional materials that referenced students' lived experiences and backgrounds (Rivas-Drake, et al., 2021).

Embedding of professional learning

PL is integral to helping teachers change their beliefs and instructional practices so that they align with the school's vision and mission for ABE. Building the capacity of teachers to engage in equitable practices is one of the key behaviors of equity-focused leaders (Galloway and Ishimaru, 2017; Khalifa et al., 2016). Capacity-building efforts can focus on building teachers' individual knowledge, skills, mindsets, and beliefs as noted earlier, which are critical for influencing teachers' practice. The literature on educational infrastructure highlights the importance of developing routines, resources, and roles within the organization to support these changes in beliefs and practices, such as professional learning communities, time for collaboration with peers, modeling, and instructional coaches (Shirrell et al., 2018; Spillane et al., 2018). Providing teachers with ongoing in-service PL may be especially important because teachers who receive training during their teacher preparation experiences on culturally responsive practices may experience difficulties in applying that knowledge in an actual classroom environment (Struthers Ahmed, 2019).

Integration of ABE schoolwide

ABE might be integrated into numerous aspects of the school or school system, such as its mission and vision, routines, policies, culture, and academics (Carlisle, et al., 2007; Oberle, et al., 2016). Such integration is likely to influence the effectiveness of schools' ABE efforts. Below, I dive deeper into the major types of integration identified in the literature.

Integration into school climate

Developing a safe and supportive learning environment involves both strong relationships between students and teachers as well as opportunities for students to engage in community with each other. Describing the idea of cultural caring that teachers might exhibit for diverse students, Gay (2002) writes, "Caring is a moral imperative, a social responsibility, and a pedagogical necessity" (p. 109). One piece of this lies in the expectations that teachers hold for students. Gay (2002) asserts, "Teachers have to care so much about ethnically diverse students and their achievement that they accept nothing less than high-level success from them and work diligently to accomplish it" (p. 109). This notion is also exemplified in Hammond's (2015) notion of learning partnerships, in which she maintains that caring, trusting relationships between students and teachers create a learning environment in which students feel safe enough to take academic risks and to push themselves in their learning.

Integration into academics

Teaching towards the four IDJA themes of ABE can also be infused with academic instruction. Scholars in the fields of culturally responsive teaching, culturally relevant pedagogy, and social justice education draw a connection between these approaches and academic achievement, stating that teachers can use students' interests, prior knowledge, and lived

experiences as "vehicles" to support academic growth (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 161). The explicit connection to academic achievement is one of the central pieces of Ladson-Billing's conception of culturally relevant pedagogy; she writes, "culturally relevant teaching requires that teacher attend to students' academic needs, not merely to make them 'feel good'" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 160). Educators engaging in culturally relevant pedagogy help students "choose' academic excellence" by allowing students to use their academic abilities in ways that are meaningful to them. Similarly, Gay (2013) states that a culturally responsive approach "[uses] the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them," thus "improving achievement by teaching diverse students through their own cultural filters" (p. 49). Gorski and Swalwell (2015) note that equity literacy, their framework for developing multicultural curricula and promoting equity in schools, is most effectively leveraged when taught in an interdisciplinary manner and integrated into the core subject curricula rather than taught in isolated activities.

Scholars also emphasize the importance of allowing these key instructional elements to stem from multiple sources. Teachers might plan or "initiate" their own instruction around topics they think may expand students' awareness or that are important to students' communities (Derman-Sparks, et al., 2020, p.40). Because ABE is intended to support students in understanding the world around them, teachers also have flexibility in allowing for discussion of content or issues that are raised by students, prompted by current events, or which address students' own personal traumas (Derman-Sparks, et al., 2020; Rivas-Drake, et al., 2021).

However, teaching in an environment that prioritizes standards-based instruction can present obstacles, as teachers seek to balance and reconcile the pressures of accountability mandates with efforts to teach ABE. Tensions might arise from having to adhere to curricular mandates within a school or district, pushback from colleagues and school leaders, and a lack of resources, including time, appropriate curricular materials, and training (Dover, 2013a; Gay, 2013). Fortunately, teachers can feasibly accomplish both equity-related goals associated with ABE alongside standards-based instruction by weaving them into mandated curricula (Dover, 2013a) or leveraging culturally responsive methods to help students meet the standards (Gay, 2013).

Integration into operations

Beyond integration into academics, schools might also consider integrating ABE considerations into its operations, like its hiring procedures, resource management, or, if applicable, admissions procedures (Derman-Sparks, et al., 2015). For hiring, extant research underscores the importance of hiring staff who share the school's vision for equity in addition to diversifying staff (Galloway and Ishimaru, 2017). Such hiring involves actively crafting a set of strategies to cultivate a diverse pool of potential candidates, clearly communicating the school's vision and priorities for ABE to candidates, integrating questions about ABE into hiring interview protocols, and leveraging a diverse hiring committee (Derman-Sparks et al., 2015).

Scholars also highlight the equitable allocation of resources (e.g., teachers, institutional structures, monies) to support the learning experiences of students who have historically had constrained access to resources (Galloway and Ishimaru, 2017). Finally, schools that have some control over the types of families admitted can engage in targeted outreach and craft their outreach materials and admissions policies to recruit more families from diverse backgrounds (Derman-Sparks et al., 2015).

Use of data for continuous improvement

Continuous improvement can support the quality of implementation and identify areas for additional growth. School leaders should determine which data points are necessary to monitor ABE implementation and the impacts of ABE. Relevant data points might include those related to teachers' practices, teachers' anti-bias skills and dispositions, or students' growth in the IDJA goals. School leaders may also investigate impacts of ABE on school and classroom climate and culture (Derman-Sparks, et al., 2015).

Place

The implementation site itself is a critical element influencing implementation. The specific characteristics of where implementation takes place, such as its historical, geographic, or institutional background or characteristics, can shape how implementation ultimately unfolds, especially as change initiatives adapt to fit schools' local context, institutional setting, and students' needs (McLaughlin, 2006). The school as an implementation site is also embedded within a broader local, state, and national context. At the local level, schools are situated within local communities which may or may not support schools' provision of ABE. As classroom conversations and instruction related to ABE become increasingly contentious and the influence of state restrictions spread beyond the states where they have been enacted (Woo, Diliberti, and Steiner, 2024), the state context in which educators and schools are located may also influence educators' ABE implementation. At the national level, I refer to the broader trends affecting the whole of the U.S. education system, including those relating to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on educational equity and the teacher workforce, which could have consequences for schools' and teachers' provision of ABE.

National context

The racial reckoning that occurred in the summer of 2020, following the death of George Floyd, engendered calls for the education systems to confront systemic inequities. Simultaneously, the COVID-19 pandemic heighted awareness about different student groups' inequitable experiences and access to opportunities. Communities of color were hit harder by the pandemic, experiencing higher rates of infection, hospitalization, and death, driven by inequities in the social determinants of health (Tai et al., 2022). In part because communities of color were

disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, students of color and low-income students were also more likely than their counterparts to attend schools and districts that were fully remote (Smith and Reeves, 2020). Meanwhile, fully remote schooling was associated with reduced learning opportunities, like less instructional time and curriculum coverage and higher student absenteeism (Kaufman and Diliberti, 2021). Even though schools have reopened their doors for in-person schooling, the impacts of these inequities remain. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which tracks long-term trends in academic performance, math and reading achievement has declined between the 2019-2020 and 2022-2023 school years (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). While achievement declined for many student groups, the declines for struggling learners and students of color were even larger (Modan, 2022), therefore widening existing gaps.

The pandemic has also brought greater attention to the health of the teacher workforce. At the height of the pandemic, teachers experienced high levels of job-related stress and symptoms of depression especially when compared to the general population of working adults, raising concerns about elevated teacher turnover (Steiner and Woo, 2021). Recent research suggests, in comparison to pre-pandemic levels, educator turnover has increased, leaving school system leaders to manage acute teacher shortages (Diliberti and Schwartz, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2023). While teacher well-being has improved since the pandemic, low pay and high workloads continue to drive teachers' decisions about whether they want to stay in their jobs. Moreover, concerns about low pay and long working hours are especially acute for Black teachers, who are more likely than White teachers to report that they are considering leaving their jobs (Steiner et al., 2023). These findings raise concerns about the retention of teachers of color and efforts to enhance the racial and ethnic diversity within the teacher workforce, which remains predominantly White. Threats to teacher diversity might also hamper efforts to implement ABE. In addition to the body of research that demonstrates the many benefits of having a teacher of color, especially for students of color (Blazar, 2021; Cherng and Halpin, 2016; Egalite, 2024) teachers of color are also more likely than White teachers to believe that systemic racism exists (Woo et al., 2022)—a belief that underpins the tenets of ABE.

These trends in both student and educator experiences may be relevant to schools' ABE initiatives for a couple of reasons. First, these broader national trends continue to highlight racial inequities and the importance of attending to minoritized students' experiences at school. At the same time, these trends highlight the pressures on the education system that might prevent teachers from fully engaging in ABE. For instance, during the 2022-2023 school year, teachers' top job-related stressors included managing student behavior, supporting students' academic learning, completing administrative work, and supporting students' mental health and well-being (Doan et al., 2023a)—suggesting that teachers are likely balancing many competing demands on their time. If schools and teachers do not understand how ABE efforts may help alleviate these other stressors, it is possible that they may view ABE as yet another demand that they have little time or few resources to prioritize.

State context

As described earlier, states are now enacting policies to restrict teachers' classroom discussion of political and social issues, including those related to race, gender, and sexual orientation. In addition to states' policy context, it is also likely that state' *political* context—that is, whether a state is leans towards Democrats or Republicans-- could influence teachers' provision of ABE.

National polls show that beliefs about whether and how teachers should address topics related to race, gender, or other political and social issues vary by political party. For instance, Republicans are far less likely than Democrats to support instruction around an array of controversial topics, including immigration, voter rights, racial and income inequality, and especially LGBTQ+-related issues, such as gender identity, gay rights, or trans rights (Polikoff et al., 2022). Republicans are also more likely than Democrats to support "book bans" at the state and local levels, although about half of Republican still oppose such restrictions (Jackson et al., 2023). Recent polling of K-12 parents demonstrates that Republican and Democratic parents not only have different opinions on whether students should have access to instruction around political and social issues, but they also have substantively different views. For instance, Republican parents were more likely than Democratic parents to say that the legacy of slavery no longer impacts Black people in America and that gender is determined by sex at birth, while Democratic parents were more likely to agree that "the legacy of slavery still affects the position of Black people in American society today" and that "someone can be a boy or a girl even if that's different from sex at birth" (Hatfield, 2023).

States' policy and political context are deeply intertwined but not entirely overlapping. All states with restrictions are controlled by Republicans in either the legislature or governorship and often both (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2024). However, there are also other states controlled by Republicans that have not yet enacted restrictions. In some of these states, a large proportion of teachers may work in conservative areas. For example, the majority of teachers in Louisiana, Nebraska, and Ohio teach in conservative counties—although none of these states have enacted formal restrictions on teachers' instruction. Meanwhile, very few teachers in states like California and Washington teach in conservative counties (Woo, Diliberti et al., 2024). Therefore, we may observe state-level variation in teachers' implementation of ABE even across states with similar policy contexts that could potentially stem instead from the state political context.

Although there are 19 states with restrictions, over 40 states have made attempts to enact restrictions (Schwartz, 2021a; PEN America, 2024). Similar to the laws already passed, these policy attempts largely intend to prohibit instruction or classroom discussions related to sexual orientation, gender identity, critical race theory, or divisive concepts related to race or gender (PEN America, 2024). Even where state restrictions have not been formally enacted, attempts to

pass restrictions could potentially send signals to teachers about how they should be approaching these contentious topics.

Local and school context

At the local school or community level, the local political climate and the characteristics of the students teachers serve are also factors that might influence how teachers provide ABE. As noted earlier, Democrats are generally more likely to support instruction around a range of social and political topics, including race and gender, than Republicans (Polikoff et al., 2022). It is possible that the local political climate could be connected to teachers' individual political beliefs—that is, there may be more conservative teachers in conservative communities and more liberal teachers in liberal communities. In addition, the political climate of teachers' local school communities could also influence their provision of ABE, because the local political climate could act as a proxy for the level of local support—or opposition—that teachers might encounter in their provision of ABE. The local political climate may be especially important for teachers' decisions to engage in ABE because community pressure and fears of altercations with parents are strong drivers of teachers' decisions to engage in or avoid instruction about social and political issues (Woo, Diliberti, and Steiner, 2024). Overall, parents of K-12 students are very split on how schools should approach issues relating to race and gender identity, although there are strong partisan differences (Horowitz, 2022). Thus, the local political climate as well as the beliefs held by local community members and families could potentially influence the extent to which teachers and schools are supported by their local school community to provide ABE.

Teachers' decisions about whether and how to provide ABE are also likely influenced by the student population they serve. Students' experiences at school differ in part depending on their identity, and therefore teachers' approaches to student learning are also likely to differ. Students from racially minoritized student groups, as described earlier, are especially vulnerable to stereotype threat, the stress that racially minoritized students experience when they receive signals that they may be subject to negative stereotypes (Steele and Aronson, 1995). Moreover, racially minoritized youth are also likely to experience social identity threat as they experience discrimination that can jeopardize their sense of belonging, control, efficacy, and positive sense of self, thus weakening engagement in schooling (Verkuyten et al., 2019). Research has similarly found that LGBTQ+ youth are especially vulnerable to negative messages about their identities. LGBTQ+ youth are at higher risk of suicide than their peers, but LGBTQ+ youth that have access to protective factors at school like teachers who respect students' identities and pronouns, access to Gay-Straight Alliance, or representation of LGBTQ+ people in their classes, can lower students' risk of self-harm (Pendekhar, 2023). Teachers who serve more students from these historically minoritized groups or are aware of the challenges experienced by these student groups may be more inclined or motivated to ameliorate these challenges through practices like those associated with ABE.

While there has been much emphasis on parental opinions, it is important that we also keep sight of what students believe about instruction related to ABE-related topics. A recent survey of American teens found that only 38 percent and 29 percent of teens are comfortable learning about racism or racial inequality and sexual orientation or gender identity, respectively. Notably, Black teens are especially likely to say that they are uncomfortable learning about racism or racial inequality, Republican teens are especially likely to say that they are uncomfortable learning about sexual orientation or gender identity, and half of teens believe that they should not learn about gender identity at school (Lin et al., 2024). Thus, students' own comfort, willingness to engage in ABE topics, and baseline levels of knowledge regarding ABE topics likely vary across different school communities, which could also influence students' reaction to ABE efforts and how teachers choose to approach ABE.

Connecting Anti-Bias Education with Student Experiences

Comprehensive, large-scale evaluations of ABE implementation do not yet exist and impact studies of related approaches, such as teaching for social justice and culturally relevant education, are limited in scope (Aronson and Laughter, 2016; Dover, 2009). However, existing studies do suggest that elements of ABE lead to positive academic, attitudinal, and behavioral student outcomes. For example, speaking to the ABE goal of identity, one study found that a more positive sense of racial identity was associated with greater engagement with schooling and indicators of educational attainment, including attendance, high school completion, and college attendance (Chavous, et al., 2003). Speaking to the ABE goal of justice, teaching students explicitly about racism can, among White students, promote more positive views about racial minorities, and, among all students, promote greater regard for racial fairness (Hughes et al., 2007). Explicit instruction around issues of oppression, equity, and activism can also increase students' sense of belonging, competence, and sense of confidence about their academic skills, as well as their appreciation for diversity (Aronson and Laughter, 2016; Dover, 2009).

Research syntheses of the impacts of culturally relevant education and teaching for social justice find that these approaches lead to greater student engagement in learning and more positive orientations towards schooling, learning, and students' identity as a learner (Aronson and Laughter, 2016; Dover, 2009). Teachers themselves have expressed that they consider cultural relevance a key facet of engaging instruction (Wang et al., 2021). Importantly, these approaches are also associated with academic gains (Aronson and Laughter, 2016; Dee and Penner, 2017; Dover, 2009). Collectively, the existing research base on the goals of ABE suggests that taking an anti-bias approach in teaching holds promise. Consequently, the high-quality implementation of ABE warrants greater attention.

Chapter 3: Data Collection and Analysis

I use a mixed methods approach that has two major components. For the first component, I leverage survey data drawn from nationally representative samples of K-12 teachers to get a broad sense of the extent to which teachers across the nation are providing ABE and their access to resources and supports to provide ABE. While surveys are useful for understanding the landscape of ABE implementation at the national level, survey results alone may not provide enough information to parse out *why* we observe certain patterns within the survey data or *how* to most effectively provide ABE. As such, I pair the nationally representative survey data with an in-depth school-based case study. Qualitative methods and case studies are well-suited for understanding the processes and mechanisms that lead to improved outcomes—in other words, questions of "how" and "why" (Yin, 2018). A case study allows me to take a deeper dive into how a school actually implements ABE in practice, identify factors that facilitate and impede ABE implementation and effectiveness, and explain how ABE might influence student outcomes, such as students' sense of belonging, comfort with diversity, or agency to bring about social or community change. Moreover, case studies are useful for grounding findings, processes, and outcomes within the particular context of the case (Bush-Mecenas and Marsh, 2018). A case study can thus shed further light on how the implementation of ABE occurs within a unique local and institutional context. A case study can also provide hypotheses for understanding the patterns observed within the survey results.

In this chapter, I describe the types of data I analyzed for this dissertation and how I collected these data. I then describe the methods I used to analyze the data. I begin with the survey component and end with the case study component.

Survey Data Collection

The main source of survey data for this study is RAND's American Teacher Panel (ATP), which is a standing panel of 25,000 to 30,000 K-12 public school teachers. Panel members receive surveys periodically throughout the year to provide insights and perspectives on the state of education in the United States. ATP members are recruited using probabilistic sampling methods, and the samples are designed to be of sufficient size to facilitate national analyses as well as analyses of prevalent subgroups at the national level (e.g., elementary school teachers, high school mathematics teachers, teachers in urban schools). The survey responses are weighted to ensure that the sample reflects the national population of teachers. More information about the sampling, recruitment, and weighting of educators in the ATP is available in Robbins and Grant (2020).

Survey Administration and Content

I administered questions on four separate ATP surveys and use each of the four datasets as part of my analyses. The four surveys include: the fall 2020 Omnibus Survey, the spring 2021 American Instructional Resources Survey (AIRS), the fall 2021 Omnibus Survey, and the spring 2022 AIRS. There are a few key differences in the characteristics of the survey samples. Omnibus surveys are administered to nationally representative samples of K-12 public school teachers. The RAND American Educator Panel team invites researchers to include questions on the Omnibus, which is administered annually. Therefore, it includes questions on a variety of subject areas rather than focusing on a single topic area.

In contrast, the AIRS focuses explicitly on how and why teachers are using instructional materials in schools and the various factors that support their use. The AIRS is administered to nationally representative samples of teachers teaching English Language Arts (ELA), math, and science. Teachers who do not teach at least one of these subjects are screened out of this survey. As a result, the AIRS sample does not include many teachers whose main subject is social studies, although some teachers—particularly elementary education teachers—teach social studies in addition to ELA, math, or science. This feature of the AIRS sample is noteworthy given the likely overlap between social studies content and ABE and could result in a possible underestimation of the prevalence of ABE when examining AIRS data.

As of the time of data collection, the AIRS also contained teacher oversamples in 16 states, which augments the size of the overall sample and allows for the presentation of state-representative results in those 16 states (Arkansas, California, Delaware, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, and Washington). This feature of AIRS is especially relevant given the differences across states' policies regarding topics related to ABE.

For each survey, I crafted the survey items relating to ABE in collaboration with other RAND researchers. The resulting items relating to ABE comprised one short module on each survey. Next, I describe in greater detail the topics addressed on each survey, which were guided by the conceptual framework I presented in Chapter Two. Survey items and topline results from both Omnibus surveys are presented in Appendix A. Survey items and results from both AIRS surveys have been published in technical appendices (See Doan et al., 2021 and Doan et al., 2022).

Fall 2020 Omnibus Survey

The fall 2020 Omnibus Survey was administered in September 2020 and was completed by 1,579 K-12 public school teachers. The survey items relating to ABE comprised one of five modules that addressed a variety of other education topics. The topics addressed in the survey items included:

- The extent to which anti-bias education is a part of teachers' curricula or teaching practices
- The types of instructional materials that teachers use or reference to plan their anti-bias instruction
- The extent to which teachers need specific supports (e.g., anti-bias standards, model lesson plans, professional development, measurement tools, support from families, prioritization from their school or district) to help them provide anti-bias education.

Spring 2021 American Instructional Resources Survey

The spring 2021 AIRS was administered in May to June 2021 and was completed by 7,217 public school ELA, math, and science teachers, including general elementary teachers. The survey items relating to ABE were part of a larger survey focused on teachers' use of instructional materials. The ABE survey items were designed to address different elements of IDJA. Topics addressed in the survey items included:

- The extent to which teachers feel prepared to provide anti-bias education in their classrooms
- The types of instructional materials that teachers use to provide anti-bias education
- Whether teachers perceive the ELA, math, or science curriculum materials provided by their district or school as a recommendation or a requirement as adequately addressing anti-bias concepts
- Whether teachers' professional learning opportunities have prepared them to address anti-bias topics
- Whether teachers' preparation program have prepared them to engage anti-bias topics in the classroom

Fall 2021 Omnibus Survey

The fall 2021 Omnibus Survey was administered in November 2021 and was completed by 1,003 K-12 public school teachers. As with the fall 2020 Omnibus survey, the survey contained several modules on various topics, and the items relating to ABE comprised one of those modules. Topics addressed in the survey items included:

- The systems and supports facilitating ABE at teachers' schools (e.g., a schoolwide vision for ABE, adequate professional learning, policies and practices aligned with ABE goals, data supporting continuous improvement, evidence-based resources)
- Teachers' perceptions about whether ABE has the potential to improve various school and student outcomes

Spring 2022 American Instructional Resources Survey

The spring 2022 AIRS was administered in April to May 2022 and was completed by 8,063 public school ELA, math, and science teachers. Topics addressed in the survey items included:

- The extent to which anti-bias education is a part of teachers' curricula or teaching practices

- The source and types of instructional materials that teachers use to provide anti-bias education
- Whether teachers' ABE instructional materials were required or recommended by their school or district

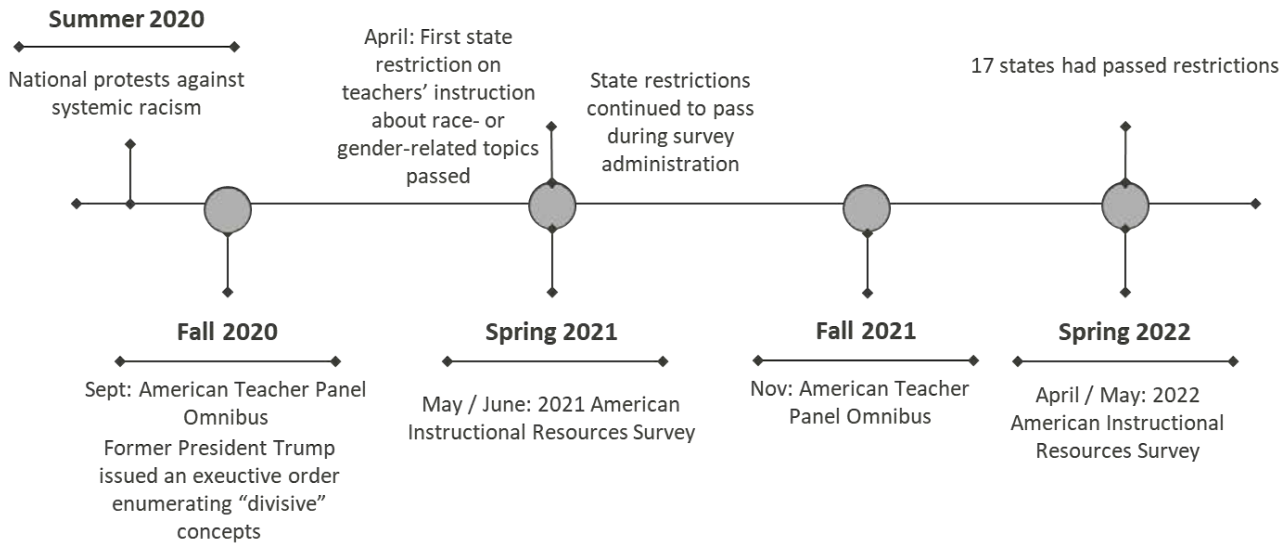
Survey Administrations in Context

To interpret the survey findings, it is also important to understand the sociopolitical context in which the surveys were administered (Figure 3.1). The 2020 Omnibus survey was administered in fall 2020, shortly after a surge of nationwide protests against systemic racism in the summer of 2020. In the wake of these protests and especially given calls for educators to more deeply consider racial equity in their instruction, teachers may have been more intentional about integrating content about identity, diversity, and equity into their instructional practice. Or teachers may have been even more susceptible than usual to social desirability bias when responding to survey questions about ABE.

Around the same time the 2020 Omnibus survey was fielded in September 2020, the Trump administration released an executive order on "combatting race and sex stereotyping" which prohibited the promotion of "divisive concepts" in workplace trainings for federal government agencies and federal contractors (Trump, 2020). These "divisive concepts" included the notion that "one race or sex is inherently superior to another race or sex," "the United States is fundamentally racist or sexist," or "an individual, by virtue of his or her race or sex, is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously," among others. Critics of the executive order claimed that it was an attempt to curtail efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workforce (UCLA Law, 2021). While the executive order did not impact K-12 public schools directly, it laid the groundwork for future opposition to discussions of race, gender, and other political and social issues in schools.

By the time the spring 2021 AIRS survey was fielded, the sociopolitical context and policy landscape had already begun to shift dramatically. Shortly before the 2021 AIRS entered the field, the first state enacted a restriction on how teachers could address topics related to race and gender in the classroom, citing tenets it characterized as rooted in critical race theory as well as the same "divisive concepts" named in the 2020 Trump administration executive order (PEN America, 2024). While the survey was in the field, additional states also passed their own restrictions, also broadly based on the executive order. By the time the spring 2022 AIRS was fielded, 17 states had enacted such restrictions. One full year after state restrictions began to emerge, teachers were experiencing pressure to curtail instruction related to race and gender (Woo et al., 2023), which may have also influenced their survey responses about ABE implementation.

Figure 3.1. Timeline of Survey Administrations



Survey Data Analysis

I present descriptive means and proportions, weighted using a set of nationally representative weights. The weights ensure that the results represent the national population of teachers (Doan et al., 2021; Doan et al., 2022; Robbins and Grant, 2020).

In Table 3.1, I provide descriptive information on each of my survey samples, including weighted and unweighted statistics.

Table 3.1. Descriptive Statistics for Survey Respondents

	Fall 2020 Omnibus (n = 1,579)		Spring 2021 AIRS (n = 7,217)		Fall 2021 Omnibus (n = 1,003)		Spring 2022 AIRS (n = 8,063)	
	Unweighted Percentage	Weighted Percentage	Unweighted Percentage	Weighted Percentage	Unweighted Percentage	Weighted Percentage	Unweighted Percentage	Weighted Percentage
Race								
Black	6%	6%	8%	8%	6%	5%	7%	7%
Hispanic	8%	8%	7%	8%	9%	9%	7%	10%
Other	6%	6%	5%	6%	4%	4%	4%	4%
White	81%	82%	82%	80%	81%	82%	83%	79%
Gender								
Female	75%	76%	82%	82%	75%	77%	81%	80%
Male	25%	24%	18%	18%	25%	23%	18%	19%
Percentage free or reduced-price lunch								
0-50 percent	50%	59%	54%	51%	49%	52%	51%	50%
50 – 100 percent	50%	41%	46%	49%	51%	48%	49%	50%

Percentage students of color								
0 – 50 percent	49%	51%	51%	46%	50%	49%	52%	51%
50 – 100 percent	51%	49%	49%	54%	50%	51%	48%	49%
School locale								
Suburban	40%	39%	36%	39%	38%	40%	36%	38%
Town/ rural	32%	33%	37%	32%	31%	31%	37%	33%
Urban	28%	28%	27%	30%	30%	29%	27%	29%

I used OLS regressions to test for significant differences across different teacher groups, adjusting for observable school-level characteristics (e.g., percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, student racial and ethnic composition, urbanicity) and educator-level characteristics (e.g., race, gender, years of experience, main subject taught, and grade level). I control for these teacher- and school-level characteristics because many teacher- and school-level demographic variables overlap; for instance, teachers of color are generally more likely than White teachers to work in schools with more students of color and also more likely to work in schools with more students experiencing poverty, and there is also substantial overlap among the demographic characteristics of students within a school in terms of socioeconomic status and race (de Brey et al., 2019; National Center for Education Statistics 2020; National Center for Education Statistics 2018a). Therefore, these regression analyses are useful for understanding the drivers of differences, but I do not present regression-adjusted statistics because I believe that these teacher subgroup differences remain notable even if they could be driven by multiple underlying factors. Moreover, I did not make statistical adjustments for multiple comparisons because the intent of this study is to provide exploratory, descriptive information rather than to test specific hypotheses or causal relationships. Unless otherwise noted, I reference only differences among teacher groups that are statistically significant at $p < 0.05$.

In alignment with my conceptual framework, I explore the ways people, policies, and places may influence teachers' implementation of ABE as well as the supports to which they have access and need. To examine how characteristics of teachers themselves may influence ABE implementation, I examine whether teachers' survey responses vary by the characteristics of teachers themselves, such as their race or ethnicity, years of experience, grade level, or subject assignment.

I also examine whether teachers' responses vary by their *state policy context*. As described earlier, I collected teacher survey data in the midst of a shifting policy environment as states were passing restrictions on how teachers could discuss issues that are central to ABE. I explored state-level variation in two ways.

I sorted teachers into two groups based on whether or not they taught in a state that had enacted a state-level restriction on teachers' discussion of race- or gender-related topics by the administration of the spring 2022 AIRS (Schwartz, 2021a; PEN America, 2024). The 17 states

that had enacted restrictions by this time were Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and Virginia.[4] I refer to teachers in these states as *teachers in states with restrictions*. I refer to teachers who reside in the remaining 33 states as *teachers in states without restrictions*.

I also explored how teachers' responses to survey items differed by the *specific* state in which they taught in during the 2021-2022 school year—that is, displaying the responses of, for example, Florida teachers, Texas teachers, California teachers, and New York teachers. Presenting state-specific results is important because the specific policy context is different even among those states that have enacted restrictions as well as those states that have not enacted restrictions. To do so, I leveraged the fact that sampling for AIRS was done intentionally to allow for production of state-level estimates in select states. The spring 2022 AIRS sample included teacher oversamples in 16 states (Arkansas, California, Delaware, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, and Washington).[5] These 16 states include five states (Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Texas) that have enacted restrictions on teachers' discussions of race- or gender-related topics, and 11 states that have not enacted restrictions on teachers' instruction. This allows me to explore whether and how much a specific state's policy context influences teachers' perceptions.

Finally, because I have data on where teachers teach, I also examine how teachers' responses vary by their local context and school context. Specifically, I examine whether teachers' responses differ by their *local political climate*. To proxy the local political climate, I relied upon data from MIT's Election Data + Science Lab (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2022). I use a 5-category measure of the share of votes received by President Trump in the 2020 presidential election in the county where the respondent's school is located: *very liberal* (where Trump vote share was less than 40 percent), *liberal learning* (where Trump vote share was between 40 and 45 percent), *contested* (where Trump vote share was between 45 and 55 percent), *conservative leaning* (where Trump vote share was between 55 and 60 percent), and *very conservative* (where Trump vote share was 60 percent or greater). For ease of interpretation, I used the vote share of a single candidate. I chose to focus on President Trump because he was the incumbent candidate in the 2020 presidential election. These cutpoints are aligned with those

[4] New Hampshire's restriction was struck down in May 2024, as this manuscript was being finalized, but I categorize it as a state with a restriction because the restriction was still in effect during the administration of the spring 2022 AIRS.

[5] The AIRS has oversamples in states that participate in the Council of Chief State School Officers High Quality Instructional Materials and Professional Development Network as well as other states that are of funder interest (e.g., California, Florida, and New York) (Doan et al., 2022).

used in a similar analysis by Pollock et al. (2022), Rogers and Kahne (2022), and Woo, Diliberti, et al., (2024).

I also matched teachers' survey responses to school-level data from the National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data. This allows me to compare the responses of teachers working in different school contexts. For instance, I examine whether teachers' responses vary by the racial composition of their school's student body, the percentage of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch as a proxy for school-level poverty, and urbanicity (i.e., urban, suburban, or rural).

Analyses of Trends Over Time in Teachers' Survey Responses

Because some items were fielded across time, I examine how teachers' responses may have changed over time. This is especially important given the changing policy environment. When examining trends over time, I discuss differences between years that I believe are sufficiently large to be meaningful. I do not have longitudinal survey weights that properly account for the partial overlap of respondents across surveys and am thus unable to conduct significance tests of differences between years. Instead, I examined the 95 percent confidence intervals for each estimate when comparing results across time. Where 95 percent confidence intervals overlapped, I described changes over time as *non-substantial* or essentially the same. Where 95 percent confidence intervals did not overlap, I described these changes over time as *substantial*. The results I display are cross-sectional and are not intended to measure change over time for the same teachers. These methods are consistent with those used in Woo, Diliberti, et al. (2024) for a similar analysis.

Case Study Data Collection

I conducted a single site, school-based case study. I drew on my network of colleagues working within schools and districts to recruit a school for this study. The main criterion for case study selection was that the school was already in the process of implementing the tenets of ABE. As I will describe in further detail in Chapter Four, although the school used a term other than "anti-bias education" to describe its work, the tenets of ABE (e.g., a focus on affirming the identities of diverse groups of students, developing students with the ability to critically engage with their communities and the world around them) were central to the founding principles of the case study school that I recruited. I confirmed the school's focus on ABE through publicly available sources of information, such as its website and its charter petition. I also confirmed that the school was a good fit for the study through conversations with school system leadership at the start of the recruitment process. During interviews and focus groups, I informed interviewees and focus group participants that the overall focus of the study was anti-bias education, which I defined for them as an approach to education which focuses on issues of identity, diversity, equity, and social justice.

I recruited a public charter middle school serving grades six through eight, located in an urban, racially diverse city. The school is part of a larger regional and national network of charter schools. The school received a $500 incentive for participating in the study. Throughout this study, I refer to this school as "East Charter Middle," a pseudonym I use to mask the school's identity. I have also modified some of the local terminology the school uses to describe its ABE work to ensure that the school's identity is protected. More information about the case study context is presented in Chapter Four.

I collected data using multiple approaches: interviews, focus groups, direct observations, and document review. All data was collected during the 2022-2023 school year. Below I describe each data collection effort, including sampling procedures and focal topics.

Interviews

I conducted one-hour interviews with a school system (i.e., charter management organization [CMO]) leader at the national level, a school system leader at the regional level, and four school leaders. I also conducted one-hour interviews with 7 teachers, which represented about half of the teachers in the school. Nearly all interviews took place May or June 2023; one interview was conducted in September 2023. The timing of interviews allowed me to understand staff perspectives as the school year was coming to an end.

Sampling of Interview Participants

I engaged in purposive and snowball sampling to identify participants who would have in-depth knowledge about the school and CMO's efforts to implement ABE. For instance, I interviewed CMO-level staff and the principal, who were responsible for key elements of ABE implementation. The principal helped identify other key school leaders who were also integral to the school's ABE implementation, including a school leader responsible for the school's SEL efforts, the dean, and a school leader responsible for family outreach and family enrollment. This made up nearly all members of school leadership team.

The principal also provided a list of teachers at the school. I sent an email to the full teacher list inviting them to participate in an interview. In the email, I informed school leaders and teachers that the interview would focus on their school's process of implementing ABE and the challenges and successes that they experienced. Interviewees were also informed that their participation in the interview was voluntary and that they would receive a $25 gift card as a token of appreciation for their participation in the interview. One teacher was out on parental leave, two teachers declined to be interviewed because they had felt they had limited time to participate in research, and five teachers did not respond to my interview requests. The seven teachers who did consent to participate in an interview represented a diverse array of subjects, including ELA, social studies, math, and special education. Interviewed teachers also ranged in their experience levels; for instance, one teacher was in their first year of teaching, while others

had over 10 years of experience. As noted earlier, I interviewed about half of the teaching staff at East Charter Middle.

Prior to beginning the interview, I informed teachers that the purpose of the interview was to understand how ABE is implemented, operationalized, and supported at their specific school site and school system as well as the factors that facilitate and impede the implementation process. I reminded teachers that their participation in the interview was voluntary. I also informed teachers that I would keep the information that they provided confidential and that I would not identify any individuals in the data or any published reporting. I then obtained interviewees' consent to participate in the interview and recorded the interviews with interviewees' permission.

Topics Addressed During Interviews

Interviews were semi-structured and lasted for an hour. I designed protocols to address the research question associated with the case study and the conceptual framework outlined in Chapter Two. For instance, in alignment with the portion of the conceptual framework focused on school- or school-system level policies supporting ABE implementation, the interview protocols for school and CMO staff focused on topics such as the school and CMO's vision and priorities for ABE implementation; how instructional materials, PL, and continuous improvement processes supported ABE implementation; how ABE was integrated into the school's policies and practices; perceptions about the facilitators and barriers to implementation; and perceptions about the impacts of ABE implementation. In addition, to understand teachers' own beliefs about ABE, I asked them what their own vision and priorities for ABE were, and the extent to which they aligned with the school's vision and priorities. Finally, to understand the influence of place, I also asked CMO and school staff how the local context of East Charter Middle influenced ABE implementation. Additionally, I asked CMO staff, who oversaw ABE implementation at multiple school sites, how the local context of each site influenced ABE implementation at that site.

In Table 3.2, I provide a summary of the interviews I conducted and a sample of interview questions for each type of interviewee. In Appendix B, I provide the full interview protocols.

Table 3.2. Interviews Conducted and Sample Interview Questions

Type of Interviewee	Roles interviewed	Sample Interview Questions
CMO leaders (n = 2)	• CMO-level leader responsible for ABE implementation • CMO-level leader responsible for ABE curriculum development	• Can you tell me about your CMO's approach to anti-bias education? In other words, how do you define it? • What are your CMO's main endeavors or initiatives supporting anti-bias education (e.g., whether related to family engagement, adoption of curricula, professional learning, etc.)? • Can you describe East Charter Middle's ABE curriculum? What does it look like on a day to day or week to week basis? • How, if at all, do you see operational aspects of your CMO / school (e.g., staff hiring, budgeting, allocation of resources) as

		related to anti-bias education in your CMO? • Overall, what challenges have you faced in implementing anti-bias education in your CMO? How, if at all, have you addressed these challenges? • What advice would you offer to an organization that is considering or planning to adopt anti-bias approaches?
School leader (n = 4)	• Principal • Dean • School leader responsible for SEL • School leader responsible for family outreach and student enrollment	• What is the school's vision for ABE? • How are the school's priorities and vision with respect to ABE influenced by the CMO's vision and priorities? • How are the vision and priorities of the CMO communicated to school leaders? • How, if at all, do you see ABE fitting in with other initiatives that your school is undertaking?
Teachers (n = 7)	• ELA, social studies, math, and special education teachers	• What are your main endeavors or instructional activities supporting anti-bias education (e.g., class projects, assignments, lessons, activities)? • What instructional materials, if any, do you use to implement anti-bias education at your school? • To what extent is anti-bias education integrated with academic content? • How is anti-bias education woven into other aspects of the school day or school culture? • What professional learning opportunities, if any, do you receive to support your implementation of anti-bias education in the classroom? • How, if at all, do you communicate with families about anti-bias education? • Of the guidance you've received from your school leaders or district/CMO on implementing anti-bias education, what has been most helpful? Why? Can you provide an example? What has been the least helpful? Why? Can you provide an example? • What kind of student impacts, if any, have you observed as the result of your school's implementation of anti-bias education?

Focus Groups

I conducted one-hour focus groups with parents and students. I conducted four parent focus groups (n = 7) and three student focus groups (n = 18). All focus groups took place May or June 2023. Again, the timing of focus groups allowed me to gather stakeholder perspectives on the full scope of the academic year. All focus groups were recorded and transcribed, with permission from participants.

Sampling of Focus Group Participants

The principal supported recruitment of parents and students to participate in focus groups. I drafted an invitation for parents to sign up for a virtual focus group using an online platform, SignUp Genius. In the invitation, I told parents that East Charter Middle was participating in a study about the implementation of ABE and that the focus group would provide parents the opportunity to share their thoughts and perspectives about the education that their child receives.

Parents were informed that their participation in the focus group was voluntary and confidential, although their name would be shared with other focus group participants if they joined via videoconference or their phone number would be shared if they joined via phone. Parents were also informed that they would receive a $25 gift card as a token of appreciation for their participation in the focus group. In the invitation, I provided parents with a link they could use to sign up for a predetermined focus group time, which I scheduled in the evening during weekdays and in the late morning on weekends. The principal then sent this invitation to parents through a parent newsletter. Parents used SignUp Genius to select a focus group time that was convenient to them. On SignUp Genius, their identities were masked to all others viewing the online platform. As parents signed up for focus groups, I sent them an email with information on how to access Microsoft Teams for the virtual focus group.

To recruit students for student focus groups, the principal leveraged existing student groups, including a 6th grade student council, a 7th and 8th grade student council, and a 7th and 8th grade leadership class. I then coordinated with the staff leading these student groups to schedule on-site student focus groups during the school day. Prior to conducting the focus group, I provided staff with an informed consent form notifying students' parents or legal guardians that their student had been selected for participation in a focus group. I informed parents about the purpose of the study and the topics addressed during the focus group. I also informed parents that students' individual identities would not be associated with the data and that their student would receive a $15 gift card as an incentive for participation in the research project. I only included in focus groups the students who returned the informed consent form with a signature from their parent or guardian.

Prior to beginning the focus groups, again, I informed participants that the purpose of the interview was to understand how ABE is implemented, operationalized, and supported in their school and school system as well as the factors that facilitate and impede the implementation process. I reminded participants that their participation in the focus group was voluntary. I also informed participants that I would keep the information that they provided confidential and that I would not identify any individuals in the data or any published reporting. I asked participants to respect the confidentiality of other participants and not repeat what we discussed outside of the focus group. However, I reminded participants that I could not guarantee this confidentiality given that they were participating in a group interview. I then obtained participants' consent to participate in the focus group and recorded the focus group with their permission.

Topics Addressed During Focus Groups

Student and parent focus group protocols focused on topics such as student and parents' perceptions about the priorities of the school, how the school engaged families in its ABE work, perceptions about the school's ABE activities including strengths and areas for improvement, and perceptions about how the school's ABE work impacted students. Full focus group protocols are provided in Appendix B.

Table 3.3. Focus Groups Conducted and Sample Focus Group Questions

Type of focus group	Number of focus groups	Total number of focus group participants	Sample focus group questions
Parents	4	7	• What do you think the school's priorities are? Do you agree with these priorities? What do you think the school should prioritize? • What, if anything, have teachers or other staff at the school told you about how the school is teaching students about ABE? • In what ways, if any, have you been asked to get involved in the school's ABE activities? • Do you think ABE will help your student? Why or why not? • Is there anything you'd like to change about how the school addresses ABE?
Students	3	18	• What do you think your school really cares about? In other words, what is really important to your school? How do you know? • What kinds of school activities, like your classes, clubs, projects, or assignments, do you participate in that help you learn about topics like diversity, identity, equity, or social justice? • What do you like about the way your school teaches you about these topics? • What do you think could be improved? Is there anything else you think the school could do to support you in understanding these topics better? • Do you think that learning about diversity, identity, equity, or social justice has helped you as a student? Why or why not?

Observations

As a supplementary source of data, I conducted four in-person observations:

- One day of academic classes,
- One day of extracurricular activities such as student clubs,
- One afterschool staff PL session focused on helping teachers guide students through a project-based learning opportunity wherein students chose a social issue to research, and
- One school-wide heritage month celebration.

While I was planning data collection activities for the case study, I explained the purpose of this dissertation to the principal so that they would have an understanding of the types of observations that would be most relevant. I notified the principal of my desire to observe both classes and PL opportunities related to their ABE implementation, and the principal invited me to the campus on days when I could conduct those observations. To reduce the burden on the school, my observations were spread throughout the school year. The principal coordinated each visit by providing me with a schedule for each observation and notifying teachers of my presence. Prior to my first observation, I provided teachers at the school with a document notifying them about the purpose of my observations and that observations were confidential and voluntary.

During observations, I used a notetaking protocol that captured the activities in which teachers and/or student engaged. For each activity, I took notes on the content addressed in the activity and level and types of interactions and engagement between participants that occurred during the activity.

Document collection

To supplement my interviews and focus groups, I drew on publicly available documents and resources. These included the school and CMO's websites, which provided public-facing information on the school and CMO's mission and values, history, model for education, ABE efforts, enrollment processes, and data on student achievement and from staff and family surveys. I also drew on the school's publicly-available charter petition, as submitted to the local school district. The charter petition included further detail on the school's mission and vision, educational program, processes for student and staff recruitment, and admissions requirements. Finally, I reviewed data on the school from other public databases (e.g., the National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data, the state department of education website), which provided data on student enrollment and student demographics.

Case Study Data Analysis

Case study data were analyzed using established qualitative methods. All interview and focus group transcripts were uploaded to Dedoose, a platform that facilitates qualitative analysis. I first coded transcripts into overarching topics that were keyed to my conceptual framework. These included school-level systems and supports (e.g., vision, use of curricula, PL, continuous improvement process, strategies for family engagement, integration of ABE) as well as context, implementation facilitators, barriers, and student outcomes. This initial coding scheme illuminated different characteristics of the school's model for implementing ABE. During this process of coding the data, I also modified the codebook to allow for the emergence of unanticipated aspects of the school's model for ABE, such as its staff hiring processes (Bernard and Ryan, 2010).

While conducting this initial level of coding, I developed a matrix that summarized participants' perspectives regarding each major component of the conceptual framework to illuminate themes and patterns across participants (Miles and Huberman, 1994). In addition, I recorded emerging themes as I was coding and summarizing. This process of creating summaries and a running list of themes was helpful in identifying finer second-level codes that arose inductively from the data.

I exported the excerpts that were coded to each of the overarching codes into a spreadsheet. Using this spreadsheet, I applied inductive, second-level thematic codes. These thematic codes were used to identify themes around interviewees' perceptions about the characteristics of effective system and supports, and various types of implementation facilitators and barriers. For

instance, I coded some excerpts as representing positive or negative perceptions of school-level policies identified in my conceptual framework like PL or instructional materials to better understand the features of effective or ineffective PL experiences and instructional materials. As another example, when analyzing the various facilitators and barriers to implementation, I coded excerpts using thematic codes like support from leadership, buy-in to the school's vision for ABE, or staff and leadership turnover. Using my record of emergent themes, I also created second-level codes that were at the highest level of inference. For instance, one emergent theme was around the coherence between school-level systems and supports. While interviewees did not explicitly discuss coherence, because it was emerging as broader theme relating to the school's implementation of ABE, I also began to track excerpts relating to coherence in my coding. In Table 3.4, I present the list of codes I used to analyze the interview and focus group data.

Table 3.4 Qualitative Codes Used for Case Study Analysis

First-level codes	Second-level codes	Description
Role and Background	--	• Staffs' role and responsibilities (e.g., grade or subject taught) at the school • Information about staff's experience as an educator
Vision, goals, priorities	• Identity • Diversity • Justice • Action	• Staffs' perceptions of the CMO's or school's vision, goals, and priorities for ABE • Staffs' perceptions of their own vision, goals, and priorities for ABE • Staffs' perception that the vision, goals, and priorities for ABE were related to identity (e.g., representation of students' identities); diversity (e.g., inclusion of different groups, making learning accessible to all groups, helping students understand others across lines of difference); justice (e.g., understanding historical context); or action (e.g., battling biases)
Instructional materials	• Positive perceptions of ABE curriculum • Negative perceptions of ABE curriculum • Development of instructional materials	• Staffs' perceptions about the school's ABE curriculum, including aspects of the curriculum they liked and aspects they felt could be improved • Staffs' descriptions of how the school's ABE curriculum was created
Professional learning (PL)	• Positive perceptions of PL • Negative perceptions of PL • Additional needs for PL • Future PL	• Staffs' perceptions about the school's ABE PL, including aspects of PL that they liked and aspects they felt could be improved • Staffs' perceptions of additional PL that they would like to have

		• Staffs' perceptions of plans for future PL
	--	
Data collection and continuous improvement	• Monitoring implementation • Continuous improvement	• Staffs' perceptions of school / staff efforts to monitor the implementation of ABE • Staffs' perceptions of how data is used to support continuous improvement
ABE integration	• Integration into staff hiring • Integration into school climate • Integration into school policy • Integration into academics • Integration into discipline • Integration into extracurriculars • Integration into student enrollment • Integration into SEL • Integration into student enrollment	• Staffs' perceptions of how ABE is integrated into various school operations, academics, and other school initiatives
Family and community engagement	• Family engagement • Community engagement	• Staffs' perceptions of how the school engages with community partners to support ABE efforts • Staffs' perceptions of how the school engages with families to support ABE efforts
Alignment	• CMO to school alignment • School to teacher alignment	• Staffs' perceptions about the extent to which CMO vision or ABE activities align with the school's vision or activities • Staffs' perceptions about the extent to which the school's visions or ABE activities align with the teachers' visions or activities
Context	--	• Staffs' perceptions about how local context influences ABE implementation
Facilitators	• Ownership / leadership of ABE initiatives • Support from leadership • Buy-in and alignment in values • School culture • Coherence between systems and supports	• Staffs' perceptions about the factors that facilitated ABE implementation
Barriers	• Turnover • Teacher stress • Competing pressures • Variation in individual capacity • Silos between systems and supports •	• Staffs' perceptions about the factors that hindered ABE implementation

Student outcomes	--	• Staffs' perception about how ABE influenced students
School values and priorities	--	• Students' and parents' perceptions about the school's values and priorities
Student enrollment	--	• Students' and parents' perceptions about why they decided to enroll in the school
ABE activities	--	• Students' and parents' perceptions about the activities that students engaged in to support ABE
Strengths	--	• Students' and parents' perceptions about the strengths of the school's ABE implementation
Areas for improvement	--	• Students' and parents' perceptions about how ABE could be improved at the school
Family engagement	--	• Students' and parents' perceptions about how families are engaged in the school's ABE activities

After conducting this finer level of coding, I summarized key themes pertaining to each school-level policy (e.g., the school's vision for ABE, use of instructional materials, PL experiences, continuous improvement processes), major implementation facilitators and barriers, coherence between school-level systems and supports, and how broader contextual factors like the characteristics of the school community influenced the school's ABE implementation. For instance, one theme related to the high levels of support and buy-in for the school's vision for ABE across multiple types of stakeholders, including leaders, teachers, and families, which resulted in part from the school's processes for hiring and enrollment. As another example, a different theme related to how the CMO created a curriculum to teach ABE-related concepts, which in part signaled the importance of ABE to the school. However, teachers struggled with some aspects of implementing the curriculum, noting that the curriculum itself sometimes felt too abstract or that implementation of the curriculum was inconsistent.

In this process, I used established procedures like looking for repetitions across the data and attending to the prevalence of themes across participants, patterns in themes across types of

participants, and the extent to which there was consensus or divergent views across participants. To enhance the validity and accuracy of my findings, I also attended to confirming and disconfirming evidence. For instance, I triangulated data across different sources by comparing data between different participants (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

As another example of how I sought out confirming and disconfirming evidence, I compared staff members' descriptions of the student diversity within the school to public data about the school's student demographics. I also compared my observation data with interview and focus group data. Because I conducted only four observations throughout the school year to reduce burden on the school site, I am unable to determine how representative my observations were of school days or PL sessions throughout the school year. However, observations helped me better understand how the school operated and how teachers interacted with students and each other. In Chapter Four, I note where observations provide examples or further evidence of perspectives or information expressed during interviews or focus groups.

When presenting results from the case study, I use the term "CMO leaders" to refer to the two leaders at the CMO network level I interviewed, one at the national CMO level and the other at the regional CMO level. Where I refer to "school leaders," I am referring to the four school leaders at East Charter Middle, including its principal, dean, director of SEL, and director of outreach and enrollment. Where I refer to "leaders," I refer to the collective of CMO and school leaders. Where I refer to "teachers," I am referring to the seven teachers that I interviewed at East Charter Middle. Where I refer to "school staff," I am referring to both school leaders and teachers at East Charter Middle. Words or phrases in quotation marks originate directly from interviewees, although some quotes were lightly edited for clarity (e.g., false starts and filler words like "um" or "like" were removed).

Limitations

Readers should keep in mind several caveats when interpreting these study results. One limitation across both survey and case study results is that, with the exception of case study observations and documents, they both rely on self-reported data. In both cases, data may subject to reporting bias. Teacher survey respondents as well as case study participants may have felt inclined to respond in socially desirable ways, especially given the sensitivity of the topic.

There are also several limitations that are specific to the survey and case study components. In the survey, I provided teachers with a definition for anti-bias education, but I cannot guarantee that teachers interpreted the definition of anti-bias education in a uniform way, and I also have no knowledge about the quality and depth of their anti-bias education implementation. Second, the AIRS only includes teachers who teach ELA, math, or science. Some of these teachers taught social studies in addition to ELA, math, or science, but the sample lacks teachers who exclusively taught social studies. This is a limitation because social studies teachers may be

especially likely to encounter ABE-related topics in their instruction, particularly in subjects like history or civics education (Schwartz, 2023). Therefore, results from the AIRS may actually underestimate the extent to which teachers across the nation are providing anti-bias education. Third, as mentioned earlier, the characteristics of the Omnibus and AIRS surveys are slightly different, because the Omnibus survey does not screen teachers out based on their subject assignment. This complicates comparisons of results between the two surveys. To alleviate concerns that differences in results between the two surveys stem from differences in the characteristics of the survey samples, when examining data from the Omnibus surveys, I also examined the responses of only teachers teaching ELA, math, or science to see whether results were substantively different depending on the types of teachers included in the sample. I call out instances of discrepancy between the overall and subsample where necessary. Fourth, while I report on differences by teachers' self-reported racial identity,[6] I am unable to distinguish between the many ethnicities and cultures encompassed by the broad racial categories used for analyses in this study. While I recognize that teachers within these broad racial categories have varied lived experiences and are not a monolith, another limitation of the study is that I am not able to parse out the nuanced differences and experiences within the racial categories used for reporting. Finally, all analyses across different groups of teachers are purely descriptive and do not suggest causal relationships.

Case study findings are also subject to several limitations. First, case study findings reflect the experience of just one school during one school year. Other schools—and especially those in different institutional or local contexts (e.g., a traditional public school, a school in a less racially diverse city)—might have different models for providing ABE, or they might experience different implementation barriers or facilitators. Extending this study to include multiple sites is an area for future research. Secondly, I lack information on staff members' race or ethnicity, which limits my understanding of how staff's own identities may influence how they provide ABE. This too is an area for future research. Thirdly, the perspectives presented may not represent the entire population of staff, students, or families because the perspectives of those who agreed to be interviewed might not be the same as those who did not agree. As a result, generalizability of case study results may be limited.

[6] We asked teachers, "With which of the following do you identify?" and teachers were able to select all that apply from the following response options: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, White, and other. Teachers are also able to decline to respond to the question.

Chapter 4: Anti-Bias Education K-12 Public Schools

Despite the potential for ABE to advance educational equity, there is little information on how prevalent ABE is throughout K-12 public schools, how teachers are approaching ABE, and teachers' access to supports to help them teach ABE. Understanding whether or not teachers provide ABE and how they are doing so are important lines of inquiry in the current sociopolitical climate, as teachers face mounting pressures to reduce their instruction about diverse groups. Additionally, as teachers encounter challenges to providing ABE that may stem from states' recent restrictions on how they can address topics related to race, gender, or sexual orientation or from the communities in which they teach, it is also critical to examine teachers' access to supports that can help them provide ABE.

To provide the first national examination of teachers' implementation of ABE in the midst of challenges to instruction about diversity and equity, I leverage four surveys administered from fall 2020 to spring 2022, each drawing on nationally representative samples of K-12 public school teachers.

I explore several lines of inquiry in alignment with my conceptual framework, which outlined the dimensions of policy, places, and people that likely inform and influence ABE implementation. In my conceptual framework, I identified several types of policies that might influence teachers' implementation of ABE. For instance, some states across the nation have enacted restrictions on the ways teachers can talk about diverse identities in the classroom, while other states have enacted supports or even requirements to engage in such instruction. Thus, in this chapter, I explore teachers' reports of providing ABE, how teachers' provision of ABE has shifted in the wake of the enactment of state restrictions, and how teachers' provision of ABE varies across different state contexts. My data are well-suited to examine these shifts, as they were collected before, during, and after the passage of state restrictions. Two of the surveys—the fall 2020 Omnibus and the spring 2021 AIRS—were administered prior to or right as states began enacting restrictions on teachers' instruction, thus providing a baseline comparison point for teachers' provision of ABE before state restrictions took effect on teachers' practice. The fall 2021 Omnibus and spring 2022 AIRS were administered during the first year of states' passage of restrictions. By the time the spring 2022 AIRS was administered, one full year had passed since states first began enacting restrictions. In my conceptual framework, I also described the local (i.e., school or school system) policies that the literature has identified as critical for the implementation of related approaches, such as SEL. I present teachers' reports on whether they have access to the supports that might be bolstered by these local policies, such as PL, instructional materials, integration into academic learning, integration into schoolwide policies, or data to support continuous improvement.

My conceptual framework also underscores the importance of where implementation takes place. Thus, I explore the influence of the local political climate and school context on whether teachers provide ABE and how they provide ABE. National surveys suggest that Republicans are less likely than Democrats to support instruction about various social and political issues that are likely to arise in ABE, such as racial inequality, income inequality, and LGBTQ+ identities and rights (Polikoff et al., 2022). Teachers in more-conservative areas may experience more local resistance to ABE. Or, teachers in more-conservative areas may be more likely to identify as Republican themselves and may therefore be less likely to support or provide ABE. Teachers who serve higher populations of minoritized students—such as students of color or students experiencing poverty—may be more likely to provide ABE, if they perceive a greater need for ABE.

Finally, my conceptual framework also describes how the characteristics of teachers themselves are likely important factors influencing implementation. These characteristics might include demographic characteristics, like teachers' race or gender, because teachers with varied lived experiences might also approach ABE differently. Teachers' beliefs about the importance of ABE are also ripe for exploration; although there has been significant debate about whether the integration of diverse identities is appropriate for classroom instruction, we have little national data on what teachers think about such instruction. Therefore, I also examine whether teachers' reports of providing ABE vary by teacher characteristics as well as teachers' beliefs about the importance of ABE and related approaches.

Honig (2006) emphasizes it is the interaction between these dimensions of policies, place, and people that shape how implementation unfolds. I explore some of these interactions and dynamics in this chapter as well. For instance, the local political climate may influence teachers' provision of ABE differently in different state policy contexts; teachers in very-liberal areas and in states without restrictions likely experience the most support for ABE implementation, while teachers in very-liberal areas and in states with restrictions may perceive local support for their provision of ABE but challenges from their state, such as the prospect of facing punishment for violating state policies. As another example, some types of teachers may be more influenced by recent state restrictions than others, thus influencing their provision of ABE.

Given the lines of inquiry outlined in my conceptual framework, I present research findings for the following three guiding questions:

1. How many and which teachers report providing ABE, and how, if at all, has the percentage of teachers providing ABE shifted since states began enacting restrictions on teachers' instruction?
2. What types of instructional materials and approaches do teachers use to provide ABE?
3. How can ABE be supported?

I begin with data on the percentage of teachers providing ABE. I explore whether the percentage of teachers providing ABE has shifted in the wake of state restrictions and how these shifts differ by state policy context, local political climate, and teachers' own demographic characteristics and school context. These data lay the foundation for understanding the prevalence of ABE throughout the country and where there might be disparities and changes in teachers' provision of ABE. Although I am unable to verify that teachers interpreted the term "anti-bias education" uniformly, I provided teachers with the same definition for ABE across each survey administration, drawing on definitions from Learning for Justice (2022) and Derman-Sparks et al. (2020). I defined ABE as "an approach to education that emphasizes the development of students' positive social identities and fosters their comfort and respect for all dimensions of diversity, including, for example, race and ethnicity, gender identity, religious identity, immigration status, sexual identity, socioeconomic status, and ability status. It is also intended to raise their awareness of and promote their capacity to act against bias and injustice."

Next, I explore the approaches and instructional materials that teachers use to provide ABE, how they vary by teachers' characteristics and teaching contexts, and how teachers' approaches and use of materials have shifted over time. I then examine teachers' perceptions about the impacts of ABE on student learning to underscore the potential for ABE to improve students' educational experiences and educational equity, even as states are enacting restrictions to constrain teachers' discussion of ABE-related topics. Finally, I explore the ways that policymakers and education leaders can support teachers' provision of ABE through mechanisms like teachers' access to curricula, PL, teacher preparation, and other school-level supports for providing ABE.

Unless otherwise noted, I reference only differences between teacher subgroups that are statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. When comparing teachers' responses across time, I am unable to conduct significance tests of differences between years because I lack a set of longitudinal survey weights that correctly account for the partial overlap in the survey samples. Therefore, the results I display are cross-sectional rather than longitudinal. To determine whether differences between years are sufficiently large to be meaningful, I examined the 95-percent confidence intervals for each estimate. Where 95-confidence intervals do not overlap, I describe differences are substantial; where they overlap, I describe differences are non-substantial or unchanged. This method is consistent with a related analysis conducted in Woo, Diliberti, et al., (2024).

How Many and Which Teachers Report Providing Anti-Bias Education?

To answer my first question, I first examine the percentage of teachers providing ABE at the national level. Using data from the fall 2020 Omnibus, spring 2021 AIRS, and spring 2022 AIRS, I explore shifts in teachers' provision of ABE before and after the passage the state restrictions. I then explore shifts by teachers' state policy context and local political climate. Next, I present findings on how teachers' provision of ABE varies by their own characteristics,

such as race or ethnicity, gender, or subject taught, and their school context, such as the locale of their school and population of students served. I examine how these patterns by teacher subgroup shift after the passage of state restrictions. Finally, I discuss teachers' beliefs about the outcomes of ABE.

About three-quarters of teachers reported providing anti-bias education prior to the passage of state restrictions

Across two survey administrations, teachers widely reported providing ABE prior to the passage of state restrictions. In the fall 2020 Omnibus, 71 percent of teachers nationally reported that ABE is a part of the curriculum they teach or a part of their teaching practices to a small, moderate, or large extent, with 28 percent of teachers reporting to a small extent, 26 percent reporting to a moderate extent, and 16 percent reporting to a large extent. This high prevalence of ABE is reinforced by results from the spring 2021 AIRS, where we asked teachers what types of instructional materials they used to provide ABE. In the spring 2021 AIRS, 73 percent of teachers reported that they provide ABE in some form, whether through their school- or district-provided materials for their subject area, through materials they find or create themselves, or without materials and instead through informal discussions with students.

It is important to note the national context during the administration of these two surveys. In fall 2020, states had not yet passed any restrictions on how teachers can address topics related to race, gender, or sexual orientation. Moreover, the fall 2020 Omnibus was administered just a few months after widespread protests against systemic racism swept across the nation, possibly raising teachers' awareness of issues related to diversity and equity. When the spring 2021 AIRS began its administration in early May, the first state-level restriction on classroom content related to race or gender had just passed just a few days earlier, although other state-level restrictions were passed during the administration of the spring 2021 AIRS (Schwartz, 2021a; PEN America, 2024). Research suggests that it may take time for teachers to become aware of the restrictions in their states (Woo et al., 2023), so it is plausible the impacts of these restrictions on teachers' instruction might not have been felt so soon. Altogether, these results suggest that, prior to the passage of state restrictions and just as restrictions were beginning to pass through state legislatures, nearly three-quarters of teachers were providing ABE in some form and to some extent.

One year after states began enacting restrictions, the national percentage of teachers providing ABE declined to 62 percent

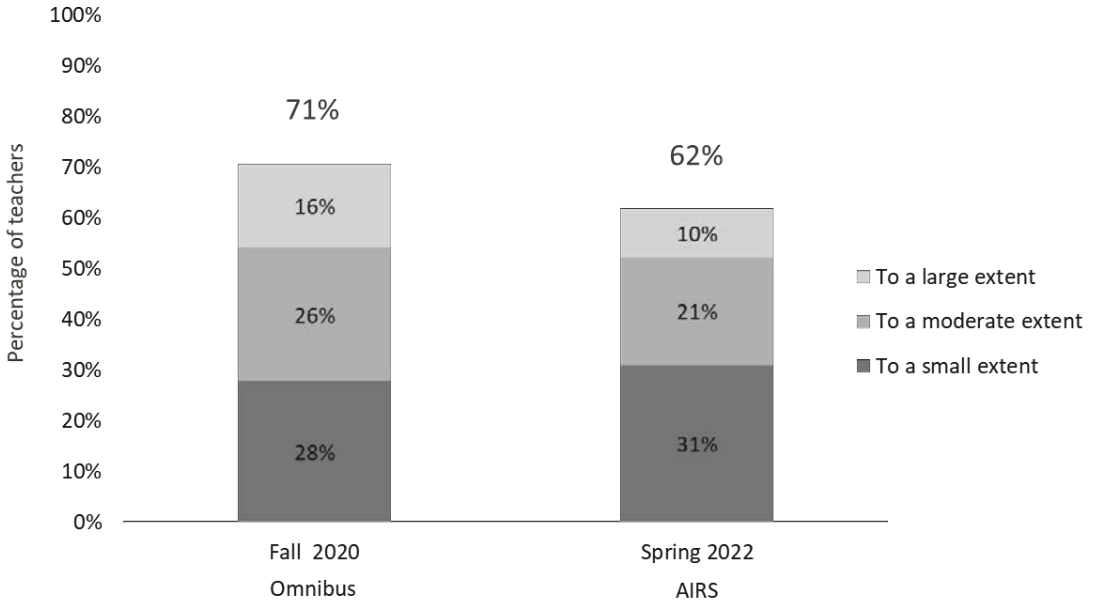
In spring 2022, one full year after the passage of the first state restriction on teachers' instruction, 62 percent of teachers reported that ABE was a part of their instruction to a small, moderate, or large extent, suggesting a slight drop in the provision of ABE at the national level. Teachers may also be less likely to provide ABE intensively to students. Substantially fewer teachers reported providing ABE to a large extent in the spring 2022 AIRS than in the fall 2020

Omnibus (10 percent in 2022 in comparison to 16 percent in 2020); I observed a similarly substantial decline in the percentage of teachers providing ABE to a moderate extent (21 percent in 2022 in comparison to 26 percent in 2020). In the spring 2022 AIRS, half of teachers providing ABE were doing so to a small extent (see Figure 4.1).[7]

As noted earlier, the sample characteristics of the fall 2020 Omnibus and the spring 2022 AIRS are different, making comparisons across results of the two surveys more tenuous even though the survey items are very similar. While both samples are nationally representative, the AIRS only samples teachers who teach ELA, math, and science, sometimes in addition to other subjects, while the Omnibus does not screen teachers out of the sample based on their subject assignment. To explore whether the difference in the characteristics of the samples might have accounted for this drop in the provision of ABE between fall 2020 and spring 2022, I examined the responses of just ELA, math, and science teachers in the fall 2020 Omnibus. I found that, in fall 2020, 71 percent of ELA teachers, 70 percent of science teachers, and 65 percent of math teachers reported that ABE was a part of their curriculum or teaching practices to a small, moderate, or large extent. In comparison, by spring 2022, 66 percent of ELA teachers, 63 percent of science teachers, and 59 of math teachers reported the same. Since I observe a drop in the provision of ABE even when examining the responses of just ELA, math, and science teachers in both surveys, it is likely that the decline in teachers' provision of ABE between the fall 2020 Omnibus and the spring 2022 AIRS is not due to the difference in the characteristics of the AIRS and Omnibus teacher samples.

[7] Throughout the figures in this chapter, I will use a coloring scheme to organize results. Greyscale figures are figures depicting overall trend analyses. Blue figures depict the results of teachers in states without restrictions, and green figures depict the results of teachers in states with restrictions. In figures with agree or disagree dichotomies or positive or negative valences, I use purple to indicate agreement or positive valences and orange to indicate disagreement or negative valences.

Figure 4.1. Percentage of Teachers Reporting the Extent to Which Anti-Bias Education is a Part of the Curriculum They Teach or a Part of Their Teaching Practices, Fall 2020 and Spring 2022

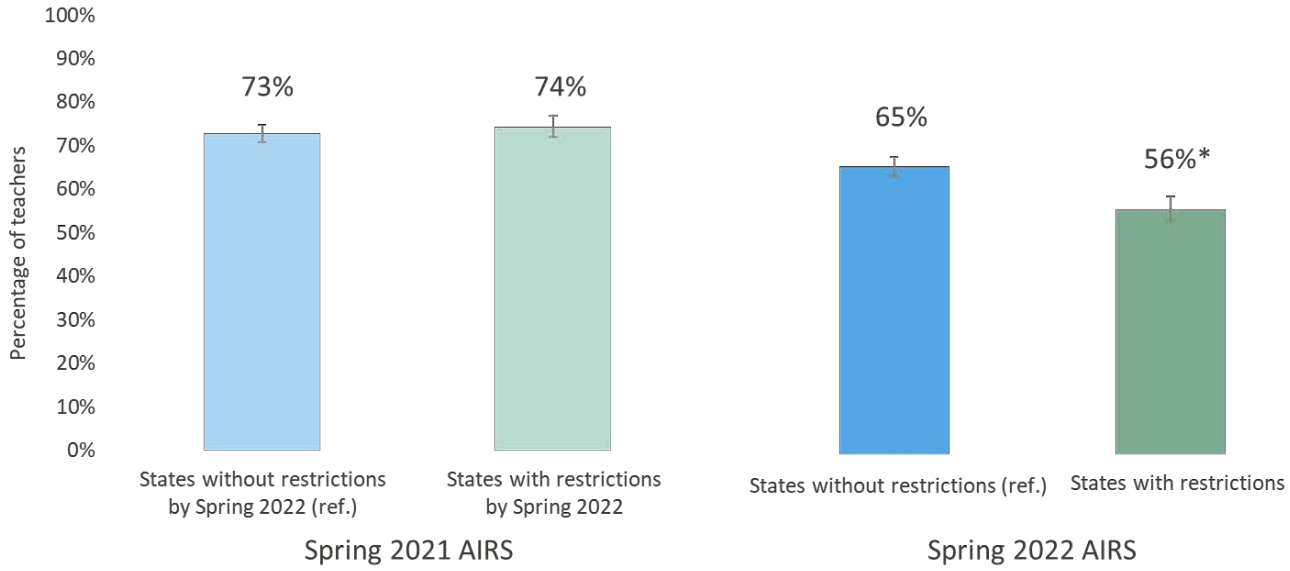


NOTES: This figure shows the percentage of teachers reporting the extent to which ABE is a part of the curriculum they teach or a part of their teaching practices. Data are from the fall 2020 Omnibus (n=1489) and the spring 2022 AIRS (n=7,780). This figure displays teachers' responses to the question, "To what extent is anti-bias education a part of the curriculum you teach or a part of your teaching practices?" In the fall 2020 Omnibus, teachers were also able to respond, "Not at all; I am not interested in this" and "not at all; I am interested in this." In the spring 2022 AIRS, teachers were also able to respond, "not at all." In the spring 2022 AIRS, the survey question explicitly identified the 2021-2022 school year as the reference year.

I also examined whether teachers' responses differed by the state in which they teach as a way of exploring the influence of teachers' state policy context on their provision of ABE. According to the spring 2022 AIRS, 65 percent of teachers in states *without* restrictions reported providing ABE, as shown in the bars in blue, in comparison to 56 percent of teachers in states *with* restrictions, as shown in the bars in green (see Figure 4.2).

The above data do not tell us whether the introduction of state restrictions explains the observed difference or if these differences existed prior to the restrictions. I examined the spring 2021 AIRS data, collected before most states enacted restrictions, to assess whether the differences appear as a response to policy changes. My data shows that prior to the introduction of most state restrictions, there were no differences between teachers in the 17 states that eventually introduced restrictions and teachers in states without restrictions (see Figure 4.2). This finding suggests the relatively lower provision of ABE in states with restrictions in spring 2022 plausibly stems from the presence of restrictive state policies as well as potential changes in how educators view instruction about diversity and equity in the wake of state restrictions, rather than differences in the underlying characteristics of states with and without restrictions.

Figure 4.2. Percentage of Teachers Reporting that They Provide Anti-Bias Education by Whether They were in a State with Restrictions, Spring 2021 and Spring 2022



NOTES: This figure shows the percentage of teachers who reported providing ABE. Data are drawn the spring 2021 AIRS (n teachers in states without restrictions by spring 2022 = 4,762; n teachers in states with restrictions by spring 2022 = 2,402) and the spring 2022 AIRS (n teachers in states without restrictions = 5,534; n teachers in states with restrictions = 2,523). In the spring 2021 AIRS, I defined teachers as providing ABE if they responded that they used school- or district-provided instructional materials for their subject area, instructional materials they find themselves, instructional materials they create from scratch, other instructional materials, or that they teach anti-bias topics without the use of instructional material. Teachers were also able to respond that they do not provide anti-bias instruction. In the spring 2022 AIRS, I defined teachers as providing ABE if they responded that ABE is a part of the curriculum they teach or part of their teaching practices during the 2021-22 school year to a small, moderate, or large extent. Teachers were also able to respond, "not at all." An asterisk (*) indicates that percentages for that subgroup significantly differ at the $p < 0.05$ level from the reference group, which is indicated by (ref.), before and after controlling for teacher- and school-level characteristics. Black bars represent 95-percent confidence intervals.

In addition to exploring whether teachers' provision of ABE varied by their state policy context, I am able to present state-representative data in select states and examine whether states' *specific* contexts might influence shifts in teachers' provision of ABE. The AIRS has teacher oversamples in five states that had restrictions by spring 2022: Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Texas. The AIRS also has teacher oversamples in 11 states which have not passed any restrictions: Arkansas,[8] California, Delaware, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Washington. Using these state oversamples in the spring 2021 and spring 2022 AIRS, I examined shifts in teachers' provision of ABE within each of these states. In the five states with restrictions— Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Texas—I observed substantial declines in teachers' provision of ABE of 15 to 21 percentage points (Figure 4.3).

[8] Arkansas later passed two restrictions in early 2023, but for the purpose of this analysis, I define Arkansas as a state without a restriction because it had not yet passed any restrictions by spring 2022.

In some states without restrictions (i.e., Massachusetts, New York, California, Delaware, and Rhode Island), teachers' provision of ABE remained essentially unchanged. In these states and Washington, for which I lack state-representative data in 2021, teachers' provision of ABE remained high—on par with national rates from the fall 2020 Omnibus and spring 2021 AIRS. In the spring 2022 AIRS, 78 percent of Massachusetts teachers, 73 percent of New York teachers, 71 percent of Washington teachers, and 69 percent of California teachers reported providing ABE. Just as declines in the provision of ABE in states with restrictions may be connected to state policy, these high rates may similarly be connected to the state-level policies. In spring 2021, Washington and New York enacted policies to expand and support conversations about ABE-related topics, through the adoption of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Framework in New York and the passage of legislation requiring PL related to "cultural competency, diversity, equity, or inclusion" in Washington (New York State United Teachers, undated; Washington State Legislature, 2021). Other research has found that, during the 2021-2022 school year, teachers in New York and Washington were more likely than other teachers nationally to report that their school requires cultural competency or anti-racist training for all teachers and all school administrators (Steiner, Woo, et al., 2023)

Yet, state policy may not be the only factor driving shifts in teachers' provision of ABE. Even in some states *without* restrictions on teachers' instruction, I observed declines in ABE provision of a magnitude similar to those observed in states with restrictions. For example, in Louisiana, there was a substantial decline of 22 percentage points in teachers' provision of ABE between the spring 2021 AIRS and the spring 2022 AIRS. In New Mexico, Arkansas, Nebraska, and Ohio, there were similarly substantial declines in teachers' provision of ABE—ranging from 13 to 18 percentage points.

Figure 4.3. Percentage of Teachers Reporting that They Provide Anti-Bias Education in Select States, Spring 2021 and Spring 2022

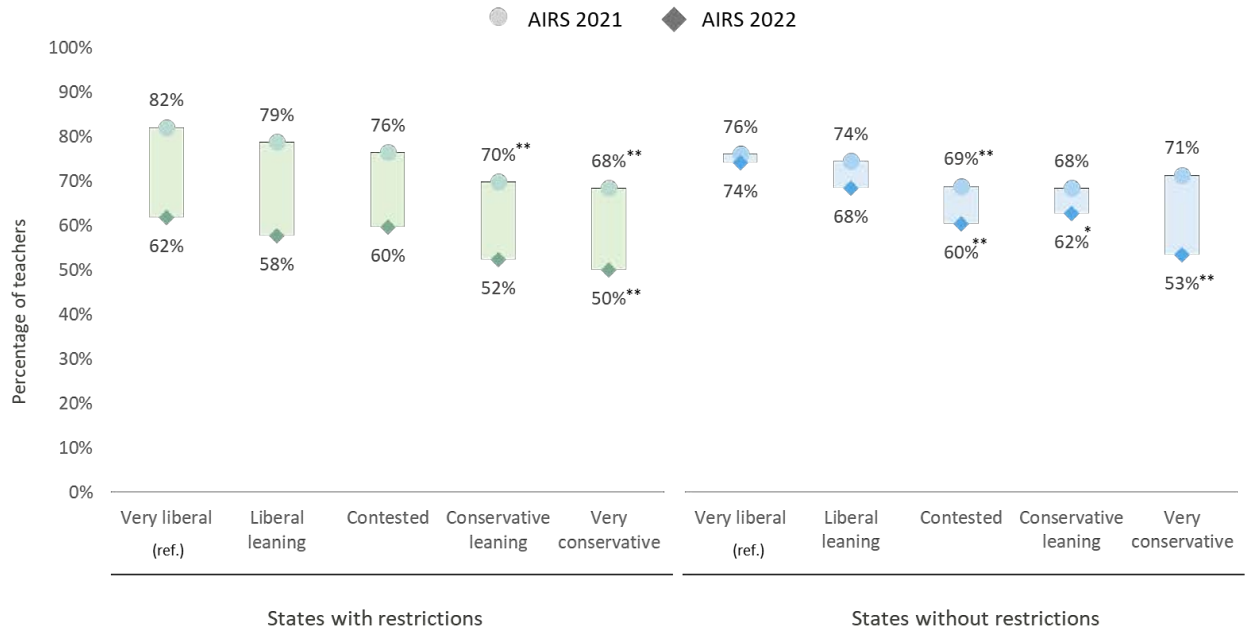
NOTES: This figure shows the percentage of teachers who reported providing ABE. Data are from the spring 2021 AIRS (n teachers in states with restrictions = 1,911; n teachers in states without restrictions = 3,659) and the spring 2022 AIRS (n teachers in states with restrictions = 2,013; n teachers in states without restrictions = 4,430). In the spring 2021 AIRS, I defined teachers as providing ABE if they responded that they used school- or district-provided instructional materials for their subject area, instructional materials they find themselves, instructional materials they create from scratch, other instructional materials, or that they teach anti-bias topics without the use of instructional material. In the spring 2022 AIRS, I defined teachers as providing ABE if they responded that ABE is a part of the curriculum they teach or part of their teaching practices during the 2021-22 school year to a small, moderate, or large extent. The spring 2021 AIRS did not include a state oversample for WA.

In addition to teachers' state policy context, it is likely that teachers' local political climate may also play a role in whether teachers provide ABE. Before and after the passage of state restrictions, teachers in very conservative counties were less likely than teachers in very liberal counties to report the provision of ABE, but after the passage of state restrictions, the difference between teachers in these two different types of communities grew even larger. In the spring 2021 AIRS, 77 percent of teachers in very liberal counties reported providing ABE, in comparison to 70 percent of teachers in very conservative counties—a statistically significant difference of 7 percentage points. In the spring 2022 AIRS, there was a substantial decline in the provision of ABE across all local political climates, but the decline was steeper in conservative counties, such that the gap in provision of ABE between very liberal and very conservative counties nearly tripled. In spring 2022, 71 percent of teachers in very liberal counties reported providing ABE, in comparison to 52 percent of teachers in very conservative counties—a difference of about 20 percentage points.

Teachers' provision of ABE also depended on the interaction between their state policy context and their local political climate. I detail each of the potential combinations in Figure 4.4. In states that enacted restrictions by spring 2022, substantially fewer teachers across all local political climates reported providing ABE in the spring 2022 AIRS than in the spring 2021 AIRS. This was also true in the very liberal counties of such states, where teachers might experience more local support for ABE than teachers in conservative areas (Polikoff et al., 2022); in states with restrictions, 82 percent of teachers in very liberal counties reported providing ABE in spring 2021, but this percentage declined to 62 percent in spring 2022, suggesting the influence of restrictive state policies.

Analyses of teachers' responses in states without restrictions also suggest the influence of teachers' local political climates. In states without restrictions, there were no substantial shifts in teachers' provision of ABE between the spring 2021 and spring 2022 AIRS in very liberal, liberal leaning, contested, and conservative leaning counties. However, in very conservative counties, teachers were nearly 20 percentage points less likely to provide ABE in the spring 2022 AIRS than in the spring 2021 AIRS—a substantial decline similar in magnitude to those across local political climates in states with restrictions. Teachers' local political climate may help explain why there are substantial declines in teachers' provision of ABE even in states which lack restrictions.

Figure 4.4. Percentage of Teachers Reporting that They Provide Anti-Bias Education, by State Policy Context and Local Political Climate, Spring 2021 and Spring 2022



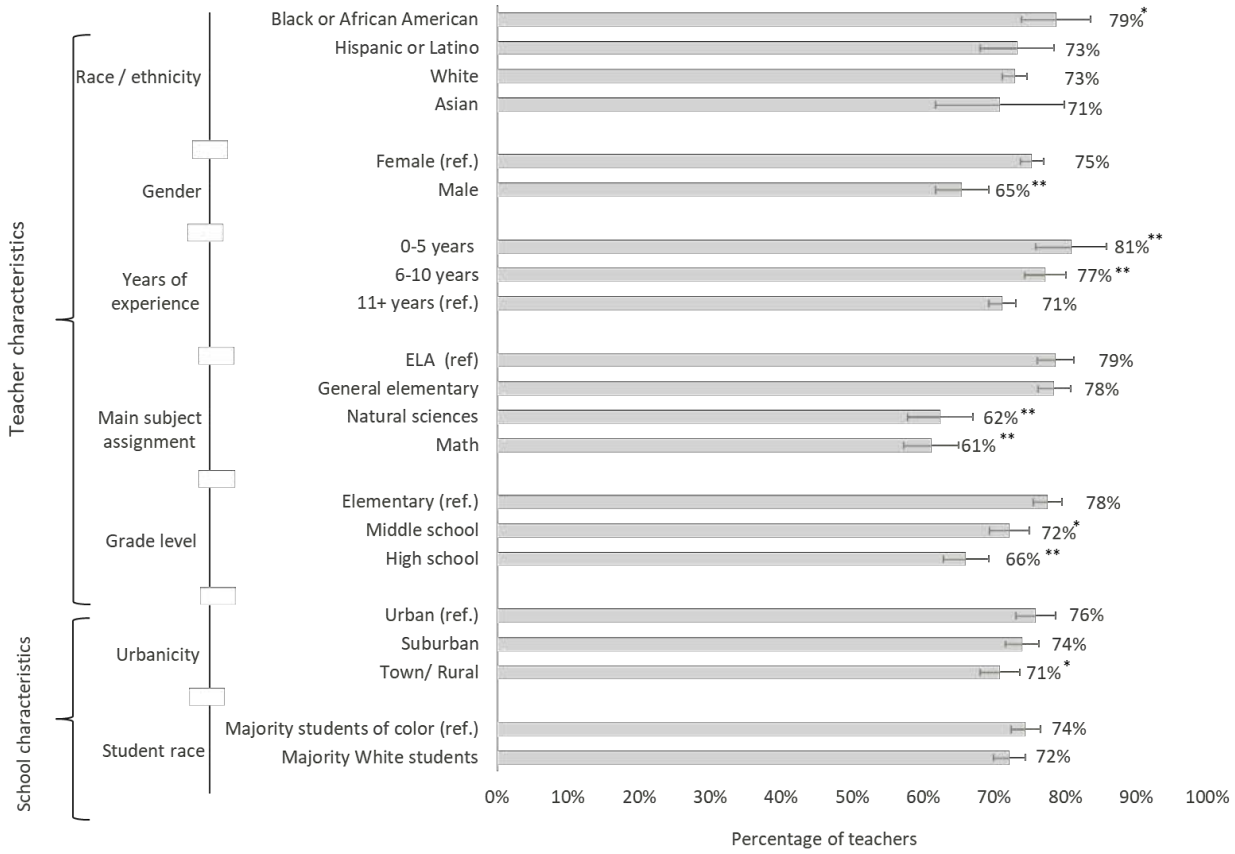
NOTES: This figure shows the percentage of teachers who reported providing ABE. Data are from the spring 2021 AIRS (n teachers in states with restrictions = 1,874; n teachers in states without restrictions = 3,584) and the spring 2022 AIRS (n teachers in states with restrictions = 1,986; n teachers in states without restrictions = 4,357). In the

spring 2021 AIRS, I defined teachers as providing ABE if they responded that they used school- or district-provided instructional materials for their subject area, instructional materials they find themselves, instructional materials they create from scratch, other instructional materials, or that they teach anti-bias topics without the use of instructional material. In the spring 2022 AIRS, I defined teachers as providing ABE if they responded that ABE is a part of the curriculum they teach or part of their teaching practices during the 2021-22 school year to a small, moderate, or large extent. An asterisk (*) indicates that percentages for that subgroup significantly differ at the $p < 0.05$ level from the reference group, which is indicated by (ref.) Two asterisks indicate that differences remained statistically significantly different after controlling for teacher- and school-level demographics.

Prior to the passage of state restrictions, Black teachers, female teachers, novice teachers, ELA teachers, elementary teachers, and teachers in urban schools were especially likely to provide anti-bias education

I also examined the relationship between teachers' provision of ABE and their own characteristics or school contexts. Prior to the passage of state restrictions, a majority of teachers across numerous demographic characteristics and school contexts reported providing ABE. I present the results from the spring 2021 AIRS, by teacher and school characteristics, in Figure 4.5. Although the provision of ABE was high across different types of teachers and teachers in different school contexts, some teachers were especially likely to report providing ABE—namely, Black teachers, female teachers, novice teachers (i.e., teachers with five or fewer years of experience), ELA teachers, elementary teachers, and teachers in urban schools.

Figure 4.5. Percentage of Teachers Reporting that They Provide Anti-Bias Education by Teacher and School Characteristics, Spring 2021



NOTES: This figure shows the percentage of teachers who reported providing ABE. Data are from the spring 2021 AIRS (n teachers = 7,216). I defined teachers as providing ABE if they responded that they used school- or district-provided instructional materials for their subject area, instructional materials they find themselves, instructional materials they create from scratch, other instructional materials, or that they teach anti-bias topics without the use of instructional material. An asterisk (*) indicates that percentages for that subgroup significantly differ at the $p < 0.05$ level from the reference group, which is indicated by (ref.) Because teachers can identify with more than one race or ethnicity, I compared the responses of teachers who identified with a specific race/ethnicity to teachers who did not identify with that race/ethnicity (e.g., Black teachers compared with non-Black teachers). Two asterisks indicate that differences remained statistically significantly different after controlling for teacher- and school-level demographics. Black bars represent 95-percent confidence intervals.

Novice teachers were significantly more likely to engage in ABE than more-experienced teachers; 81 percent of novice teachers and 77 percent of mid-career teachers (i.e., those with 6 to 10 years of experience) reported providing ABE, compared with 71 percent of veteran teachers (i.e., those with 11 or more years of experience). I hypothesize that the teacher preparation experiences of novice and mid-career teachers might differ from those of veteran teachers. Polling on perceptions about race indicates that, over the past decade, the U.S. population in general has increasingly perceived that racism against Black people is widespread (Jones and Lloyd, 2021). The U.S. population also has become increasingly concerned about race relations (Newport, 2020). It is possible that these broader trends in perceptions and

awareness might be affecting the type of preparation that newer teachers are receiving compared with that of their more-experienced colleagues.

Teachers from minoritized groups were also significantly more likely than their respective counterparts to report that they provided ABE. Seventy-five percent of female teachers reported providing ABE, compared with 65 percent of male teachers. Seventy-nine percent of Black or African American teachers reported engaging in ABE, compared with 73 percent of non-Black or African American teachers.[9] In an open-ended question, we asked teachers to describe the instructional materials they use to provide ABE, and teachers' responses to this open-ended question suggest that minoritized teachers' practices and discussions about issues relating to equity and bias in the classroom could be informed or motivated by their own lived experiences, a sentiment which also arises in the literature on the classroom experiences of minoritized teachers (Quiocho and Rios, 2000). One teacher explained,

> "As a person of color, and [a] visible Muslim who wears a headscarf, I incorporate many different [types of] anti-bias instruction into my lesson. I always strive to include . . . different cultures and celebrations into my lessons so that my students don't feel left out like I did when going through the K–12 system. I also explicitly state why I am teaching them this way—to make them more open-minded."

Teachers' grade level assignment and main subject matter[10] taught were also linked to whether teachers engaged in ABE. ELA teachers and general elementary teachers who teach multiple subjects were more likely to engage in ABE than their peers teaching math and science. Open-ended responses suggest that some math and science teachers might lack anti-bias materials for their content areas or might struggle to connect anti-bias instruction to their subjects. Some math and science teachers expressed that the anti-bias materials they used or that their district provided were not content-related but instead were used during their advisory classes. Another math teacher expressed that their content area does not lend itself well to anti-bias instruction, saying, "In Math, there isn't really much material that is biased. We teach things like slope, transformations, ordering numbers, [and the] Pythagorean theorem." Thus, our survey

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[9] At the time that I conducted these analyses, I did not have access to demographic data about fall 2020 Omnibus respondents, such as race/ethnicity or the state in which teachers taught. Since then, I have obtained access to these demographic variables, allowing me to conduct additional analyses. These preliminary analyses suggest some patterns different than those found in the spring 2021 AIRS data. Specifically, the fall 2020 Omnibus data suggest that Black teachers may have been as likely as non-Black teachers to provide ABE prior to the passage of state restrictions. The data also suggest that states that ultimately passed restrictions by spring 2022 were indeed less likely to provide ABE even before any state restrictions were passed. It is possible that differences in the survey item used to determine whether teachers provided ABE could account for these differences. More research is needed in this area to understand teachers' approach to diversity and equity prior to the passage of state restrictions.

[10] For my analyses of teacher subject matter assignments, I examined differences between general elementary teachers and departmentalized ELA, math, and science teachers because multiple-subject teachers are likely to teach social studies and, therefore, might have more opportunities to teach anti-bias content. Seventy-five percent of the elementary teachers in the 2021 AIRS sample were general elementary teachers; most teachers who were departmentalized into specific subjects were secondary teachers.

findings and some open-ended responses suggest that some teachers might find certain subjects, such as ELA, better suited toward the provision of ABE. Most of the teachers who reported using instructional materials that are designed to address anti-bias topics, such as those from Learning for Justice, were ELA teachers, suggesting again that ELA instruction might include more opportunities for reading and discussion around anti-bias topics.

Although math and science teachers were, on average, less likely to provide anti-bias instruction than ELA teachers, some shared how they were able to provide ABE through their subject areas. One high school science teacher said that they provided antibias education by "analyzing data ([coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)] infection rates) by race and discussing discrepancies." A middle school science teacher shared, "Students in my class draw their first idea of a scientist at the beginning of the year and we talk about the images they have drawn and what that says about our image of science and scientists." Scholars in the field have provided other examples, such as using math skills to investigate social problems or real-world issues, leveraging survey data collected from community members, or examining data on wages, income, and poverty (Gorski and Swalwell, 2015).

Although math and science teachers were less likely to provide ABE than ELA teachers, Black or African American math and science teachers might be more likely to provide ABE than their non-Black or African American colleagues. Specifically, 82 percent of Black or African American science teachers reported providing ABE, compared with 60 percent of non-Black or African American science teachers. I find similar patterns among Black or African American math teachers and among other math teachers of color when comparing them with their counterparts—non-Black or African American math teachers and White math teachers, respectively—but the differences were not statistically significant.

Collectively, elementary school teachers were more likely to provide ABE than were secondary teachers. Prior research suggests that elementary school teachers place a greater emphasis on the social and emotional development of students (Hamilton, Kaufman, and Hu, 2020) and receive more support from their schools to implement social and emotional learning (SEL) (Hamilton and Doss, 2020). These results could explain why elementary school teachers were inclined to place a greater emphasis on ABE; although ABE is not synonymous with SEL, ABE and SEL can overlap in key ways (Jagers, Rivas-Drake, and Williams, 2019; Spiegler, 2016; Warner and Browning, 2021). Although some have raised concerns that conversations about equity might be too mature or developmentally inappropriate for young students (Woo, Diliberti, et al., 2024), Gorski and Swalwell (2015) provide an example of how ABE might be operationalized for elementary-aged students. They describe how a team of 3rd graders at a high-poverty school used academic skills spanning multiple disciplines to address an injustice that they identified in their community—a lack of safe playground equipment—which was a challenge that children in wealthier neighboring communities did not similarly experience. Students used their ELA, math, and communication skills to devise community surveys, draft letters to community members, and share findings through oral and written reports.

Many differences between types of teachers in the provision of ABE diminished or were no longer present after the passage of state restrictions

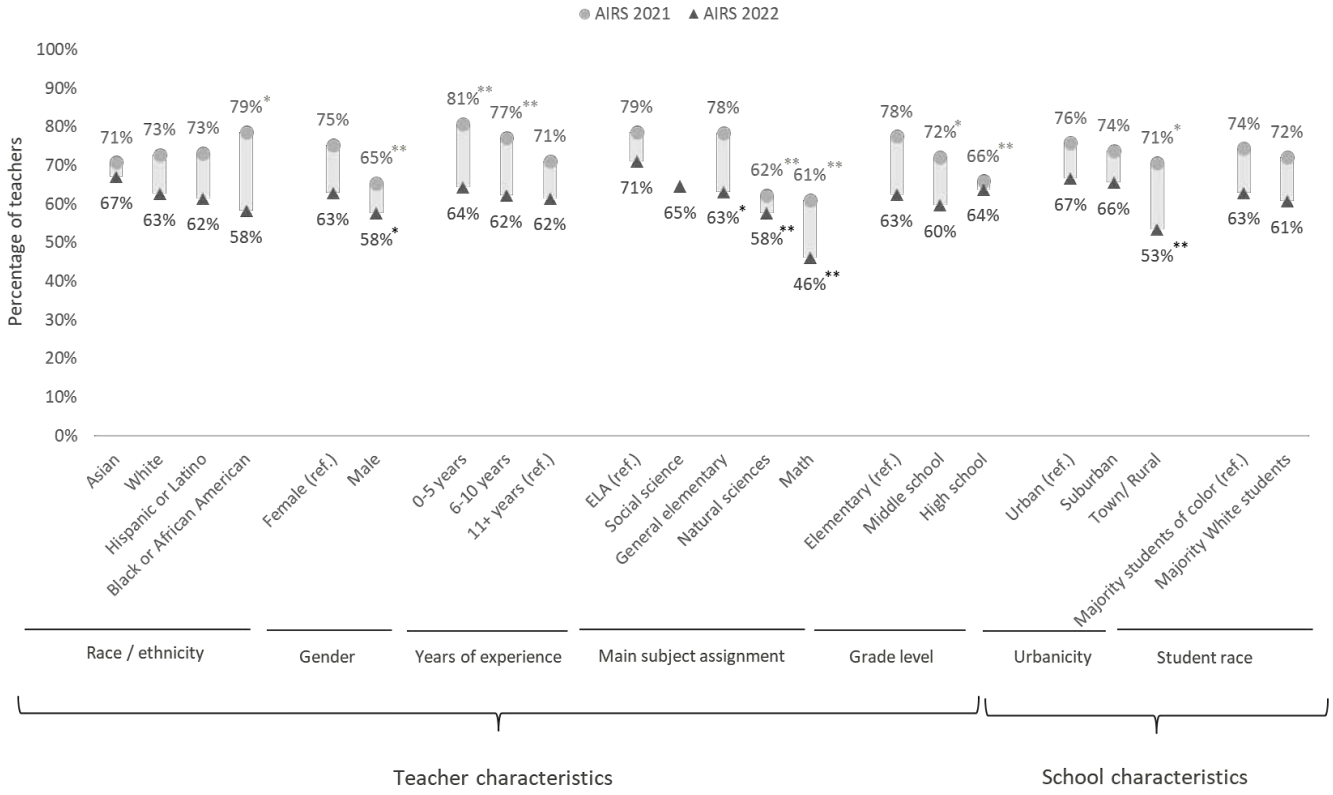
Many of the differences in teachers' provision of ABE by demographic or school characteristics noted in spring 2021 were no longer present in spring 2022 (see Figure 4.6). While there was a decline in the provision of ABE across all types of teachers for the demographic and school characteristics that I examined, there were steeper declines for some types of teachers, leading to the reduction in or elimination of subgroup differences. For instance, in spring 2021, 79 percent of Black teachers reported providing ABE. By spring 2022, there was a substantial, roughly 20 percentage-point decline in the percentage of Black teachers providing ABE—the largest decline of any race or ethnicity. As a result, there were no longer any significant differences in the provision of ABE by teacher race or ethnicity. Research on the influence of state restrictions suggests that Black teachers—and especially Black teachers in states with restrictions—are especially likely to report that limitations have influenced their instruction (Woo et al., 2023). Black teachers make up approximately 7 percent of the national teacher workforce; however, they make up a larger proportion of teachers in many states with restrictions. For instance, Black teachers make up approximately ten percent of teachers in Florida, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia and about 20-25 percent of teachers in Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018b). Thus, it is also possible that Black teachers are disproportionately impacted by state restrictions because they are more likely to reside in states with restrictions.

I observed a similar pattern for other teacher subgroups. For instance, in spring 2021, novice teachers and elementary teachers were more likely than their counterparts to report providing ABE. By spring 2022, these differences were no longer present. Elementary teachers were 15 percentage points less likely to report providing ABE in spring 2022 than they were in spring 2021, a substantial difference; for high school teachers, there was essentially no change. Differences by teachers' grade level might be explained by narratives around the kinds of instructional content that are—or are not—appropriate for young students. Proponents of state restrictions and even teachers themselves have raised concerns that conversations about race or gender may be too complex or mature for young students (Woo, Diliberti, et al., 2024). State restrictions that specifically prohibit instructional content about gender identity and sexual orientation are often targeted towards elementary grades as well (PEN America, 2024). Meanwhile, research suggests that the American public is generally supportive of instruction about issues like racial equity or LGBTQ+ rights, but especially supportive of such instruction in high school (Polikoff et al., 2022). This may explain why the decline in the provision of ABE was more pronounced for elementary and middle school teachers but marginal for high school teachers.

There was one case where differences between subgroups became more pronounced. In Spring 2021, teachers in rural schools were slightly less likely than teachers in urban schools to

provide ABE—a difference of 5 percentage points— although this difference was not statistically significant after controlling for school- and teacher-level demographic characteristics. In Spring 2022, relative to Spring 2021, there was a substantial decline in teachers' provision of ABE across all locales. However, the decline for teachers in rural schools was nearly twice the magnitude of the decline for teachers in urban and suburban schools—nearly 10 percentage points for teachers in urban and suburban schools in comparison to nearly 20 percentage points for teachers in rural schools. In Spring 2022, teachers in rural schools were significantly less likely than teachers in urban and suburban schools to report that they provide ABE, even after controlling for school- and teacher-level demographic characteristics and the state teachers were in. One hypothesis that could explain these results is that rural areas are more likely to reflect Republican views, while urban areas are more likely to reflect views of the Democratic party (Parker et al., 2018). Prior research similarly finds that rural teachers are less likely than urban teachers to oppose legal limits on classroom conversations about racism, sexism, and other contentious topics and also less likely to believe in the existence of systemic racism (Woo et al., 2022). However, it is possible that this decline in the provision of ABE in rural schools may reflect other factors, such as the availability of school- or district-level resources to provide ABE. This finding is also notable because prior research suggests that conflict about politicized topics in schooling tends to be concentrated in majority White, suburban areas (Jochim et al., 2023; Woo et al., 2022; Woo et al., 2023). Therefore, even though political conflict may not be the most salient in rural areas, teachers in rural areas may nevertheless be most likely to disengage from classroom conversations about diversity and equity.

Figure 4.6. Percentage of Teachers Reporting That They Provide Anti-Bias Education by Teacher and School Characteristics, Spring 2021 and Spring 2022



NOTES: This figure shows the percentage of teachers who reported providing ABE. Data are from the spring 2021 AIRS (n = 7,216) and the spring 2022 AIRS (n = 7,780). In the spring 2021 AIRS, I defined teachers as providing ABE if they responded that they used school- or district-provided instructional materials for their subject area, instructional materials they find themselves, instructional materials they create from scratch, other instructional materials, or that they teach anti-bias topics without the use of instructional material. In the spring 2022 AIRS, I defined teachers as providing ABE if they responded that ABE is a part of the curriculum they teach or part of their teaching practices during the 2021-22 school year to a small, moderate, or large extent. An asterisk (*) indicates that percentages for that subgroup significantly differ at the $p < 0.05$ level from the reference group, which is indicated by (ref.) Because teachers can identify with more than one race or ethnicity, I compared the responses of teachers who identified with a specific race/ethnicity to teachers who did not identify with that race/ethnicity (e.g., Black teachers compared with non-Black teachers). Two asterisks indicate that differences remained statistically significantly different after controlling for teacher- and school-level demographics.

Overall, teachers across the nation widely report providing ABE, although state policies restricting teachers' instruction of ABE-related topics and the broader sociopolitical climate may have dampened the provision of ABE nationally, and especially in states with restrictions and politically conservative communities as well as for Black teachers, elementary teachers, novice teachers, and teachers in rural communities.

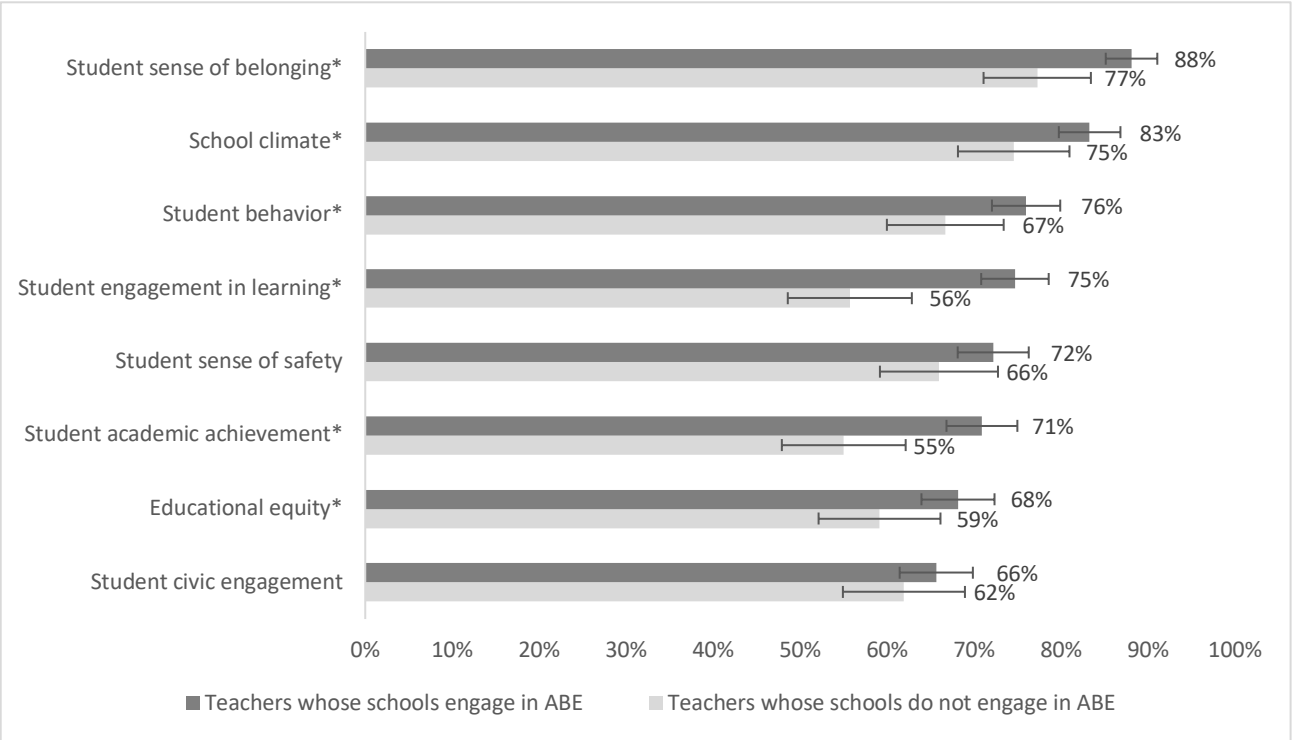
Large majorities of teachers reported that anti-bias education has the potential to positively influence a range of student- and school-level outcomes

Despite a decline in the provision of ABE between spring 2021 and 2022, large majorities of teachers nationally believe that ABE has the potential to lead to positive student- and school-level outcomes, even in the midst of heated debates about the value of conversations about diversity and equity in schools. According to the fall 2021 Omnibus, roughly two-thirds of teachers nationally reported that they believe ABE has the potential to improve student academic achievement, student engagement in learning, student civic engagement, and educational equity. Additionally, about 70 percent of teachers reported that ABE has the potential to improve student behavior and students' sense of safety, and over 80 percent reported that it has the potential to improve school climate and students' sense of belonging. Only 6 percent of teachers nationally reported that they believed that ABE did not have the potential to improve any of the listed student outcomes (see Figure 4.7). Notably, these percentages held high across teacher subgroups. Even in rural areas, where teachers were less likely to provide ABE, there were no significant differences in the beliefs of teachers by urbanicity.

Teachers in schools that do not engage in ABE[11] were overall less likely than teachers whose schools do engage in ABE to believe that ABE can lead to positive student- or school-level outcomes. These teachers appeared to be most skeptical about the ABE's potential to improve student learning, since only slightly over half of them reported that they believe ABE has the potential to improve student engagement in learning and student academic achievement, in comparison to about three-quarters of teachers whose schools do engage in ABE. Perhaps this is unsurprising, given assertions from proponents of state restrictions that conversations about race, diversity, and equity detract from core academic content (Aldrich, 2021; Woo, Diliberti, et al., 2024). Yet, it is still noteworthy that over half of teachers in schools that do not engage in ABE feel that ABE has the potential to improve all of the school and student outcomes asked about in the fall 2021 Omnibus. This suggests that teachers' beliefs about the value of ABE is not necessarily a barrier to their provision of ABE; instead, they may lack the supports to provide ABE in their classrooms.

[11] On another set of items in the same survey, the fall 2021 Omnibus, teachers were asked whether they had access to various supports for ABE (see Table A.4). On those items, teachers were able to report, "my school does not engage in anti-bias education." I determined that respondents were in schools that did not engage in ABE if they reported on all items in Table A.4 that their school does not engage in ABE.

Figure 4.7. Percentage of Teachers Reporting that They Believe Anti-Bias Education Has the Potential to Improve School- or Student-Level Outcomes, Fall 2021



NOTES: This figure displays data from the fall 2021 Omnibus survey (n = 993). Data displays teachers' response to the survey item, "Please complete the following statement. I believe anti-bias education has the potential to improve…" Teachers were able to select all that apply. Teachers were also able to respond "none of the above" and "other." An asterisk (*) denotes statistically significant differences between teachers whose schools engage in ABE and teachers whose schools do not engage in ABE at $p < 0.05$ before and after controlling for school- and teacher-level characteristics. Black bars represent 95-percent confidence intervals.

What Types of Instructional Materials and Approaches Did Teachers Use to Provide Anti-Bias Education?

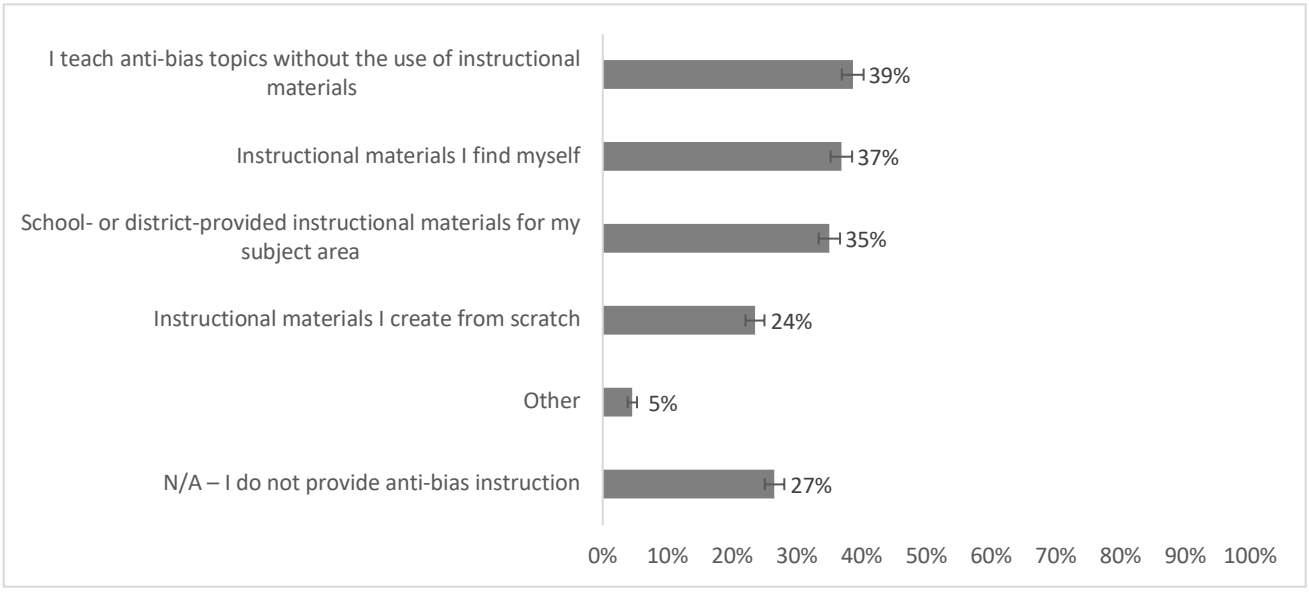
To answer my second guiding question, I use data from the spring 2021 and spring 2022 AIRS to understand *how* teachers provided ABE. Because instructional materials can provide a useful grounding for teachers' instruction and AIRS is a survey that focuses on teachers' use of instructional materials, I examine the types of instructional materials that teachers reported using when providing ABE. I first provide an overview of teachers' use of instructional materials in the spring 2021 AIRS—before most state restrictions were passed. Then, using data from both the spring 2021 and spring 2022 AIRS, I explore how teachers' use of instructional materials and the source of their materials may have shifted since the passage of state restrictions.

Teachers used a wide variety of materials to provide anti-bias education, ranging from materials they found or created themselves to those provided by their school or district

I asked teachers what types of instructional materials they used to provide ABE to better understand teachers' approach to ABE. I found that teachers used an array of materials from different sources, including materials they found or created themselves to those provided by their school or district for their subject area.

In the spring 2021 AIRS, teachers most frequently reported not using any instructional materials to provide ABE (39 percent). This response was closely followed by teachers who indicated they used instructional materials they find themselves (37 percent). Thirty-five percent of teachers also reported using their school- or district-provided materials for their subject area for ABE, and 24 percent reported using materials that they create from scratch. The remainder of teachers reported that they do not provide ABE (see Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8. Percentage of Teachers Reporting the Type of Instructional Materials They Use to Provide Anti-Bias Education, Spring 2021



NOTES: This figure displays teachers' responses to the question, "What types of instructional materials do you use to provide anti-bias instruction?" Data are drawn from the spring 2021 AIRS (n = 7,217). Percentages do not sum to 100 because teachers were able to select more than one response. Black bars represent 95-percent confidence intervals.

One way teachers can provide ABE is by integrating it into their academic instruction. Therefore, it is important that we understand whether and how teachers are leveraging their academic curriculum materials (i.e., those used for core subject like ELA, math, or science) for ABE. Integrating ABE into academic instruction might also help ameliorate concerns that ABE might take time away from academic learning or that teachers cannot address ABE competencies

and academic standards simultaneously (Aldrich, 2021; Dover, 2013a; Woo, Diliberti, et al., 2024). Indeed, according to the fall 2021 Omnibus, 37 percent of teachers agreed that pressure to improve student academic achievement makes it hard to focus on ABE. Better understanding teachers' use of their academic materials for ABE can point to opportunities for schools and districts provide teachers with materials that appropriately address ABE topics and guidance on how to use these materials for ABE.

Echoing earlier findings, I observed that teachers from minoritized backgrounds and teachers who taught higher percentages of minoritized students were more likely to provide ABE through their school- or district-provided materials for their subject area than their counterparts. Additionally, I observed patterns by years of experience, subject assignment, and grade level.

Forty-eight percent of Black or African American teachers providing ABE with school- or district-provided materials for their subject area, compared with 34 percent of non-Black or African American teachers. Novice teachers similarly reported high rates of using school- or district-provided materials (44 percent) relative to their more experienced counterparts with 10 or more years of experience (33 percent). All of these differences remained statistically significant after controlling for school- and teacher-level characteristics. Additionally, 38 percent of teachers who served schools with a majority of students of color and 38 percent of teachers who served schools with a majority of students experiencing poverty used school- or district-provided materials to provide ABE, compared with 32 percent of teachers who served in majority White schools and 33 percent of teachers who served in low-poverty schools, although these differences were no longer significant after controlling for school- and teacher-level characteristics, suggesting that perhaps these types of schools may attract the types of teachers who are likely to integrate ABE into their academic instruction.

In comparison with ELA teachers and general elementary teachers, a relatively smaller proportion of science and secondary teachers used school- or district-provided materials for their subject area to provide ABE. Only 26 percent of the departmentalized science teachers, 94 percent of whom are secondary teachers, reported using school- or district-provided materials to provide ABE, compared with 33 percent of departmentalized ELA teachers and 40 percent of general elementary teachers. Similarly, only 22 percent of high school teachers and 35 percent of middle school teachers reported using their school- or district-provided materials to provide ABE, compared with 41 percent of elementary teachers.[12]

These differences across types of teachers could be explained by differences in the support provided by their school or the availability of resources for ABE. They also could be explained by differences in teachers' beliefs and priorities for student education, which could be shaped by the population of students they serve (Rojas and Liou, 2017). Where teachers were less likely to use school- or district-provided materials for their subject area to provide ABE, they might lack

[12] I did observe, however, that high school and middle school teachers were more likely than elementary teachers to create their ABE materials from scratch.

access to appropriate materials for ABE, as indicated by some of the open-ended responses from math and science teachers described earlier, who struggled to understand how ABE related to their subject.

In the spring 2021 AIRS, 53 percent of surveyed teachers provided a response to at least one of our open-ended items asking teachers to describe or indicate the instructional materials they used for ABE, thus providing greater detail and insight into the types of instructional materials they used to provide ABE. Teachers cited a wide array of materials, including SEL curricula (e.g., Second Step, the Zones of Regulation, the RULER approach); books that represent diverse cultures and peoples or that touch on social justice issues; news articles describing current events, such as those from Newsela; materials from Teachers Pay Teachers; and educational videos, such as TedTalks.

Only roughly 7 percent of teachers who responded to the open-ended items—or 3.5 percent of the teachers who responded to the spring 2021 AIRS—reported using an instructional material that explicitly focused on anti-bias concepts, such as identifying bias and discrimination, celebrating cultural identities, and promoting social justice. Such materials include Facing History and Ourselves, Learning for Justice, and Rethinking Schools. In comparison, roughly twice as many teachers—15 percent of teachers who responded to at least one of our open-ended items, or 7 percent of teachers who responded to this survey—reported using SEL curricula to provide anti-bias instruction. The remaining responses varied, from responses that named integration into academic curricula, to unspecified materials from teachers' classroom libraries or such websites as Teachers Pay Teachers and YouTube, to responses that were not instructional materials at all. For example, teachers described how they incorporated ABE into their academic instruction. One teacher stated, "The division's department of teaching and learning [has] embedded these anti-bias resources within curriculum materials." Teachers also reported using methods to provide ABE that did not include the use of any instructional materials. These methods included anti-racist or culturally responsive pedagogy, discussions about race and social justice, professional development, or such approaches as restorative practices or positive behavioral interventions and supports. One teacher said, "I use anti-racist and culturally responsive teaching practices. We used district- and teacher-created restorative circles to ensure that our classroom had an anti-racist environment."

In spring 2022, teachers providing anti-bias education were most likely to find their own instructional materials and least likely to have access to materials provided by their school or district

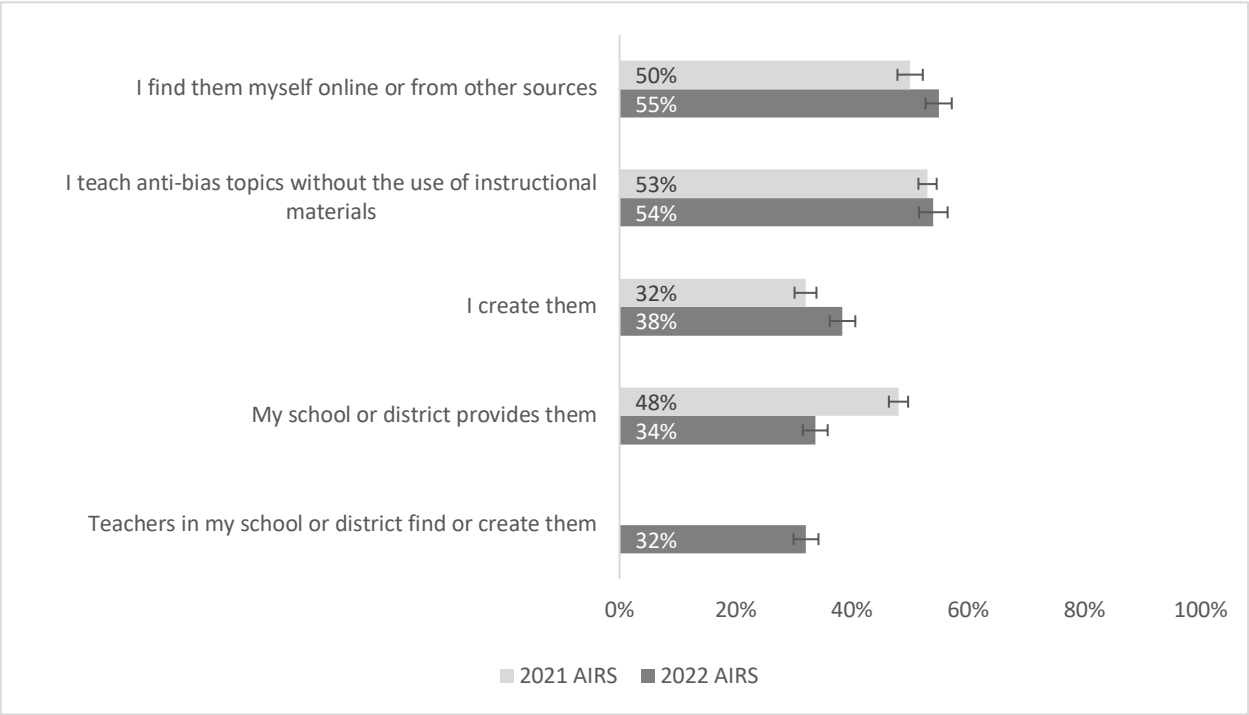
In both the spring 2021 and 2022 AIRS, half or more of teachers who reported providing ABE did so without the use of instructional materials or using materials that they found themselves. Thirty-two percent of teachers in spring 2021 and 38 percent of teachers in spring 2022 also reported creating their own instructional materials to provide ABE (see Figure 4.9). It is likely important for teachers to anchor their provision of ABE in high-quality instructional

materials. However, many teachers report creating or finding their own materials or not using materials, which could indicate a barrier to the high-quality provision of ABE. There may be a wide variation in the quality of materials that teacher select or create as well as wide variation in the quality of discussions that teachers are having with students without high-quality materials to anchor those conversations.

Substantially more teachers found or created their own ABE instructional materials in spring 2022 than in spring 2021. Thirty-two percent of teachers providing ABE reported creating their own ABE instructional materials in spring 2021, in comparison to 38 percent of teachers in spring 2022. Similarly, 50 percent of teachers providing ABE reported finding their own materials in spring 2021, in comparison to 55 percent of teachers in spring 2022. Since teachers were working in a potentially more-contentious political environment in 2022 than in 2021 given the passage of state restrictions, states and districts may have been more hesitant to provide explicit guidance or support to teachers around instruction related ABE-related topics. This may have led teachers to increasingly fill in the gaps themselves by creating and finding their own materials.

Another trend in the data might also support this hypothesis. In the spring 2021 AIRS, nearly half of teachers providing ABE reported that they used their school- or district-provided materials for their subject area to provide anti-bias instruction. In contrast, in the spring 2022 AIRS, only 34 percent of teachers providing ABE reported that their school or district provided them with materials to provide anti-bias instruction. Although survey responses across both years focused on school- or district-provided materials, we asked about school- or district-provided materials *for teachers' subject area* in 2021 and school- or district-provided materials in 2022, which could include materials for teachers' subject area or standalone ABE materials, such as those from Learning for Justice or Facing History and Ourselves. It is possible that the change in wording of the survey item might also account for this difference between 2021 and 2022. It is also possible that this drop in the provision of school- or district-provided materials from 2021 to 2022 points to the possibility that schools and districts may be more reluctant to provide teachers with materials that address anti-bias topics given that such topics became more controversial during that timespan.

Figure 4.9. Percentage of Teachers Who Provide ABE Reporting the Source of the Instructional Materials They Used to Prove Anti-Bias Instruction, Spring 2021 and Spring 2022

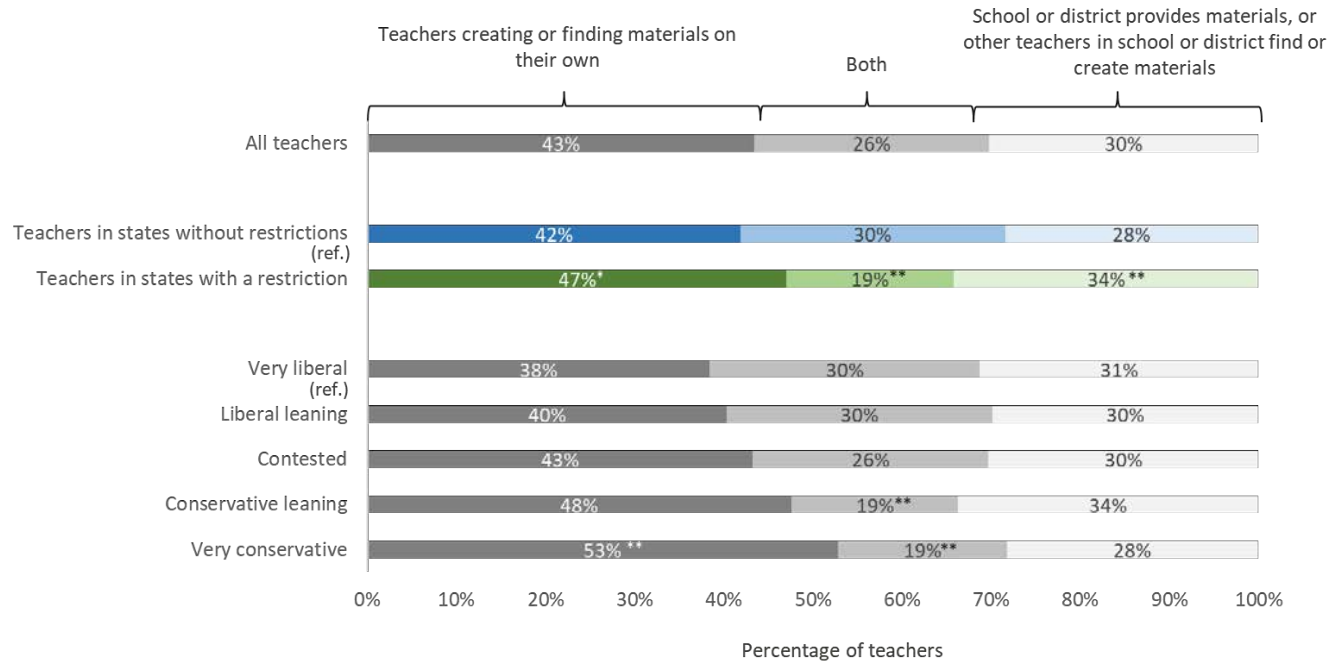


NOTES: Data are drawn from the spring 2021 AIRS (n = 5,228) and spring 2022 AIRS (n = 4,753). In the spring 2021 AIRS, teachers were asked, "What types of instructional materials do you use to provide anti-bias instruction?" We did not ask teachers whether they used instructional materials created or found by other teachers in their school or district. In the spring 2022 AIRS, teachers were asked, ""Where do you get the instructional materials you use to provide anti-bias education?" Percentages do not sum to 100 because respondents were able to select all that apply. These percentages reflect the responses of only teachers who reported providing ABE. Black bars represent 95-percent confidence intervals.

To better understand how teachers may leverage multiple sources to obtain ABE instructional materials as well as the degree of institutional support and autonomy that teachers receive for their provision of ABE, I put teachers into three categories: 1) teachers who worked only on their own to find or create instructional materials; 2) teachers who were only using materials provided by their school or district or other teachers in their school or district; and 3) teachers who leveraged a combination of both their own work and support from their school or district. In the spring 2022 AIRS, among teachers who reported providing ABE, 43 percent were working on their own to find or create instructional materials, 30 percent used just materials provided by their school or district, and about a quarter of teachers leveraged a combination of both (see Figure 4.10). These results suggest that, while slightly over half of teachers providing ABE may receive some institutional supports to do so, whether from their peers, school, or district, many teachers are working on their own to provide ABE. Teachers working in contexts that may be less welcoming of ABE instruction were even more likely to find or create materials for ABE instruction on their own. Fifty-three percent of teachers in very-conservative counties who

reported providing ABE found or created materials on their own, with no support from others in their schools or districts when obtaining instructional materials, in comparison to 40 percent of teachers in liberal-leaning counties and 38 percent of teachers in very-liberal counties. Meanwhile, teachers in very-liberal counties were significantly more likely than teachers in very-conservative and conservative-leaning counties to report that they both found or created materials on their own and used materials provided by others in their school or districts. Thirty percent of teachers in very-liberal counties reported use of both types of materials, in comparison to 19 percent of teachers in conservative-leaning and very-conservative counties (see Figure 4.10).

Figure 4.10. Percentage of Teachers Describing the Source of the Instructional Materials They Used to Provide Anti-Bias Instruction, by State Policy Context and Local Political Climate, Spring 2022



NOTES: This figure displays teachers' responses to the question, "Where do you get the instructional materials you use to provide anti-bias education?" Data are drawn from the spring 2022 AIRS (n = 4,753). Only teachers who reported providing ABE to a small, moderate, or large extent were presented with this question. I defined teachers as creating or finding materials on their own if they reported that they created their materials or if they found their materials themselves online or from other sources but did not get materials from their school or district or from other teachers in their school or district. I defined teachers as using materials provided by their school or district if they responded that they got materials from their school or district or from teachers in their school or district who find or create the materials. Teachers who fell into both categories of finding or creating their own materials and using materials from their school or district were sorted into the "both" category. An asterisk (*) indicates that percentages for that subgroup significantly differ at the $p < 0.05$ level from the reference group, which is indicated by (ref.) Two asterisks indicate that differences remained statistically significantly different after controlling for teacher- and school-level demographics.

Use of instructional materials designed to address ABE topics was relatively rare

Besides examining the sources of the materials used for ABE, I also examined the specific types of instructional materials that teachers used to provide ABE. The spring 2021 AIRS provided teachers with an open-ended textbox to describe the instructional materials they used to provide ABE. As noted earlier, teachers mentioned a wide range of materials, including SEL curricula, news articles, and online lesson repositories. While teachers' open-ended responses were valuable for understanding the range of materials used by teachers, they were not as well-suited for understanding the prevalence of specific types of materials. Thus, I used teachers' open-ended responses from spring 2021 to construct a more structured list of instructional materials, which I then fielded to teachers in the spring 2022 AIRS.

In the spring 2022 AIRS, very few teachers reported using instructional materials that were intentionally designed to address anti-bias topics, such as those from organizations like Learning for Justice, Facing History and Ourselves, or Rethinking Schools, which explicitly aim to help students understand issues related to diversity and equity through a critical and academic lens. Among these, materials from Learning for Justice were the most common, used by 11 percent of teachers providing ABE (see Figure 4.11). Notably, data from the fall 2020 Omnibus survey indicate that materials from Learning for Justice (known at that time as Teaching Tolerance) may have been more widely used or referenced in the past, prior to the passage of state restrictions. In fall 2020, 30 percent of teachers who reported providing ABE said that they used or referenced Teaching Tolerance to plan their anti-bias instruction.[13] It is possible that the passage of state restrictions and the heighted politicization of instruction about diversity and equity may have led teachers to refrain from usage of this instructional material.

In comparison, other instructional materials which have specific anti-bias aims were even less commonly used and were named by fewer than 5 percent of teachers providing ABE. For instance, *The 1619 project*—which is the only specific instructional material named in states' restrictions—was used by just 4 percent of teachers providing ABE. Instead, teachers who provide ABE most commonly reported using instructional materials from Teachers Pay Teachers (41 percent), current events articles or websites (e.g., Newsela, New York Times, Times for Kids; 39 percent), and YouTube (34 percent).

Teachers who reported providing ABE to a large extent were more likely than teachers reporting that they provide ABE to a small or moderate extent to report the use of instructional materials designed for ABE. Eighteen percent of teachers who reported providing ABE to a large extent reported using materials from Learning for Justice, in comparison to 12 percent of teachers who reported providing ABE to a moderate extent and 9 percent of teachers who

[13] To explore whether this shift might result from the differences in sample composition between the Fall 2020 Omnibus and Spring 2022 AIRS, I also examined the responses of teachers who reported teaching ELA, math, and science in the Fall 2020 Omnibus. Among these teachers, 26 percent reported using or referencing Teaching Tolerance to plan their anti-bias instruction.

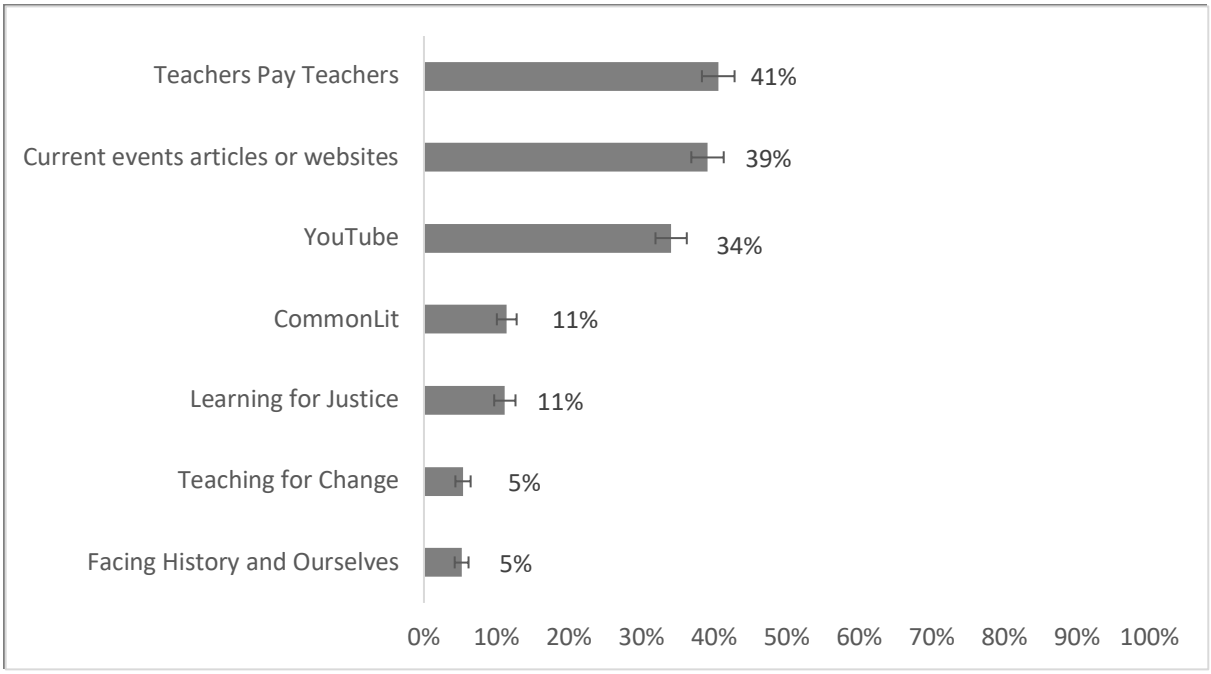
reported providing ABE to a small extent. I observed a similar pattern for usage of instructional materials from Teaching for Change and Facing History and Ourselves. Ten percent of teachers providing ABE to a large extent reported using Facing History and Ourselves, in comparison to 6 percent of teachers providing ABE to a moderate extent and 3 percent of teachers providing ABE to a small extent. Teachers providing ABE to a large extent were also more likely than their counterparts to report using online resources like current events websites and YouTube as well as to report teaching ABE without instructional materials, such as through class discussions. For instance, 47 percent of teachers providing ABE to a large extent reported using YouTube, in comparison to 30 percent of teachers providing ABE to a small extent. Notably, however, teachers providing ABE to a small, moderate, and large were all equally likely to use Teachers Pay Teachers. These findings suggest that teachers who more intensively provide ABE may be leveraging materials from many different sources, including those that are designed for ABE and others which are online repositories for resources or materials. Teachers providing ABE to a small extent were less likely to leverage materials intended for ABE; instead, their most commonly-used resource was Teachers Pay Teachers.

These findings may also be explained by the level of institutional support that teachers providing different levels of ABE receive. Teachers who provide ABE to a large extent were more likely than teachers providing ABE to a small extent to receive supports from their school or district. Among teachers providing ABE to a large extent, 23 percent reported receiving materials from others in their school or district to provide ABE, and 43 percent reported using both materials they found themselves *and* materials provided by others in their school or district, in comparison to 33 percent and 18 percent, respectively, among teachers who provide ABE to a small extent. Forty-nine percent of teachers providing ABE to a small extent reported working on their own to find or create materials, without any support from others in their school or district, in comparison with 39 percent of teachers providing ABE to a moderate extent and 34 percent of teachers providing ABE to a large extent. It is possible that, when teachers receive less institutional support from their school or school system to obtain instructional materials for ABE, they may seek out materials from sources like Teachers Pay Teachers, which are easily accessible. In contrast, teachers who receive more institutional support and provide ABE more intensively may instead seek out materials from a wide array of sources, including those that are designed for ABE instruction.

Because many teachers are using instructional materials from sources such as Teachers Pay Teachers, websites for current events, and YouTube, education leaders at school, district, or state levels may have few avenues of understanding the kinds of lesson plans or content teachers are using from these sources. They likely also have few avenues of ensuring the quality of teachers' ABE lessons. For instance, one study examining free resources on Teacher Pay Teachers' Teach for Justice collection raised concerns about the accuracy, clarity, and depth of those materials (Swalwell et al., 2023). As I will discuss further in Chapter Five, teachers may also vary in the level of experience and knowledge that they bring to their ABE practice, which means that some

teachers may be able to exercise strong professional judgement about which materials to use, while others may benefit from more support in selecting materials. Altogether, this analysis suggest that schools, districts, and states have a role to play in providing teachers with high-quality instructional materials to teach ABE so that teachers do not have to spend time finding or creating their own materials. Providing teachers with high-quality instructional materials or guidance on evaluating and selecting instructional materials for ABE can also ensure more even, equitable access to high-quality ABE.

Figure 4.11. Percentage of Teachers Providing ABE Who Reported the Instructional Materials They Used to Provide Anti-Bias Instruction, Spring 2022



NOTES: This figure displays teachers' responses to the question, "What instructional materials do you use to provide anti-bias instruction?" Data are drawn from the spring 2022 AIRS (n = 4,750). Only teachers who reported providing ABE to a small, moderate, or large extent were presented with this question. Teachers were able to choose from a list of 14 different response options, including an open-ended response option for "other." This figure displays the seven most common response options. Black bars represent 95-percent confidence intervals.

How Can Anti-Bias Education Be Supported?

I have shown that teachers' provision of ABE is high, which may be driven by teachers' beliefs in the potential for ABE to improve numerous student and school outcomes. Yet, many teachers are working on their own to provide ABE and are often leveraging instructional materials that are not designed to address ABE concepts or not using any materials. Education leaders have an opportunity to more systematically provide teachers with support to provide ABE. In this section, I examine a few avenues for supporting teachers, including through

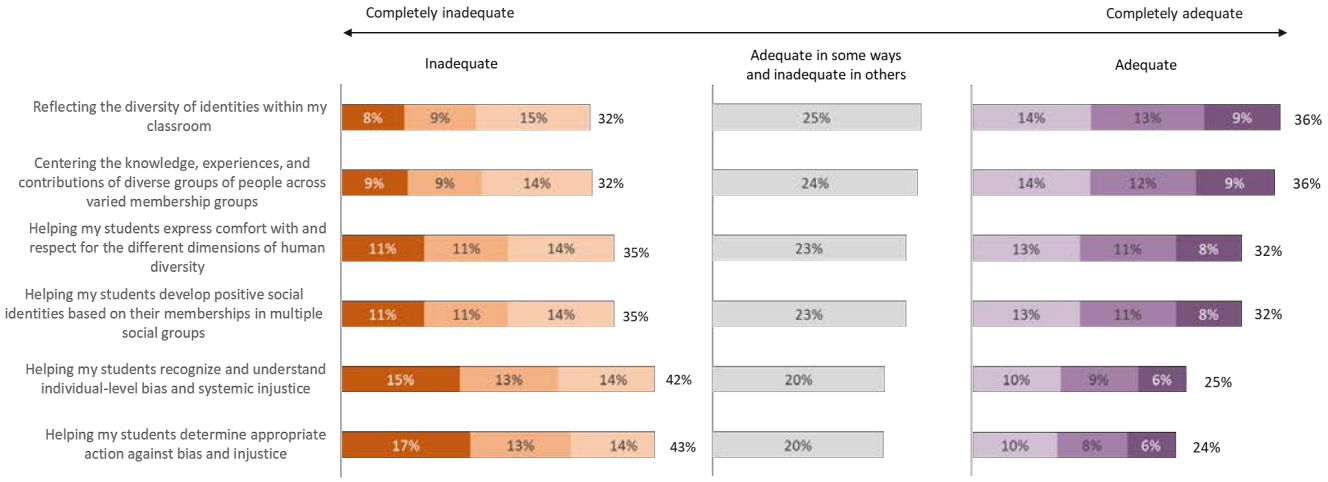
stronger instructional materials that can help teachers integrate ABE into academic learning, PL, teacher preparation, and other school-level supports for ABE.

More than half of teachers reported that their school- or district-required or -recommended curriculum materials did not adequately address anti-bias topics, although teachers felt that their materials better addressed issues of identity and diversity than justice and action

Teachers' academic curricula provide one avenue for teachers to address ABE, particularly because more teachers report using their academic instructional materials for ABE than instructional materials that are specifically designed for ABE. In the spring 2021 AIRS, we asked teachers to rate the extent to which the ELA, math, and science curriculum materials provided by their school or district, as a recommendation or requirement, adequately addressed each of the anti-bias domains of identity, diversity, justice, and action. Adequacy was measured on a 7-point scale from "completely inadequate" (1) to "completely adequate" (7). The midpoint of the scale (4) was labeled as "adequate in some ways and inadequate in others." Teachers were instructed to rate the adequacy of their materials for each purpose prior to any modifications they might make. For the purpose of my analysis, I defined adequate as a minimum rating of 5; such a rating would indicate that teachers felt positively about whether their materials met each of the listed purposes.

Only 47 percent of teachers reported that their materials were adequate for at least one of the purposes listed in Figure 4.12, meaning that 53 percent of teachers rated their materials as a 4 or lower for all six purposes. Just 19 percent of teachers rated their materials as adequate (i.e., a rating of 5 or above) for all six purposes. As shown in Figure 4.12, teachers' perceptions of the adequacy of their materials varied based on the particular anti-bias domain addressed. Teachers viewed their materials as more adequate for addressing purposes relating to representing, centering, or nurturing students' diverse identities, but viewed their materials as less adequate for addressing purposes relating to helping students understand injustice and identifying appropriate action against bias.

Figure 4.12. Teachers' Ratings of the Adequacy of Their ELA, Math, and Science Curriculum Materials for Addressing Anti-Bias Concepts, Spring 2021



NOTES: Data are drawn from the spring 2021 AIRS (n = 7,134-7,138). Teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which the ELA, math, or science curriculum materials provided by their district or school as a recommendation or requirement were adequate for each of the listed purposes. Teachers were asked to rate their materials as they were designed, prior to any modifications they might have made and regardless of whether teachers used them. Teachers rated materials on a 7-point scale, with 1 meaning completely inadequate, 4 meaning adequate in some ways and inadequate in others, and 7 meaning completely adequate. Bars do not sum to 100 percent because teachers were also able to select "not sure or not applicable."

Across all of the purposes that I asked teachers about, I observed other consistent trends echoing previous findings. Earlier, I demonstrated that ELA teachers were more likely to provide ABE potentially because the topics and content addressed in their subject lend themselves more naturally to the discussion of anti-bias concepts. ELA teachers also were significantly more likely to rate their materials as adequate for addressing each of these purposes than were both math and science teachers. Also, in line with earlier findings, across the six purposes listed in Figure 4.12, teachers of color were significantly more likely than White teachers—and Black or African American teachers were significantly more likely than non-Black or African American teachers—to rate their materials as adequately addressing each of these purposes. One potential hypothesis explaining these differences is that, although we asked teachers to rate their materials prior to any modification, teachers of color—and particularly Black or African American teachers—might be infusing their curriculum materials with these concepts or more strongly emphasizing these concepts within their materials in the implementation process. Or, teachers of color and Black or African American teachers might be more likely to work in schools or districts that select materials that address these topics.

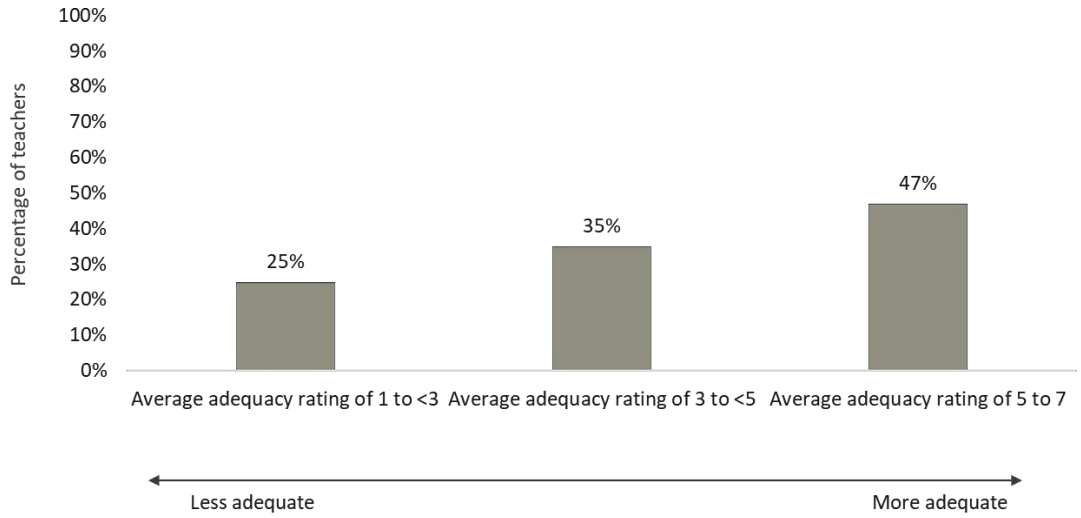
A majority of teachers preferred more support from their school or district to address anti-bias education

To better understand teachers' perceptions about potential supports, we asked teachers how they would prefer to address each of the inadequacies in their materials—completely on their own, mostly on their own and with some better school- or district-provided materials, mostly through better school- or district-provided materials with some work on their own, or completely through better school- or district-provided materials. Teachers also were able to report that they do not have a need to address the inadequacies for the students they teach.

Very few teachers, only 3 to 4 percent, indicated that they do not have a need to address these inadequacies at all, suggesting that teachers have a desire to address shortcomings in the way their materials address anti-bias topics. Most teachers preferred to have at least some additional support from their school or district in addressing the inadequacies of their materials, although most teachers also preferred to retain some level of autonomy in addressing inadequacies. Across the six purposes that we asked teachers about, roughly one in five teachers preferred to address the inadequacies of their materials completely through better school- or district-provided materials; about one in three teachers preferred to address the inadequacies of their materials mostly through better school- or district-provided materials but with some work on their own; and about one in three teachers preferred to address the inadequacies mostly on their own, but with some better school- or district-provided materials. These results point to an opportunity and desire from teachers for school and district leaders to provide more support. In addition, because about two-thirds of teachers reported that they would prefer to address the inadequacies in their materials through some combination of better school- or district-provided materials and their own work, these data suggest that there is an opportunity for teachers to collaborate with district or school leaders and co-develop materials that are tailored to their needs. A relatively smaller proportion of teachers—about 15 percent across all six purposes—stated that they would prefer to address these inadequacies completely on their own.

Importantly, teachers who, on average, had more-positive perceptions about the extent to which their school- or district-required or -recommended materials adequately addressed anti-bias topics (e.g., a higher average rating across the six items presented in Figure 4.12) also were significantly more likely to use school- or district-provided materials for their subject area to provide anti-bias instruction, as shown in Figure 4.13. This finding further demonstrates that schools and districts likely have an opportunity to support ABE by ensuring that teachers have appropriate instructional materials that adequately address anti-bias topics.

Figure 4.13. Percentage of Teachers Who Used School- or District-Provided Materials for Their Subject Area to Provide Anti-Bias Education, by the Extent to Which They Perceived Their School- or District-Required or -Recommended Materials as Adequately Addressing Anti-Bias Topics, Spring 2021



NOTES: This figure displays the percentage of teachers using their school- or district-provided materials for their subject area, by the extent to which they perceived those materials as adequately addressing anti-bias topics. Data are drawn from the spring 2021 AIRS (n = 6,699). Because teachers' responses across the survey items about the adequacy of their instructional materials (shown in Figure 4.12) were correlated, I created a summary scale measuring teachers' perceptions about their materials across all of the items by averaging teachers' responses. A higher average adequacy rating indicates that, on average, teachers felt that their school- or district-required or -recommended materials more adequately addressed anti-bias topics, whereas a lower average adequacy rating indicates that, on average, teachers felt that their school- or district-required or -recommended materials less adequately addressed anti-bias topics. All pairwise comparisons are significant at $p < 0.05$, before and after controlling for teacher- and school-level characteristics.

Teachers' beliefs and feelings of preparedness were associated with their provision of anti-bias education, but many teachers did not have professional learning opportunities that prepared them to address anti-bias topics

I investigated factors that could be associated with teachers' provision of ABE to better understand how teachers might be supported in addressing these topics with their students. Specifically, I examined several factors or supports and the relationships between these factors—teachers' beliefs, their perceptions of how well prepared they were to provide anti-bias instruction, their PL opportunities, and the preparation that they received through their teacher preparation programs.

As described earlier, other equity-oriented approaches to education, including culturally responsive teaching and culturally relevant pedagogy, align with the anti-bias goals of identity, diversity, justice, and action. Thus, I examined teachers' beliefs about the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy. Forty-two percent and 41 percent of teachers reported that they

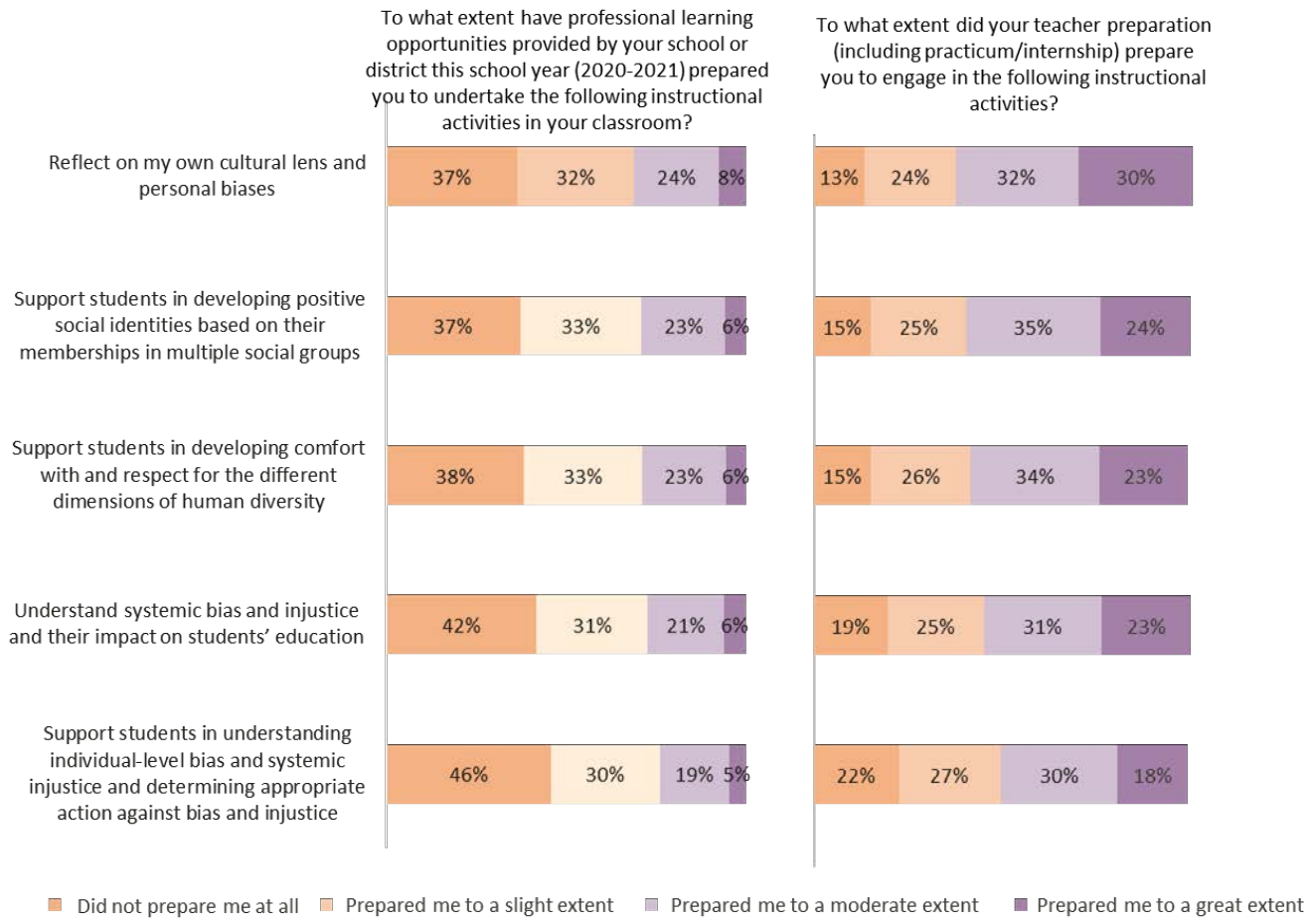
consider culturally relevant content and approaches extremely important or somewhat important, respectively, when choosing instructional materials to use in their classroom lessons. Although teachers broadly considered culturally relevant content and approaches to be important, when asked how well prepared they felt to provide anti-bias instruction, nearly four in ten teachers reported that they felt "not prepared at all" or "not very well prepared."

When I examined the characteristics of teachers who reported in their open-ended responses that they used materials that were specifically designed to address anti-bias topics, such as Facing History and Ourselves or Learning for Justice (formerly Teaching Tolerance), roughly eight in ten of these teachers reported that they felt somewhat or very well prepared to provide anti-bias instruction. Perhaps seeking out and using such anti-bias materials helps teachers feel more confident and prepared for instruction, or, alternatively, perhaps teachers who feel more prepared to provide ABE might actively seek and use these types of materials.

Next, I delved further into the factors that could affect teachers' perceptions about how prepared they feel or the beliefs and mindsets they bring to their teaching practices, such as their PL and teacher preparation experiences. In Figure 4.14, I summarize the extent to which teachers felt that their PL opportunities and teacher preparation programs prepared them to engage in instructional activities linked to the anti-bias domains of identity, diversity, justice, and action.

A fairly large proportion of teachers—roughly four in ten—indicated that their PL opportunities during the 2020–2021 school year did not prepare them at all to address anti-bias topics. Additionally, in line with earlier findings, a slightly larger proportion of teachers reported that their PL opportunities and teacher preparation programs did not prepare them or prepared them only to a slight extent to engage with instructional activities promoting students' understanding of bias and systemic injustice as well as appropriate action against bias (76 percent and 49 percent respectively) in comparison with instructional activities to promote students' positive social identities and respect for diversity (70 percent and 30 percent respectively). This finding contributes to the broader theme that teachers receive more supports around the domains of identity and diversity than justice and action. Scholars have also raised this concern, noting that school's efforts to promote equity must encompass not only celebrations of diversity but also attend to issues of discrimination, bias, and inequity (Gorski and Swalwell, 2015).

Figure 4.14 The Extent to Which Teachers' Professional Learning Opportunities and Preparation-Program Experiences Prepared Them to Address Anti-Bias Topics, Spring 2021



NOTES: Data are drawn from the spring 2021 AIRS. This figure displays teachers' responses to two questions, "To what extent have your professional learning opportunities provided by your school or district this school year (2020-2021) prepared you to undertake the following instructional activities in your classroom?" (n = 7,034-7,035) and "To what extent did your teacher preparation (including practicum/internship) prepare you to engage in the following instructional activities?" (n = 700). Only teachers who completed their teacher-preparation program in the past five years were presented with the items about their teacher preparation experiences. Bars do not sum to 100 percent because teachers were also able to select "I don't remember or N/A."

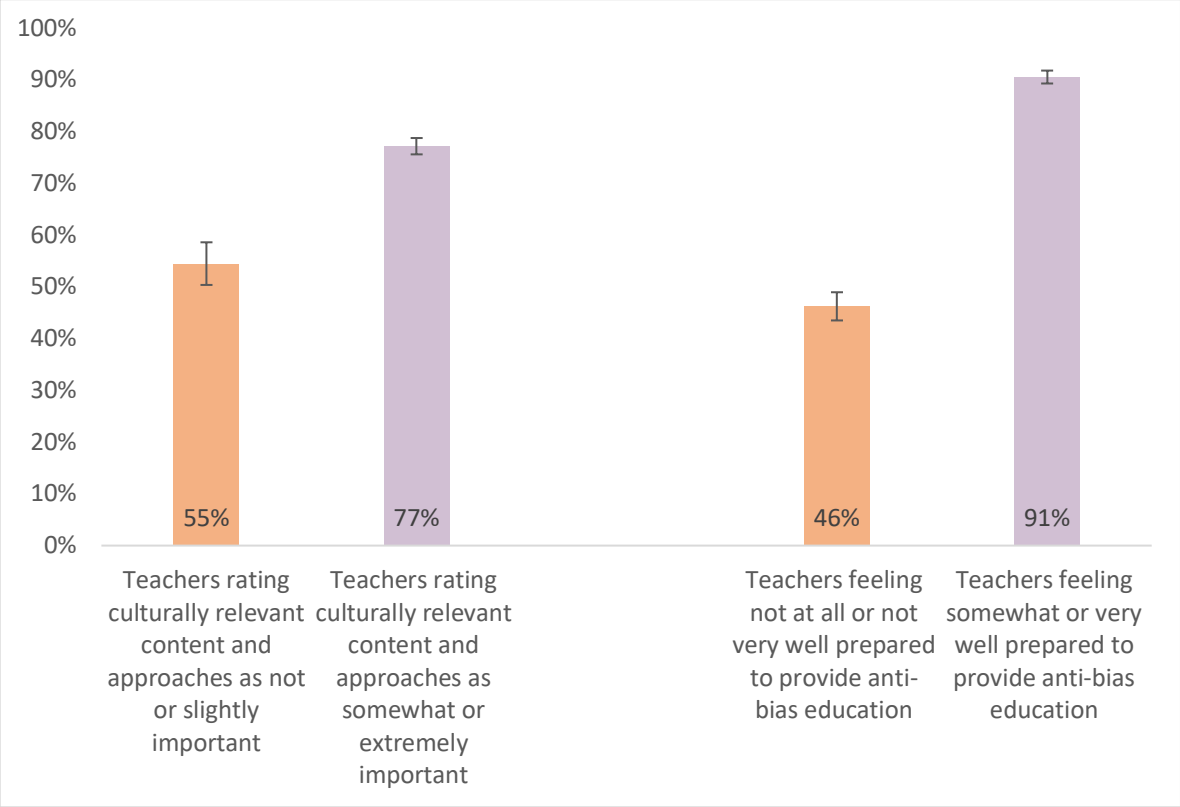
Teachers' preparation and PL opportunities might be important for supporting their feelings of preparedness and shaping their beliefs. When I average teachers' responses to the various PL items shown in Figure 4.14, teachers who received PL that better prepared them to address anti-bias topics were significantly more likely to consider culturally relevant pedagogy extremely important. Only 36 percent of teachers who received PL that least prepared them to address anti-bias topics considered culturally relevant teaching extremely important, while 71 percent of teachers who received PL that most prepared them considered it extremely important.

I observed similar patterns when exploring significant differences in how well-prepared teachers felt to provide anti-bias instruction, suggesting that preparation programs and school- or district-provided PL can support teachers' feelings of preparedness. Forty-three percent of teachers who received school- or district-provided PL that least prepared them to address anti-

bias topics considered themselves somewhat or very well prepared to provide anti-bias instruction, compared with 88 percent of teachers who received PL that most prepared them to address anti-bias topics. Teachers might have a variety of experiences or other sources of knowledge upon which they draw to prepare them to provide anti-bias instruction, and this finding suggests that district- or school-provided PL is a critical source of knowledge and a mechanism for supporting teacher preparedness. Additionally, teachers who reported that their teacher preparation programs most prepared them to address anti-bias topics were also significantly more likely to report that they felt somewhat or very well prepared to provide ABE than teachers who reported that their preparation programs least prepared them.

These findings are critical because both teachers' perceptions about their preparedness and their beliefs about the importance of culturally relevant content and approaches are associated with whether they provide ABE to their students. As shown in Figure 4.15, teachers who believe that culturally relevant content and approaches are important or who feel prepared to provide ABE were significantly more likely than their counterparts to report that they provide ABE.

Figure 4.15. Percentage of Teachers Reporting that They Provide ABE, by Teachers' Beliefs About Culturally Relevant Content and Approaches and Teachers' Feelings of Preparedness, Spring 2021



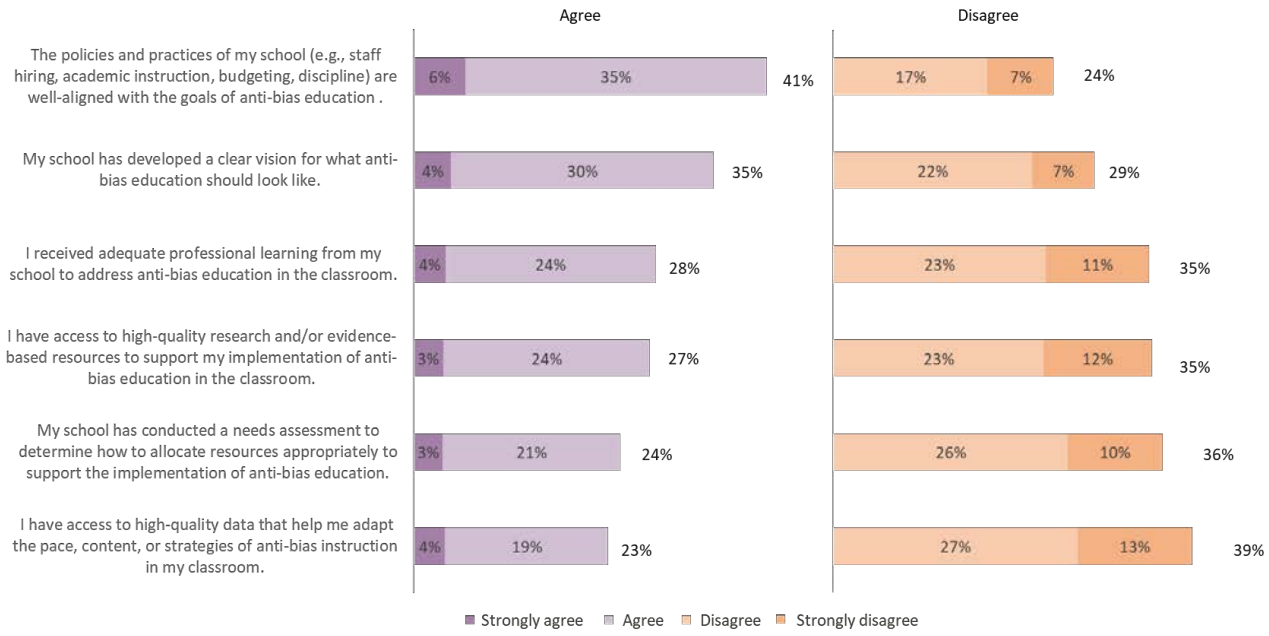
NOTES: This figure shows the percentage of teachers who reported providing ABE, depending on their beliefs about culturally relevant content and approaches and whether they felt prepared to provide ABE. Data are drawn from the

spring 2021 AIRS (n = 7,176-7,213). Black bars represent 95-percent confidence intervals. All pairwise comparisons are significant at p < 0.05, before and after controlling for teacher- and school-level characteristics.

Among school-level supports available for ABE, teachers were least likely to have access to supports related to the use of data to support continuous improvement, and most likely to say that their school's policies and practices were aligned to the goals of ABE

In the fall 2021 Omnibus, I asked teachers about several other school-level supports for providing ABE, as noted in the conceptual framework described in Chapter Two, to better understand teachers' access to these supports and whether different types of teachers may have more or less access to such supports. As shown in Figure 4.16, among the school-level supports listed, teachers were most likely to agree that the policies and practices of their school were aligned with the goals of ABE (41 percent) and that their school had developed a clear vision for ABE (35 percent). Teachers were least likely to report access to data to help them adapt the pacing, content, or strategies for anti-bias instruction in their classrooms (23 percent). Professional learning, discussed earlier, fell somewhere in the middle and broadly aligned with the results I presented from the spring 2021 AIRS, as over a third of teachers disagreed they had access to adequate PL to support ABE in the classroom. Among teachers whose school engaged in ABE, 17 percent of teachers reported that they did not have access to *any* of the school-level supports asked about, meaning that there is a sizable minority of teachers who may be engaging in ABE without the kinds of support that literature has suggested is important for high-quality implementation. Teachers serving higher proportions of minoritized students were slightly more likely to report access to some supports. For instance, teachers serving schools with a majority of students of color were more likely than teachers in majority White schools to report that their school has a clear vision for what ABE should look like (39 percent compared with 31 percent), while teachers serving high-poverty schools were more likely than teachers serving low poverty schools to report that they had access to high-quality data that helped them adapt the pace, content, or strategies for anti-bias instruction in their classrooms (27 percent compared with 18 percent).

Figure 4.16. Percentage of Teachers with Access to School-Level Supports for ABE, Fall 2021



Note: This figure displays the percentage of teachers who agreed or disagreed with each statement listed about the 2021-2022 school year. Data are drawn from the fall 2021 Omnibus survey (n = 994-995). Bars do not sum to 100 because teachers were also able to respond, "N/A – My school does not engage in anti-bias education.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I present a picture of the provision of ABE nationally, in U.S. K–12 public schools. I explored several areas of inquiry regarding the implementation of ABE, including the prevalence of ABE, the types of teachers providing ABE, the types of materials and approaches teachers used to provide ABE, and the various factors that might be related to teachers' provision of ABE.

My findings suggest that a majority of teachers nationally provide ABE. In the wake of states' passage of policies that could restrict teachers' provision of ABE, teachers' provision of ABE has declined— especially in states with restrictions and in more-conservative communities. Despite an overall drop in the provision of ABE, even in these places, about half or more of teachers still reported providing ABE. In some states, such as Massachusetts, New York, and California, and in very liberal communities in states without restrictions, teachers' provision of ABE remained essentially unchanged from the period prior to when state restrictions were passed. The high prevalence of ABE is perhaps unsurprising in light of teachers' beliefs about ABE. Large majorities of teachers believe that ABE has the potential to improve numerous student- or school-level outcomes, like students' sense of belonging, behavior, and engagement in learning as well as school climate.

Yet, teachers may experience many challenges accessing supports that could help them provide high-quality ABE. Many teachers are working on their own to find or create instructional materials to provide ABE, and a majority of teachers providing ABE say they do so without the use of instructional materials. When teachers do report using instructional materials, the most common types of materials are drawn from websites like Teachers Pay Teachers, Newsela, or YouTube, rather than materials that are specifically designed to address ABE topics, making it difficult to assess the quality of materials or approaches that teachers are using. Although the academic curricula that teachers use could provide a useful avenue for teachers to integrate ABE concepts into their usual academic instruction, only about one-quarter to one-third of ELA, math, and science teachers believed that their required or recommended academic curricula were adequate for addressing ABE topics.

When asked how teachers would like to address the inadequacies in their instructional materials, teachers reported that they desire more support from their school or districts to provide ABE. Instructional materials were not the only area where teachers may require additional support for providing ABE. About four in ten teachers nationally reported that their PL experiences did not prepare them at all to address ABE topics in the classroom, even though such PL was associated with teachers' feelings of being prepared to provide ABE, which in turn was then associated with teachers' reported provision of ABE. Access to high-quality data to help teachers adapt and improve their ABE instruction was another prevalent area of need.

The data and findings shared in this chapter provide a national overview of teachers' provision of ABE but are limited in their ability to answer questions of "how" and "why" -- for instance, why state and local context influence teachers' provision of ABE, how teachers use instructional materials to provide ABE, or why teachers do or do not find their PL useful for building their capacity to provide ABE. In Chapter Five, I will discuss findings from a school-based case study that delves into one school's experience of providing ABE to better address these questions of “how” and “why,” and to paint a more concrete picture of what ABE looks like in practice. In Chapter Six, I will discuss implications for policy and practice drawn from both survey and case study findings.

Chapter 5: One School's Experience Implementing the Tenets of Anti-Bias Education

Teachers across the nation widely report providing ABE to some extent and in some form., Given the pervasive nature of ABE, teachers likely need an array of supports from their school or school system to implement ABE well, as described in Chapter Two. Yet, my survey findings suggests that supports for ABE implementation are not highly prevalent; many teachers are working on their own to find materials to provide ABE and do not have access to PL that prepares them to provide ABE or data that helps them improve their ABE practice. My survey findings further confirm that local context is critical for ABE implementation; where educators may experience local support for their ABE efforts, teachers are providing ABE at rates on par to those prior to the passage of any restrictions on teachers' instruction about race, gender, or sexual orientation. Where educators face local resistance to ABE efforts, teachers may be shying away from ABE, potentially to avert potential conflict with communities and families. Survey results can shed light on how many teachers report providing ABE, the types of supports for ABE that teachers have access to, the types of supports that teachers may need, and the extent to which teachers in different local contexts report providing ABE. However, such data do not help us identify what characterizes effective or ineffective systems and supports for implementing ABE, how systems and supports might interact to affect implementation, or the mechanisms through which ABE might influence student outcomes and experiences at school. Moreover, while literature on related approaches provide an educated hypothesis on how ABE might manifest in K-12 schools and classrooms, we have limited knowledge on how schools and teachers themselves conceptualize the provision of ABE, how school leaders create systems to operationalize ABE, or the actions teachers take to provide ABE.

I use a school-based case study to begin filling in some of these knowledge gaps, as case studies are well-suited for understanding how implementation unfolds within a specific context (Yin, 2018). Case study findings portray how one school, under the pseudonym "East Charter Middle," worked to implement the tenets of ABE, thus providing other schools and school systems with an illustrative model for what implementation could look like. By highlighting East Charter Middle's successes and challenges, this case study can also highlight key lessons that can be useful to other schools and school systems that are endeavoring to undertake similar initiatives.

In this chapter, I first describe important aspects of East Charter Middle's context, including its institutional context and local context, such as its local political climate and the demographics of its student population. These pieces of context are important for establishing the implementation setting, which, as described in Chapter Two, are likely to shape how East Charter Middle approaches ABE.

Next, I describe the school's mission and vision for education and the numerous systems and supports it built to provide ABE. These findings provide an understanding of how the school provided ABE through a multitude of approaches, such as explicit instruction, integration throughout the school's operations and teachers' academic instruction, and the cultivation of a supportive and inclusive learning environment. I also explore what staff, students, and families saw as the student outcomes arising from the school's ABE efforts. These findings draw a throughline between the school's model and perceptions about student outcomes resulting from the model, thus addressing the righthand-side of the conceptual model detailed in Figure 2.1. In a highly contentious sociopolitical climate, my findings also highlight the voices of families and students—the targets of ABE efforts— whose perspectives are often excluded from research. Finally, I discuss the set of factors that hindered or facilitated the school's ABE efforts, touching on factors that speak to the importance of people, place, and policies to East Charter Middle's implementation process.

Case Study School Context

There are several aspects of East Charter Middle's institutional, local, and school context which helps to explain its approach to ABE. One key criterion for my case study site selection was that the school was already engaging in the process of ABE implementation. Though East Charter Middle primarily uses a term different than "anti-bias education" to describe its work, I use the term ABE to mask the school's own local terminology and preserve its anonymity and to be consistent with the framing from Learning for Justice and Derman-Sparks and colleagues, as described in Chapter One. However, as I describe later, the tenets of ABE—such as a focus on helping students explore their identities and build positive social identities, develop comfort with diversity, and gain an understanding of systemic inequities and how to address them—were all core to the school's model for student education. In addition, the school takes a constructivist approach to pedagogy, which emphasizes students' opportunities to construct their own knowledge through mechanisms like project-based learning. While not directly connected to the school's ABE efforts, the school's emphasis on constructivist pedagogy also provides context for its approach to activities and discussions used to develop students' ABE competencies.

The school is nested within a larger regional network of public charter schools, which is then nested within a larger national network of public charter schools. By the time data collection took place, the national CMO had been in existence for over a decade. The case study school is only a few years younger than the network itself. First, the institutional structure of the CMO meant that the school received supports, guidance, and directives that were communicated by the regional and national levels of the CMO. Second, the ages of both the CMO and East Charter Middle underscore the relative maturity of their implementation of ABE. Because the tenets of ABE were central to the CMO and school's mission and values since its inception, the findings presented in this chapter represent the experiences and perspectives of a school and school

system that have been working towards implementing the tenets for ABE for numerous school years. This is an important piece of context for understanding East Charter Middle's implementation of ABE. Schools and teachers that have an initiative imposed upon them by external actors often must internalize it so that they hold enough responsibility and authority over the initiative to support long-term sustainability and adaptability to changing contexts and priorities (Coburn, 2003). Because the school and CMO's ABE efforts have always been an integral part of their vision for education, East Charter Middle may not experience the tension of having to internalize an external reform effort.

Importantly, the school is both located in and serves a diverse community. The school is located within a county where the majority of the population identifies as people of color.[14] According to the definitions for local political climate used in Chapter Four, the school's county is very liberal, and the school is situated within a state without formal restrictions on teachers' instruction. Similar to the county in which the school is located, the majority of students in the school are people of color. During the 2022-2023 school year, when data collection occurred, about half of students were Hispanic or Latino, about one-quarter of students were White, about one-tenth of students were Black, and the remainder of students were Asian or multi-racial. During the 2023-23 school year, a majority of students in the school also qualified for free- or reduced-price lunch.

Finally, the school was also relatively small; across the three grade levels served, there were fewer than 300 students enrolled, which is about half of the average school size nationally (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022e). The school's student-teacher ratio was also lower than its state's student-teacher ratio (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023f). As I will discuss later, this is one factor which may have supported students' sense of community and belonging at the school, since small school sizes can help students feel known and build relationships and trust (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

East Charter Middle's Model for Student Education

In Figure 5.1, I provide a visual diagram of the school's model for providing education. On the left, I summarize the core tenets of the school's mission and values—its commitment to SEL, ABE, and academic instruction, the cultivation of a diverse student body, and the dispositions it endeavors to instill in students.

In the middle column, I display the numerous systems and supports that East Charter Middle created to provide ABE and the mission and values that are displayed on the left. I discuss each system or support in turn, beginning first with how East Charter Middle set aside dedicated instructional time to teach ABE, along with the instructional materials teachers used during this

[14] People of color are defined as people who identify as Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native American or Alaska Native, Asian, Pacific Islander, or multi-racial.

dedicated instructional time. Then, I discuss the PL that teachers received to support their provision of ABE, how the school identified areas for improving its ABE efforts, the school's processes for enrolling a diverse student body, and efforts to educate parents about its ABE initiatives. I also discuss the numerous ways that East Charter Middle integrated ABE into its school operations, such as its hiring and goalsetting processes, school culture and systems for behavior management, and academic instruction.

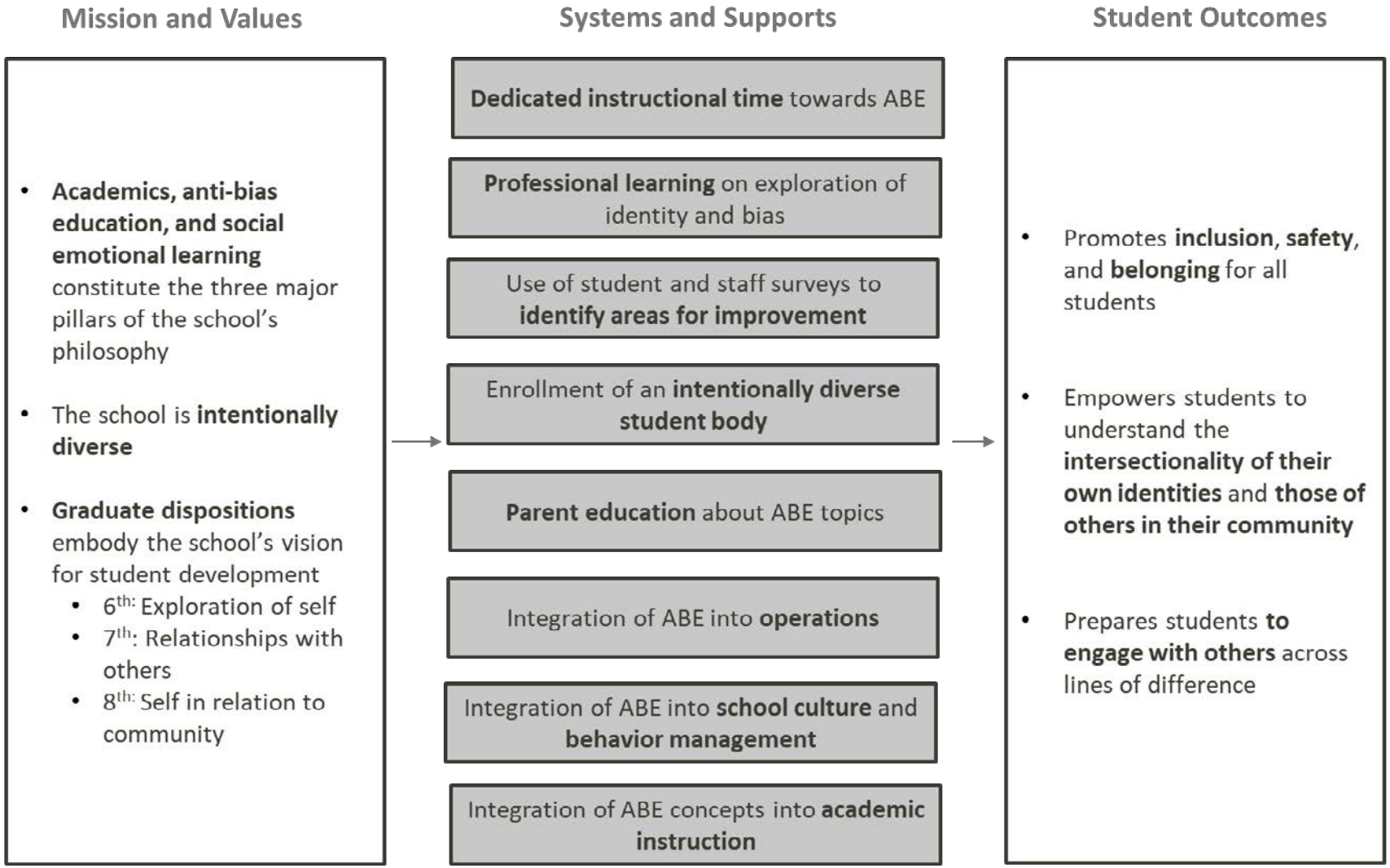
Finally, on the right, I summarize staff, parent, and student perceptions about the student outcomes that result from the school's mission, values, systems, and supports for implementing ABE. In what follows, I discuss each of the dimensions within these three columns in more detail.

East Charter Middle positioned ABE as a core pillar of the school's model

Leaders at East Charter Middle positioned **academics, SEL, and ABE** as the foundational pillars of the school's model. These three pillars were viewed by interviewees as deeply intertwined. Leaders described ABE tenets as being a goal of the organization from its inception. This is important to note because the focus on ABE tenets was not placed on the school externally or adopted over the course of its existence; rather, the CMO was established with ABE in mind. While ABE was a focus of the school since the beginning, interviewees expressed that recent events had only further emphasized the need for ABE. Citing both the COVID-19 pandemic and the murders of numerous people of color, leaders felt people were more aware of systemic inequities and racism now than they were during the founding of the CMO and that the emphasis on ABE over recent school years had become "heavy" as these issues could no longer be "ignored."

A focus on ABE manifested in a few ways in the school's articulation of its mission and vision for student education—namely, how it thought about composition of its student body and the core dispositions that it endeavored to instill in its students. One key element of the school's mission was to **intentionally enroll a diverse student body** in an effort to mimic the diversity of the community in which the school was located. In the words of one CMO leader, one part of the school's mission was to "intentionally…get lots of different kinds of people in a building to learn alongside each other." Leaders referenced an expansive definition of diversity which included racial diversity, economic diversity, family diversity, as well as other forms of diversity. By virtue of being a diverse school, leaders felt the school could cultivate a space where students could gain exposure to and work and collaborate alongside people from different backgrounds and with different perspectives. One leader articulated that this diversity would foster opportunities for critical conversations about identity and other related topics like race and privilege. By intentionally enrolling a diverse student body, the school could also provide an alternative experience to traditional public schools, which are often highly segregated by student race or ethnicity (United States Government Accountability Office, 2022).

Figure 5.1. East Charter Middle's Model for Student Education



East Charter Middle's focus on ABE also manifested in leaders' articulation of the school's vision for student development. Leaders outlined a vision for student development in three stages, tied to the **graduate dispositions** that the school aimed to instill in students at each grade level. These graduate dispositions were based in a popular SEL framework and were meant to align with students' developmental milestones. For instance, in sixth grade, the focus was on student' development and exploration of their own identities. School leaders articulated that this focus on the self allows students to first develop a deep understanding of their own identities and biases as well as an understanding of how their identities shape their perceptions of the world and their actions. This self-understanding would then lay the foundation for their understanding of others and their capacity to build relationships with others. In 7th grade, graduate dispositions focused on students' relationships with others, such as their family members, classmates, teachers, or community. The focus shifted towards concepts, in the words of one school leader, like "group dynamics," "power," and "control," including the "power and privilege that comes with your identity" as well as the biases that may spring from that power and privilege. Finally, in 8th grade, graduate dispositions emphasized helping students understand themselves in relation to larger communities outside of their school, such as their city or the world, and empowering students to engage in systems thinking and advocacy. These graduate dispositions provide evidence of how the school wove ABE and SEL together by emphasizing core SEL competencies drawn from common SEL frameworks such as students' self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship skills alongside competencies that would support students' ability to engage with others in culturally competent ways and to promote positive social change.

Leaders articulated a belief that the manifestation of this vision would result in a school that promotes inclusion, safety, and belonging for all students and where students understand their own identities and have an understanding of the identities of others. Yet, they also noted that schools have to "work the vision" by putting in place the structures to move the vision into practice. In the next section, I will describe and examine the many systems and supports that East Charter Middle put into place to "work the vision."

East Charter Middle created numerous systems and supports to provide ABE

ABE was not only a key aspect of the East Charter Middle's vision. School leaders put numerous systems and supports into place to implement ABE throughout the school and in classrooms. To understand how the school provided ABE, I asked CMO leaders, school leaders, and teachers what their main endeavors or activities were for providing ABE. In addition, I asked interviewees about whether and how school- and school system-level policies supporting ABE implementation, such as those relating to instructional materials or professional development, manifested at East Charter Middle. This line of questioning allowed interviewees to provide a broad overview of the school's ABE initiatives that arose from their own understanding of how the school implemented ABE and also allowed me to probe specifically on aspects of the conceptual framework described in Chapter Two. Through my analysis, I identified eight

systems or supports that leaders at East Charter Middle created to provide ABE (see Figure 5.1). I will describe each in turn, including dedicated instructional time to teach ABE concepts through a CMO-created curriculum, PL focused on the exploration of staff's own identities, the use of student, staff, and family surveys, student enrollment processes to promote a diverse student body, opportunities for family education, and integration of ABE considerations into the school's operations, culture, and academics.

East Charter Middle's class schedule dedicated instructional time to explicitly teach ABE-related concepts

First, East Charter Middle specifically set aside instructional time towards ABE. Every morning, students attended a class that I will refer to under the pseudonym "Advisory." Similar to an advisory or homeroom model, the same students attended this class every morning with their Advisory teacher before they moved through the rest of their school day in their academic or extracurricular classes with other teachers. Because Advisory provided students and teachers with dedicated time to discuss ABE topics, staff across all levels and roles considered Advisory as a critical element of the school's ABE implementation and emblematic of the school's commitment to ABE.

Students participated in many different types of activities during Advisory, including community building, restorative circles, and mindfulness. During Advisory, teachers also engaged students in an "identity curriculum" developed by the national CMO, which provided teachers with a set curriculum to teach ABE-related concepts. Because the curriculum was given to teachers by the CMO and teachers across the school used the same curriculum, one CMO leader described the identity curriculum as a "response to needing a system wide approach to [ABE] for students." According to this CMO leader, prior to the creation of the identity curriculum, teachers lacked an institutionalized way to talk to each other and their students about ABE-related concepts, and the identity curriculum was intended to help fill this gap.

The identity curriculum was designed to align to the three stages of student development outlined in the school's graduate dispositions. For instance, in 6th grade, students explored the different facets of their identities, the assumptions they might make about other identities, and how to be an upstander to promote positive change. In 7th grade, students considered their identities in relation to those of their peers and their communities and how to create communities that promote belonging for all. Finally, in 8th grade, students reflected on the role of human rights and how human rights are navigated in their own communities. For each grade level, the curriculum culminated in a final project-based learning opportunity which allowed students to apply what they learned across the entire school year.

Within each lesson, the curriculum followed a consistent structure. Each lesson started with an opening circle or activity, continued with the core lesson content, and finished with a closing circle. Throughout the lessons, students engaged in discussions or activities (e.g., self-portraiture, gallery walls) and recorded their thoughts in a journal. Lessons also included extension activities

that allowed teachers to differentiate instruction for students. Because the identity curriculum incorporated many different types of discussions and activities, one CMO leader who was involved in developing the curriculum described it as designed to be "dynamic in the type of cognitive ways we invited students to explore." This leader also described the curriculum as designed to be "facilitated" by teachers rather than directed by teachers. The goal of the lessons was not simply to teach students content or to "lead" students to a "right answer," but rather to provide teachers and students with a space to engage in conversation and reflection and, in the process, build community with each other. The CMO leader explained,

> "None of the lessons are trying to lead students or teachers to get to a place of saying this is exactly what it's meant to be. This is exactly the right answer. The question, the practice and skill is like, "Can we hold this conversation together and be OK that we won't have a right answer?" And I think that is why if you go through the curriculum, you'll see that it's not very directive in its content specifically. So a lot of it is activities and discussions… "Let's do something together. What did that feel like? What came up for you? What are your thoughts about this? What are your experiences that inform your thoughts?" That kind of work."

The structure of Advisory also helped teachers build community among students, which was critical for creating a space where students could engage in discussions about ABE-related topics. Throughout the week, students were able to connect with their teacher and fellow students through activities like games, check-ins, and other community-building activities. The development of community among students, in turn, helped them engage in conversations about ABE topics. Two teachers expressed that because students attended Advisory every day in relatively small classes, this routine created more trust between students. This sentiment is unsurprising because research similarly suggests that advisory structures are one way schools can support students in developing positive relationships with their teachers and other students (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). One teacher explained,

> "I think the benefits are that in [Advisory] they really do try to create a safe community for students…So there's a lot of sharing that happens in my class…We've established so much trust within this classroom that students will share openly about some of their experiences. So I think that's a benefit because throughout the classes, there's a mixture of students every single period and so they might be less inclined to share or open up in other classroom spaces."

Besides the identity curriculum, East Charter Middle also provided students and staff with other types of dedicated opportunities to engage in ABE-related activities. For instance, East Charter Middle also integrated instructional content about different cultures and identities through heritage month celebrations, such as Black History Month, Asian American Pacific Islander History Month, Women's History Month, or Pride Month. For these celebrations, school leaders provided teachers with lessons to integrate into Advisory. Through these lessons, students celebrated different groups and learned about important historical or current figures, diverse groups' major contributions to society, and aspects of culture like music, food, or

fashion. Teachers responded very positively to these lessons, noting that students were engaged with the content and felt as though they were being celebrated. One teacher explained that, while such celebrations might feel "performative" at other schools, they felt more "genuine" at East Charter Middle because the discussions were a priority for the school and integrated into daily lessons over an extended period of time.

Beyond lessons held during Advisory, East Charter Middle designated time within the school schedule for students to engage in ABE through weekly clubs. For example, one student club focused specifically on fostering students' ability to promote positive social change. Students used the provided time to research social issues they found interesting and important. One student group, for example, chose to research school lunch programs, the importance of nutrition for kids, the types of kids negatively impacted by poor nutrition, and the purpose of the free- or reduced-lunch program. Meanwhile, another student group chose to focus on bullying and the groups that are most impacted by bullying. During my observations, I saw student groups participating in this club create class presentations on a number of other issues, such as spreading awareness about climate change and greenhouse gas emissions, homelessness, and school shootings. Other clubs focused on the experiences of LGBTQ+ students ("Queer Corner"), provided students with opportunities to engage in community service, or helped students learn about different cultures. One teacher also described how clubs that might not be ostensibly focused on ABE-related topics might also help students learn ABE competencies, like learning to collaborate with others who are different from them. This teacher led the student council, noting that students from "all different races, ethnicities, genders…all different kinds of kids" had to work together in a democracy to make decisions for the school.

The identity curriculum evolved over time to better fit the needs of the school and CMO

The identity curriculum, developed by the CMO, was not a static curriculum, but rather evolved over time to better meet the needs of the school and CMO. Originally, the identity curriculum was developed by a team at East Charter Middle. This team drew on existing ABE instructional materials, like those from PollyAnna, Learning for Justice, and Facing History and Ourselves. The team drew on lessons from those existing materials to find lessons that they felt were applicable to their school community and created lesson plans based on the materials that they felt were more engaging or interactive.

The CMO then took the curriculum and endeavored to redesign the curriculum, allowing it to be used across school sites within the CMO. One CMO leader described the redesign and launch of the identity curriculum across sites as "the first attempt at institutionalizing it through a set curriculum." The need to redesign the original identity curriculum was rooted in misalignment between the identity curriculum as-written and how CMO leaders hoped teachers would use the curriculum. One CMO leader described that the CMO envisioned Advisory—and specifically, use of the identity curriculum—as facilitating a "holistic," "relational space where students and educators take time to talk and be in social justice issues, but also be in relationship not just with

content" but also with "ways of being." As such, teachers were meant to facilitate student discussion, rather than just teach content to "[further] knowledge." However, an initial iteration of the identity curriculum, which was largely based on an existing, commercially-produced ABE curriculum, was described by this leader as very "content heavy," making it difficult for teachers to digest and plan for. As a result, the leader explained, "the form that it took felt like there was a large gap between where it was and where teachers [would] be picking it up." Because of this misalignment between the curriculum and how it was used, leaders at the CMO level began to revise the curriculum. While not explicitly stated by CMO leaders, this effort to revise the curriculum was in line with the school's constructivist philosophy, which, as interviewees said, promoted "inquiry-based learning" and put students rather than teachers at the "center of the classroom."

In the revision process, the school system leaders considered educator voice by engaging teachers across grade levels to go through the existing content and determine which lessons they felt worked or did not work. The team developed a new scope and sequence, identified gaps in the existing materials, looked for or built out new materials, and reformatted all of the lessons to help make them more accessible to teachers (i.e., in the form of PowerPoint slides, through a Google website). The team "pared the content down a lot" and provided teachers with more clarity about what was a nonnegotiable versus what was optional, which one CMO leader felt facilitated implementation across different school sites within the CMO.

In Chapter Four, I noted that, nationally, relatively few teachers providing ABE appeared to use commercially-produced ABE curriculum, choosing instead to find or create their own instructional materials. The experience of staff at East Charter Middle provides one potential explanation for why. Even if the content provided by commercially-produced materials may be strong, teachers may struggle with finding materials that fit the culture of their schools and classrooms, including *how* they want to engage students in discussions about ABE topics, or they may struggle with finding materials that they find accessible and easy to use off-the-shelf. While the revision of the identity curriculum was meant to help make the curriculum easier to use for teachers, teachers still experienced some challenges with implementing the identity curriculum in practice during their Advisory periods, as I will discuss later when expanding on factors that impeded implementation of ABE at East Charter Middle.

Professional learning provided staff with opportunities to reflect on their identities, but teachers felt PL could have been more consistent and strongly connected to classroom practice

One member of East Charter Midde's leadership team held responsibility for the school's ABE efforts. This leader led staff PL to support ABE implementation. During this PL, school staff created positionality statements where they would explore their own backgrounds and personal stories. Through the development of these statements, staff reflected on their own identities and how their identities influenced their perceptions, biases, and practice as educators. One key purpose of the PL was to help staff become more aware of their own unconscious biases

and more cognizant of their actions, in the words of one school leader, "because sometimes people can do things and don't really realize that they're doing it."

School staff had mixed reactions about this PL. Over half of teachers I interviewed felt that the PL provided valuable time for self-reflection and a greater understanding of how they might interact with students. One teacher said,

> "One specific session that I remember being really valuable was creating… a statement of positionality where we analyzed ourselves and our own perspectives and truly broke down like where our own personal perspectives came from and how it may either be like very aware of things, or maybe even unaware of certain things and kind of placing our positionality, like placing our own identity within the greater context of this community specifically….So I think that actually the school has done a pretty cool job of helping me personally understand my own perspective and identity and how it might differ from some of my students."

Other staff who appreciated the PL noted that it was helpful in providing them with the language to discuss complex topics like the various forms of racism (e.g., institutional racism compared with interpersonal racism), thus helping them "do a lot of the work in terms of unlearning habits and relearning how to be antiracist." The PL also provided staff with the opportunities to discuss different perspectives within their own community and to challenge their own perspectives and biases. For instance, one teacher explained how reading other staff members' positionality statements helped them understand the perspectives of their fellow team members and challenge their own assumptions:

> "So for example, like if somebody discloses that they have a mental health issue, I might have had bias towards what that looks like…but sometimes it's something that you cannot see, and so you're helping me check my bias about how a mental illness shows up."

One school leader articulated that it was important for staff to have the capacity to identify their own biases and engage in conversations with other adults before engaging in these topics with students. Nearly all of the staff who expressed at least some positive sentiments about the PL were in their first or second year at the school or in their role, suggesting that staff may find such critical self-reflection especially useful in the beginning stages of ABE implementation. This sentiment is bolstered by the literature which emphasizes the importance of critical self-reflection as an early step in implementing ABE (Derman-Sparks et al., 2020; Pace et al., 2022). Indeed, one staff member noted that the conversations afforded by this PL provided opportunities that they had not had before. One teacher remarked, "I feel like in educational institutions, people are often afraid to go too far when you're talking about racism or anti-bias. But here I was like, 'Wow, this was straight up and honest. This is the real stuff'… I just really appreciated that." However, as I will discuss later when exploring the challenges that staff faced in their provision of ABE, about half of interviewed teachers expressed mixed feeling about the effectiveness of this PL, particularly when they felt it did not support them with their practice in the classroom. In addition, PL opportunities were vulnerable to leadership turnover. The school

leader who owned the school's ABE efforts and led the school's ABE PL left the school in the middle of the school year. Once this school leader left, staff described no longer receiving PL to advance their ABE skillsets.

East Charter Middle used student, staff, and family surveys as a key way to identify areas for improvement

The school and CMO leveraged anonymous surveys across an array of stakeholders, including students, teachers, families, and leaders, to collect data on the success of its ABE initiatives and to identify areas for improvement. For example, student surveys allowed the school to assess whether students have a sense of belonging at the school, whether they feel they have peers and adults they can go to, whether they feel they are seen for who they are, whether they feel they are a valued member of the school community, and whether their identity is celebrated at the school. Parent surveys asked parents to speak to whether they feel their child is building skills in having difficult conversations, whether they feel supported to have difficult conversations, whether they feel welcomed at school, and whether the school culture cultivates inclusivity. Altogether, this data allows leadership to "tap into a child's experience" and to identify gaps and areas for improvement.

As part of their efforts to promote more equitable outcomes, school and school system leaders attended closely to subgroup differences when analyzing student, staff, and family survey data. For instance, leaders examined student data by grade level, gender identity, race/ethnicity, income level, SPED status, or language fluency. For staff, leaders considered factors like tenure within the organization, whether they were in the first generation in their family to attend college, whether they ever qualified for FRPL, whether they identify as LGBTQ+, whether they were a parent or guardian, an immigrant, a veteran, or an English language learner. One school leader summarized, "What I am always looking for is, is there a subgroup disparity?" Examining data this way allowed leaders to understand the experiences of different groups—or, as one CMO leader put it, "who's belonging, who's not? Who's being successful, who's not?" An analysis of subgroup disparities then informed efforts for continuous improvement in the following school year. These continuous improvement efforts involved setting goals around reducing observed disparities. While staff across different levels were well-aware that this type of data collection took place and leaders were able to articulate how this data informed the school's continuous improvement efforts, it is notable that about half of the interviewed teachers expressed they did not have insight into the results of the survey or how the data was being used.

Besides survey data, student-led conferences also acted as another avenue for school staff to collect information about students' progress on ABE competencies. Students prepared for two student-led conferences each year. During these conferences, students were responsible for presenting to their parents about their progress at their school, which also involved self-reflection about their academic progress and social and emotional development, including their development in the school's graduate dispositions. During my observations, I noted that one

student wrote about how their participation in Queer Corner helped them learn how to be a better ally.

While survey data allowed the school to track outcomes related to its ABE effort at the school-level and for groups within the school, teachers' efforts to understand student progress on ABE competencies in their classrooms tended to be less structured and more teacher-directed. Nearly all teachers described drawing on their relationships with students and knowledge of students' strengths and struggles. This is unsurprising since research suggests advisory systems and small school sizes enable the development of strong relationships between teachers and their students, which can then help teachers better personalize their instruction and respond to student needs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Hernandez and Rivero, 2024). Leveraging their relationships and knowledge, teachers described observing changes and growth in students and particularly how they interacted with their peers over the course of the school year. As one teacher said, "I mean, I think I can tell just based on how they treat each other in my room." For instance, students who struggled with empathy for others or making biased or hurtful remarks to peers might, as the school year progressed, require less redirection from teachers. Thus, teachers described knowing their individual students well enough to determine whether they made progress in their understanding of ABE-related concepts.

I also identified variation in how teachers monitored students' development of ABE competencies, possibly because these types of observations were less structured and formal. While most teachers discussed more ad hoc observations of their students' behaviors and interactions, one teacher described a more systematic process of conducting one-on-one check-ins with students and setting aside time for reflection. This teacher described,

> "I think one of the ways that's most effective for me is to really process their own development through one-on-one check-ins and being able to reflect on their own growth and their own current understanding on these topics. And then also give them the one-on-one instruction support to keep pushing them in their development… at the end of every unit I have them do a reflection, and so that's really important, is having that reflection time."

While East Charter Middle had formal systems in place to monitor the outcomes associated with its ABE initiatives, like whether students felt safe at school or whether they felt their identities were valued, teachers described relatively little oversight over the *process* of implementation, including implementation of the Advisory identity curriculum. Teachers hypothesized about a few reasons behind this lack of oversight, including the perception that monitoring of Advisory was a relatively lower priority for the school or the loss of the school leader who had historically owned the school's ABE efforts. While some teachers greatly valued their autonomy or already felt comfortable facilitating the identity curriculum, other teachers experienced challenges with using the identity curriculum in practice. A lack of oversight over teachers' provision of ABE meant that teachers who struggled with facilitation of the curriculum might not receive the guidance needed to grow in their use of the identity curriculum.

East Charter Middle's enrollment process supported its ABE efforts by fostering a diverse student body and a broader school community invested in ABE

As noted earlier, one element of East Charter Middle's mission was to enroll a diverse student body reflective of the diverse community in which it was situated, thus fostering an environment where students and families could engage and collaborate across lines of difference. Importantly, the focus on student enrollment as a lever supporting the school's ABE efforts was unique to East Charter Middle's institutional context. Like many public charter schools, East Charter Middle had more latitude around the recruitment of its student body than a traditional public school because enrollment was not necessarily dictated by families' place of residence. Interested families could apply for enrollment, and if there were more applications than available seats, the school held a lottery to determine students' admission to the school. In the lottery process, the school prioritized students residing in the school's district, students who qualified for FRPL, and students residing in the school's surrounding neighborhood. East Charter Middle also paired this lottery system with intentional efforts to actively recruit a diverse student body. Leaders collected data on the racial and ethnic composition of the school's local community and then devised a plan to ensure the diversity of its student population. This plan involved strategically deciding which parts of the community to target through information sessions and flyer drop offs.

Family outreach during the enrollment process was also integral to ensuring families were aligned to the school's mission and philosophy for education. School leaders spoke to families about the school's values and focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion. In doing so, school leaders said they endeavored to be transparent about what type of education East Charter Middle offers. One school leader felt that these conversations with families were especially important because communicating the school's focus on ABE was not as simple or straightforward as discussing the school's academic results. During these conversations with families, this school leader described bringing examples to families of policies that East Charter Middle has enacted to promote equity. This transparency around the school's policies and philosophy allowed families to make an informed choice about whether the school was a good fit. This leader, reflecting on how enrollment has changed over recent years, noted that conversations about identity, equity, and inclusion during the enrollment process have become more salient, especially after the pandemic and especially for students entering middle grades, possibly because students are entering school with different needs. As a result, this school leader felt parents were more receptive to such instruction. However, to the extent that parents disagreed with the school's emphasis on ABE during the outreach and enrollment process, school leaders emphasized that the school is a "school of choice." As one school leader put it, "This is my favorite phrase: You're gonna choose the school that works for you and your family."

East Charter Middle's student enrollment processes was a key part of its vision to provide ABE, but it is also notable that this is a school policy lever that may be uniquely available to

charter or private schools, rather than traditional public schools. This may have also been a lever that was uniquely accessible to leaders at East Charter Middle because the school is located in a very-liberal county, meaning there were likely more families in the local community that aligned with the school's vision for ABE, thus increasing demand for schools like East Charter Middle. Nevertheless, despite school leaders' efforts to clearly message their vision for ABE to families during the enrollment process, as I will discuss in the next section, not all families were uniformly supportive of how the school approached ABE.

East Charter Middle created opportunities for family engagement and education about ABE-related concepts

School staff detailed many different avenues for educating parents about the school's ABE work. Parent education begins first during the student recruitment and enrollment processes, as school leaders educate parents about what ABE is and ensure that parents understand the school's mission and values. During student orientations at the start of the year, school leaders also discussed the school's ABE efforts. Throughout the school year, the principal informed families about what students are learning in Advisory and also provided families with educative resources on the school's graduate dispositions through family newsletters. The principal described how, every week, they focus on different aspects of a graduate disposition. For instance, when discussing a graduate disposition that focuses on "[evaluating] issues from multiple perspectives" and "[identifying] the role one can play to promote change locally and in the world," the principal said that they sent families resources, such as articles or videos, on what it means to "have a conversation about multiple perspectives." Over the course of the school year, the principal cycled through the school's graduate dispositions to help families unpack more deeply each graduate disposition.

In addition to these systems for providing parents with more information about the school's ABE efforts, a CMO leader also held parent workshops to clarify for families what ABE is, how East Charter Middle and the CMO conceptualizes ABE, the CMO's ABE goals, and parents' role in supporting ABE efforts. These workshops were seen as especially important because, as one school leader said,

> "There's been a lot of feedback from staff and principals that [ABE] can be very vague. And so unless you're really explicit with families about what that work means after school, then they will create their own idea and they will run with that. So [CMO leader] kind of came in and was clear with families about this. This is what we do here, this is what we mean."

School leaders also described helping parents learn more about the school's model in one-on-one conversations, sometimes in response to dealing with incidents at the school.

East Charter Middle also had numerous structured opportunities for parents to engage in and support the school's ABE efforts. For instance, the regional CMO regularly convened a group of stakeholders across schools' communities, including parents as well as staff and students. This stakeholder group would convene to discuss the CMO's ABE goals, how those goals manifested

at their respective schools, and how to translate those goals to the population served by each school. This group acted as a liaison between the school and the regional CMO regarding ABE efforts and issues. The school also had its own parent group that served many functions. This parent group led various events, such as town halls and affinity groups, and the planning for the school's heritage month celebrations. In addition, the parent group was another mechanism through which the principal received input from families about the school's ABE efforts. Parents in one focus group who were involved in this parent group felt the group was a platform for them to engage in social activism with other likeminded individuals in the school community.

Overall, teachers and leaders reported that parents have generally responded positively to the East Charter Middle's ABE efforts, particularly because the school is very transparent about its focus on ABE tenets and families have chosen to send their children to the school. However, school staff did raise instances of resistance to the school's model from families. Teachers, leaders, and families alike expressed the sentiment that the school would stand firm on its vision for ABE, despite any pushback it might experience from families.

One parent who participated in a focus group, who expressed positive perceptions about the school's competence and leadership, did raise concerns about the school's ABE efforts. This parent, who described themselves as "really socially liberal," felt that the school was overly focused on identity and diversity—sometimes to the detriment of students' learning. For instance, speaking about the school's approach to sex education, the parent noted that their child "didn't know the basics of sex ed," but came home with the takeaway that "some men have periods." Moreover, this parent felt that the school's focus on ABE was rooted in a "hierarchy of value imposed on the kids," with "white, straight male[s] being at the bottom and other things being on top," which the parent felt "actually creates a lot of division." This parent also felt that, because the school had such a strong and unwavering perspective on issues relating to identity and diversity, it was difficult to voice differing viewpoints or to provide input on school policies. Instead, this parent expressed a desire to "[embrace] and [encourage] a diversity of viewpoints" and to have the opportunity to engage in an "honest discussion" about a diverse set of ideas, rather than adhering to a single perspective on issues of identity, diversity, and equity. This parent did feel it was important to acknowledge that racism and other biases exist but rejected the notion that "everything is super racist." They noted, "Let's teach it. But let's not place value judgements on people's opinions." This parent felt that school leaders would listen to their concerns, but concerns were largely left unaddressed; they said, "They sort of listen, but in no way do I get the feeling that like, 'Ok, we're gonna actually do anything about that.'"

While this parent's perspectives may have been less prevalent among the school's families, this parent's experience provides an illustrative example of how the school responded to pushback from families. Teachers and leaders alike asserted that, in response to resistance from families about the school's ABE priorities, they reiterated that East Charter Middle, as a charter school, was a "school of choice." One school leader described an instance where they

experienced parental resistance against the school's initiatives to support transgender youth. This school leader recounted a conversation with a parent, where they responded,

> "If you don't like this. That's fine… I'm committed to supporting all of my kids, including the pretty large population of kids I have who identify as trans. If that's something you categorically disagree with, please feel free to choose a school that doesn't do that, because we're a school of choice."

East Charter Middle's institutional context again was important for understanding its approach to responding to pushback from families. As a charter school that had greater latitude around how it recruited and enrolled students as well as how it messaged its mission and values to prospective and current families, East Charter Middle was able to leverage its status as a charter school in responding to family concerns. Rather than experiencing pressure to change its model or approach to instruction—as teachers in other public schools have reported (Woo et al., 2023)—leaders at East Charter Middle had the liberty to "coach out" families that "did not fully embody [East Charter Middle's] [ABE] norms." Reflecting on how the school's institutional context as a charter school intersected with its approach to family engagement, one school leader said,

> "We can't pick and choose our families, right? We're a lottery-based system, so I think what we can do is hope that we do a really, really good job of expressing our mission and vision, being very clear about the types of events that we hold, the type of work that we do with our kids. And then hope that it aligns with people and if it gets the point where it doesn't align at all, that they can choose elsewhere and know that, you know, 'We're not for you.'"

Considerations of ABE were pervasive throughout the school's operations, culture, and academic instruction

One key feature of East Charter Middle's model for student education was how pervasively school and system leaders wove considerations of ABE into school operations, culture, and academic instruction. Rather than living in just one siloed portion of the school day, such as Advisory, ABE tenets were instead infused throughout the school day. Echoing the framing provided by Derman-Sparks et al. (2020), this pervasive integration of ABE underscored how ABE tenets were an overarching lens through which the school viewed its model for providing student education. Indeed, this strategy of taking an overarching equity lens to all aspects of school operations is critical for ensuring that equity is promoted as a foundational commitment of the school and embedded in the institutional features of the school, rather than a small-scale, add-on initiative (Gorski et al., 2022).

Organizational goals attended to equity by reducing subgroup disparities

At the school and CMO level, organizational goals—whether related to enrollment, teacher hiring, instruction, or attendance—all attended to equity. As one CMO level stated, "equity undergirds everything. So you can't have any other goals that don't have equity goals in it." At the school level, one school leader articulated how considerations of equity were operationalized

as subgroup analyses during the school's goalsetting process. This leader explained, "You'll notice that like I've chunked out our goals, thinking about hiring, thinking about academics, thinking about SEL. But in every single one of those goals, there is some kind of a targeted subgroup analysis that is generally developed based on the subgroup data from the year before." Similar to the school's examination of student, family, and staff survey data to monitor important outcomes associated with its ABE efforts, leaders described maintaining a constant eye towards subgroup analyses for other forms of data as well, such as academic data, attendance data, and suspension rates, to inform their organizational goalsetting. Organizational goals centered on not only improving data points but also reducing disparities identified through these subgroup analyses. One leader provided an example of trying to understand the causes behind disparities in student attendance by gender identity as a measure of school climate:

> "I was like, "Let's look at this from all of these different lenses to see if there is disparity in the data, in any of these data points, so that we can be really targeted in the goal setting that we do in next year and in the way that we support kids." One thing that I thought was really interesting when I looked at that data, it's a smaller population, but our male and or female identifying students…have pretty much the same average daily attendance. But then…our students who identify as nonbinary were six points below the average, and that really made me ask the question of like, "Oh, that's fascinating. Here is a subgroup that has like a really, you know, like a pretty far off data point. Let's dig in and see what the root cause of that is and how can we address it.'"

School leaders also applied this same philosophy to other forms of data, such as academic achievement data. School leaders paid particular attention to disparities they perceived as stemming from the opportunity gap and therefore focused especially on the performance of students from vulnerable backgrounds, such as students eligible for FRPL, students with IEPs, and ELs.

Hiring processes constituted another key piece of East Charter Middle's ABE efforts and organizational goalsetting. During interviews with candidates, school leaders described probing candidates on how comfortable they felt talking about issues like race, diversity, or privilege with students or working across lines of difference. This interviewing and screening process helped school leaders ensure that incoming staff were aligned to the school's values and had the experience—or at least potential— to engage in such topics with students. Two teachers also echoed this sentiment, explaining that they chose to work at East Charter Middle in part because of its focus on ABE. Teachers recounted how they talked about their own racial identities during the hiring process, what their identity meant for the students they would be teaching, and their experiences working with diverse groups of people.

In addition to intentionally hiring staff aligned to the school's values, the school and CMO both were also working towards hiring more people of color, and particularly more Black staff members. School staff expressed that staff diversity was especially important in a school that endeavors to enroll a diverse student body. A more diverse staff would allow students to have

"people in the building that look like them, so they feel comfortable." This sentiment is also supported by a body of literature on how students of color—and students in general—benefit from having a teacher of color (Cherng and Halpin, 2016). Research suggests students of color benefit from seeing people who share their identities in positions of authority. Teachers of color also hold higher expectations of their students of color than do White teachers and are able to engage in instructional strategies that better meet the needs of students of color because they share a common cultural understanding with students (Egalite and Kisida, 2016; Egalite, 2024). Staff at East Charter Middle also felt that diversity among adults in the school was important because it allowed them to learn more about other people's backgrounds, more easily engage in difficult conversations about identity, and adapt to and understand different perspectives. One staff member, who was a person of color, explained,

> "So I feel like it's diverse enough to where if you want to say something, you can. I don't feel like…I can't speak up as a [person of color] because nobody wants to side with the [person of color] or I'm seen as a like somebody who's inferior compared to everybody else. Like, I don't feel like it's that type of environment and I have worked in that type of environment before."

To support staff diversity, the school again set goals around staffing that attended to disparities between different groups of staff. For instance, the school had a goal around supporting the retention of high-performing staff and reducing disparities between the retention rates of staff of color and staff who identified as White. School leaders also attended to disparities in staff morale and set goals around maintaining high morale, with little disparities by demographic characteristics such as race, gender, sexual orientation, and role. In addition, the school partnered with a teacher residence program whose goal is to strengthen the pipeline of teachers of color—and especially men—into the classroom. Residents worked at the school, which facilitated their eventual hiring into the school full-time.

The school integrated ABE considerations into its systems for behavior management

School staff articulated two major systems for behavior management at East Charter Middle that were both connected to its ABE efforts. One system was rooted in its graduate dispositions, which, as noted earlier, were associated with overarching goals for students' SEL and ABE development. One school leader described how the school created rubrics to assess whether students were progressing in the development of the graduate dispositions. These rubrics made concrete the actions or words that students might display to demonstrate whether they were exceeding, meeting, approaching, or below the school's expectations for their development of the graduate dispositions. Rubrics were normed among teachers to reduce the potential for teacher bias. One school leader described how these rubrics allowed the school to treat targets and growth around graduate dispositions the same way that they treated academic learning targets. Teachers then used the rubrics to "grade" students on their progress in developing student dispositions, based on observations of students' behavior. During grade team meetings, teachers met and assessed students on their development of the school's graduate dispositions.

Teachers also shared rubrics with students and conferenced with them to share observations about students' growth and progress on graduate dispositions and areas for growth. This data was then used to communicate students' progress to families and make decisions about consequences like students' opportunities to go on field trips.

The school's restorative practice efforts were another element of its ABE efforts and a response to more inequitable disciplinary practices often used at other schools. Staff viewed restorative practices as an important element of the school's anti-bias work. When students engaged in harmful, biased behavior, such as using derogatory terms and hate speech or making others feel excluded or unsafe, staff members tracked all incidents and facilitated restorative circles at the end of each week. During these restorative circles, staff members guided students in conversations, helped students understand others' perspectives, and better understand how their behavior might have affected the school community. Staff noted that a restorative approach "opens up the floor for kids to reassess where they may have made a mistake" and can help students "dig into a bias" by considering other perspectives, thus creating a space for students to learn from their mistakes and making the school a safe and more inclusive space. One staff member recounted, "We had some issues at the beginning of the year with…students using hate speech and… administration's response was every student who was caught using hate speech had to attend an antibias anti-hate speech circle on Friday afternoons after school where they had to talk about why their language was harmful and kind of make those repairs in." School staff noted they appreciated that East Charter Middle took incidents of bias or hate speech very seriously. One staff member said, "If there is an issue, they're going to try their best to put a stop to it instead of just kind of letting it slide under… the rug and let kids keep doing things that they would probably get away with other schools."

Teachers wove ABE into academic instruction, although they did so to varying degrees

Teachers across all different subjects were tasked with teaching Advisory. In addition to teaching about ABE-related tenets during Advisory, teachers at East Charter Middle also described the integration of ABE principles into their academic instruction. How teachers understood ABE as manifesting in their academic instruction varied across different subjects, and teachers also varied in how they operationalized ABE and the extent to which ABE was part of their academic instruction.

In ELA, teachers and leaders felt it was critical to consider the voices represented—and missing—from the literature to which students are exposed. One ELA teacher emphasized the importance of providing students with the opportunities to read authors of color to learn from the perspectives of groups that may be marginalized or underrepresented, rather than "typical mainstream type of hegemonic voices." Meanwhile, another ELA teacher further elaborated on this idea, noting that their work was focused not only on exposing students to diverse perspectives but also to help students develop the tools to "speak, to write, and to read in a kind of socially critical way." Similar to ELA teachers, a social studies teacher also reported that one

major goal of their curriculum planning was to "include as many groups of people as possible" so that students have the chance to be exposed to something they might not otherwise know about and to include people that students can identify with. In addition, the social studies teacher layered on top of the desire to include diverse and representative perspectives the goal of engaging in a "responsible way to teach hard history." Meanwhile, teachers across other subjects expressed other ways they felt ABE manifested in their academic instruction. Special education teachers emphasized "making learning accessible to all students" and ensuring that students understand the strengths and "gifts they bring to the table." For math, one teacher mentioned the importance of battling stereotype bias by building students' confidence to engage in math, particularly for girls and other types of students who may have "been told that because they are part of a certain subgroup that… they're inherently not as good at [math]."

Teachers also varied in the extent and depth with which they wove ABE tenets into their academic instruction. These differences were likely driven by the nature of the subject they taught and the individual capacities, including skills and experience, that they brought to their work, as well as the level of support or autonomy afforded by the school. For instance, for ELA, the school used a Readers Writers Workshop model. One ELA teacher in the school conducted a text audit of the curriculum and found that the texts were unrepresentative of students in the school. As a result, one school leader described how the school modified the set of texts used for the workshop model. Thereafter, every school year, students were tasked with analyzing the representativeness of texts in the classroom and writing a letter to the principal with suggestions on the books the school should buy, based on the demographics of the students in their classroom. One school leader described that ELA teachers at the school were encouraged to prioritize texts that are representative of students' identities, rather than "canonical texts."

Perhaps as a result of this level of institutional support, the ELA teachers I interviewed both articulated a deep integration of ABE tenets into their academic instruction. One teacher described how students engaged with authors of color and other marginalized voices and how, in the course of discussing these texts, students learned how to understand a diversity of perspectives from the lens of different characters in their books. Notably, the texts this ELA teacher used to integrate ABE tenets into their academic instruction were already chosen for them by the school; thus, even though they were in their first year of teaching, they were still able to articulate how ABE tenets were inextricably woven into their instruction. In contrast, another ELA teacher I spoke with, who was comparatively more experienced, exercised significant autonomy over their instruction and was able to draw on a wealth of skills and experience to deeply integrate ABE into their ELA instruction. This teacher described a broad overarching structure to their curriculum, which focused on the theme of resistance against oppressive systems and provided students to engage in this theme through both fiction and non-fiction texts to build students' skills in reading, writing, and speaking. They described their curriculum as continually evolving to align with students' interests and topical current events. They described,

> "What's also really important in my belief is that we are teaching really relevant text that are both engaging and accessible and teach a powerful message. And so that changes all the time. So, I recently brought in Persepolis because of the Iranian Revolution, everything going on there. And so I bring in lots of new texts and I move around different, depending on what really interests the students. If there's a group of students who really care about queer justice, then I like really diving into a unit on that, or environmental justice. And so being able to be flexible to what the students' needs and desires are, I think, is really important and it allows them to kind of feel empowered in their own educational journey."

Thus, although both teachers brought varying levels of experience to their instruction, both were able to integrate ABE into their academic instruction with the level of either support or autonomy that was best tailored to their needs as a teacher.

Similarly, one experienced social studies teacher I interviewed described exercising significant autonomy to craft their own curriculum to include ABE-related topics. This teacher described curating instructional materials from different sources, such as OER Project, an online repository for free social studies curricula, Newsela, or PBS. This teacher felt that traditional social studies instructional materials were "very vanilla and basic" and "[left] out a lot of really important stuff," which led them to seeking out materials that would allow students to learn about "hard history" in a responsible, respectful way.

For other teachers, the integration of ABE into their academic instruction was comparatively shallower even though they desired a deeper integration. For instance, one teacher noted that they had very little autonomy to integrate ABE topics because they had to follow a scripted curriculum. Instead, they tried to integrate culturally relevant examples in their spelling and reading intervention class. Similarly, math teachers noted that their given curriculum included different types of names, but otherwise did not explicitly focus on issues relating to ABE. One teacher expressed a desire for deepening integration of social issues into their math instruction, but experienced challenges relating to their own capacity to create such opportunities and having to balance the pressures of state testing. They explained,

> "There are projects that I would like to do that are related to, like, when we talk about statistics, talking about misinformation and representation and things of that nature. And we're talking about geometry, talking about red lining. There are things that I would like to do to tie it in, but I felt some limitations this year. One just being new to the school, new to the curriculum. Also, timing wise there's and we have these dumb state tests, so there is you know a lot of pressure to get things done…so it's not something that I currently do, but it's something that I would like to do next year, hopefully when I have more time."

Notably, only two teachers—this math teacher and a special education teacher—mentioned the pressures of having to balance academic learning with ABE instruction. One special education teacher remarked, "Teachers have pressure from variety of places to like keep on track with their curriculum, or to get through this amount of content by this amount of time. And so sometimes when you're having these dialogues about important topics, it can take away from the

lesson objective of that day." The challenge of more deeply integrating ABE into some subjects as compared with others, such as ELA and social studies, may also explain why fewer math teachers report providing ABE at the national level. As with related approaches like culturally responsive teaching, bolstering the connection between ABE and academic outcomes provides a potential path to supporting teachers who struggle with the provision of ABE in their subject area and ensuring that ABE does not become marginalized in students' school experiences (Sleeter, 2012).

Having described the various systems and supports that East Charter Middle built to provide ABE, in the next section, I will next describe the right-hand side of Figure 2.1—the connection between East Charter Middle's model for education and student, staff, and families' perceptions about the student outcomes resulting from that model.

Staff, students, and families felt East Charter Middle's model fostered students' sense of comfort with diversity and empowered students to be themselves and to enact positive social change

When asked about how East Charter Middle's ABE efforts have impacted students, staff, students, and families most commonly noted that the school's model helped students become more comfortable engaging with diverse groups of people. Families and staff often attributed this to the school's efforts to enroll a diverse student body, thus allowing students the unique opportunity to interact and collaborate with other students who come from many different backgrounds every day at school, especially in contrast to other schools which may be highly segregated. One teacher explained,

> "I think the biggest thing that I notice is it is just a really cool thing to me that I have this room of kids from all different corners of [the city], all different backgrounds that are like all working together in class and for the most part are pretty nice to each other… it really does feel like they have a respect for the people around them and a comfort working with all different types of people… I don't think it's a common thing for kids to just have that level of comfort and exposure to so many different types of people."

Parents reiterated this same sentiment. Across all focus group, families expressed that their children have very diverse friend groups, in part because they attend a diverse school and are exposed to diverse groups of people, and also because they are intentional about building relationships with "people across the spectrum of identity." One parent said,

> "My kids tell me that they very much so are seeking out and maintaining friendships with people who don't look like them on purpose for a reason. And they very much care about maintaining that relationship. And they're aware when it is a group that feels a bit too same-same. And so that to me, has been one of the best like side effects of, I think the work the school is doing is they're not mindless about who their friend groups are. They're very intentional about it and they know that it takes work and they put in that work."

Parents across two focus groups also felt that their students would be better set up for success as adults, because they will have the ability to "operate in a space with all different kinds of people." One parent emphasized that this ability to work across lines of difference would be "a tremendous advantage in the workplace and in life." Students across two focus groups similarly recognized that the school's ABE efforts helped them to cultivate more comfort with diverse groups. One student said, "I know more about other people in the world." Another student, reflecting on what their education would be like if they had attended a school that did not value ABE tenets, said, "I think that I would have not been as open minded and as trying to be a better person as I do try to be."

Over half of interviewed staff also expressed that they felt the school's ABE efforts helped students to better understand their own identities. Teachers noted that students—especially students from more minoritized groups—were more comfortable and empowered to be themselves at school. They described how students of color felt less pressure to adhere to stereotypes, students with disabilities learned to advocate for their own needs, and non-binary students were "respected and understood" as being part of the school community. They also described how students were given the tools to reflect on their identities and how they fit into the world and to share their opinions and thoughts on issues that related to them.

About one-third of interviewed staff and students in all three focus groups described how they felt students experienced a greater sense of safety and belonging. One school leader noted that "almost every single kid at our school indicated that they felt like they belonged." Students reiterated this sentiment, with one stating, "You can feel more accepted among all of your classmates." Indeed, this sense of belonging was part of the broader culture in the school, as students in all three focus groups mentioned that they felt they had positive relationships with their teachers and that they felt cared for by school staff. Cultivating a caring climate is one manifestation of culturally responsive teaching that is critical for pushing students towards high achievement (Gay, 2018).

Over one-third of interviewed staff and students in two of the three focus groups also described how students developed a stronger understanding of biases and inequities and as well as a sense of self-awareness of the impact of their own words. Teachers described how—while middle school students may inevitably make mistakes—students understood the weight of their words and were able to "sometimes check either other." One student expressed that they learned how to "be aware of what I say before I say it." One teacher summed it up, "I'm definitely seeing students who are leaving with a greater sense of who they are, how to interact with a diverse groups of people, how to be really knowledgeable about different topics, and be interested in supporting one another."

Notably, enhanced academic learning did not come up often as an outcome of East Charter Middle's model. Students in two focus groups talked about how they felt East Charter Middle's ABE efforts helped them gain access to knowledge that they did not have before. For instance, speaking about the accomplishments of important figures during the Black History Month

lessons held during their Advisory period, one student said, “They tell me things and, ‘Oh, I never knew that, or I'm glad I learned about that,’ because I didn't know the full explanation.” However, in that same focus group, when asked how the school’s ABE efforts supported their academic learning, two students expressed they did not see a connection between ABE and their academic learning. While families and staff often discussed the influence of East Charter Middle’s ABE efforts on students’ sense of belonging, empathy, or ability to work across lines of difference, perceptions about the impact of academic learning did not arise during staff interviews or family focus groups. Thus, even when academic learning did arise, it tended to center more on knowledge acquisition rather than other aspects of learning, such as students’ engagement in learning or the development of critical thinking skills, all of which are noted in prior research as the potential benefits of engaging in classroom conversations about diverse identities and experiences (Woo, Diliberti, et al., 2024). These results are perhaps unsurprising in light of my national teacher survey findings, which suggest that teachers across the nation are most likely to consider ABE as supporting students’ sense of belonging and perceptions of school climate. Relatively fewer teachers believed that ABE could support students’ academic learning, especially among teachers in schools that did not provide ABE. Thus, as noted earlier, helping teachers to understand the connection between ABE and academic learning could be an area for potential growth as schools and school systems consider ways to support implementation.

Factors Facilitating and Hindering ABE Implementation

In the preceding sections of this chapter, I laid out the dimensions of the approach East Charter Middle uses to implement ABE in its local context. These dimensions included the school’s mission and values, which were then operationalized through the development of numerous systems that indicate the schoolwide provision of ABE and supports to help teachers provide ABE in their classrooms. I also discussed how teachers saw the school’s model for student education as resulting in various outcomes for students, such as students’ ability to work in diverse settings, understand aspects of their own identity, and feel safety, belonging, and positive attachments at school.

In this next section, I delver further into the factors and conditions that enabled East Charter Middle’s ABE efforts, such as the strong support of leadership across all levels of the organization and the degree of investment that stakeholders across the school felt for its ABE efforts. I also describe some of the barriers that the school faced in the implementation process, such as friction between ABE and other school efforts and the challenges of building individual capacity throughout an organization.

Leadership played a key role in messaging and supporting the prioritization of ABE

Leaders and staff at all levels noted the importance of messaging and support from their leaders as critical for the implementation and continuation of the school's and network's ABE efforts. For instance, one CMO leader noted the commitment of another CMO leader in advocating for continued investment in the development of the identity curriculum. They remarked, "[CMO leader] put a lot of [their] time and energy in believing in this program, and I think without that, I don't know if it would have gotten to this point."

Meanwhile, leaders and teachers at the school expressed comfort with talking with their supervisors about ABE topics, whether to troubleshoot issues and ask for support or to just check in. Leaders and teachers at the school also reported feeling that their supervisors would support them in the face of any conflict with families over the school's ABE work. This might be especially important given the contentious nature of ABE-related efforts. One school leader expressed this sentiment about their direct coach at the CMO, noting, "I'm comfortable that I will be backed up." This school leader also expressed this same sentiment in relation to their teachers, saying, "That's something my staff members have shared with me is that they know that I'm going to have their back if they do something." This same sentiment about support from leaders was shared by about half of interviewed teachers, who noted that school leadership's open commitment to ABE helped them to feel more comfortable engaging with conversations about ABE with students and families.

While leadership's support and messaging of the prioritization of ABE was crucial to creating an environment conducive to ABE implementation, the school was also vulnerable to leadership turnover. An assistant principal had previously held responsibility for many of the school's ABE efforts. One school leader described that this assistant principal "had a lot of insight and a lot of background in [ABE] work, and so it was nice when we had her because she sort of held the bucket of [ABE]" while other leaders in the school were responsible for the "buckets" of SEL and academics. Teachers described how the assistant principal had a clear vision of how restorative practices tied into the school's ABE work, provided staff with the language to talk about issues like systemic racism, and provided staff with PL. One teacher remarked,

> "I think there was a stronger push in when we had our former assistant principal who was kind of like the lead and really worked on creating that kind of curriculum and developing the teachers and the staff's knowledge of justice and different [ABE] work… at that time, there was a greater cohesion."

However, over half of school staff noted that the departure of this school leader in the middle of the school year left supports for ABE less prioritized. School staff reported that they no longer received PL on ABE, and also no longer received support around the implementation of restorative justice. One school leader remarked, "It kind of left a gaping hole for where [ABE] would go." However, this school leader did note that, because ABE was already built into the

curriculum used during Advisory, that particular aspect of the school's ABE implementation was able to continue even in the absence of the assistant principal.

East Charter Middle benefited from widespread commitment to its vision for ABE from stakeholders across its school community

East Charter Middle's systems and supports for implementing ABE — particularly its processes for staff hiring and student enrollment— fostered a school community that was broadly supportive and bought-in to the school's vision for ABE, which was a significant asset to the implementation process. For instance, as discussed earlier, the school's processes for vetting potential candidates ensured that new staff were aligned to the school's mission and values. This was viewed by one school leader as especially important because teachers across all subjects were tasked with teaching Advisory and the identity curriculum. Another school leader noted it was unsurprising that nearly all staff in the school have indicated that they feel comfortable leading conversations with students about race, bias, and privilege, because "it's one of the questions that I ask in hiring and if a person doesn't feel comfortable, then they don't even get passed the first part of our screening."

Indeed, staff's commitment to the school's vision was a key strength of the school's ABE efforts. Although they acknowledged that there was still room for growth and improvement in the implementation process, all teachers indicated alignment with the school's vision for ABE. CMO leaders similarly remarked that staff's desire to engage in ABE was an asset in the implementation process. In comparison to other schools in the network, one CMO leader remarked that East Charter Middle uniquely had "teachers specifically who were really invested in [ABE] already… they already on their own had operated with a lot of consensus and understanding amongst one another what their goals were and had a lot of trust with each other." Another CMO leader noted that, although implementation throughout the CMO could still be uneven or inconsistent, there was nevertheless a "heart and a will" and a "commitment" to engage in ABE; thus, the work lay in developing staffs' skills to engage in ABE, rather than shifting staff mindsets and dispositions towards the work.

Staff and parents alike similarly noted that how the school's enrollment processes fostered a school community that was supportive of the school's ABE efforts. The school emphasizes its ABE focus to prospective families—in the words of one leader, "making sure we express to families that…equity is the work that we do." Given East Charter Middle's process of recruiting and enrolling students, it is unsurprising that parents were broadly supportive of the school's ABE efforts. Across nearly all parent focus groups, parents named the school's focus on ABE tenets and SEL as a draw during the enrollment process. Parents valued the school's focus on exposing students to diverse perspectives through the diversity of the student body as well as the educational program that helped students understand how they "fit into the whole world." Parents across nearly all focus groups also expressed that this focus on ABE tenets also aligned with their own worldviews and perspectives.

It's also possible that the local political climate also contributed to the level of family support. One teacher who had previously worked in a state with a restrictive policy noted the relative comfort they experienced speaking about issues related to diversity and equity, saying, "I never feel any sort of fear that there's going to be pushback for something that I say or I'm going in trouble for voicing something." Another teacher noted, "I mean we're in [city]. It's really a progressive space."

Teachers experienced implementation challenges when they perceived disconnects between existing school-level systems and initiatives

Even though East Charter Middle had many systems and supports in place to provide ABE, during interviews, staff discussed ways that a disconnect between these various systems and supports manifested and hampered their effective implementation of ABE. For instance, teachers identified friction between the school's efforts to implement ABE and restorative practices, even though they considered restorative practices as one element of how the school provided ABE. Teachers also noted a disconnect between their ABE-related PL and classroom practice, including the use of their identity curriculum. Continuous improvement processes, which focused primarily on the outcomes as measured by student, staff, and family surveys, did not yet extend to implementation processes, including how teachers were implementing the identity curriculum.

Teachers also experienced a disconnect between ABE and other school-level initiatives. For instance, Advisory was a vehicle for many different initiatives in the school, of which implementation of the identity curriculum was one. As a result, teachers sometimes felt that the topics addressed in Advisory were disjointed. Teachers may have also experienced tension between their efforts to engage students in discussions about ABE and the school's focus on constructivism and open-ended, inquiry-based learning. In what follows, I describe the various manifestations of these disconnects in greater detail.

Teachers experienced friction between efforts to implement ABE and restorative practices

Teachers indicated that the school's efforts to enact restorative justice sometimes felt at odds with its ABE initiatives. Teachers expressed concerns that the school's restorative approaches for managing student behavior were not effective, and they struggled with understanding how to implement a behavior management system that was both equitable and effective. Without an effective behavior system, they found it difficult to hold students accountable to the tenets of ABE. As a result, teachers felt they needed more support around restorative practices, such as additional PL, to effectively carry out the school's ABE work. One teacher said:

> "[ABE] does relate to classroom management and behavior so much… So I do think professional development or training would be welcomed, for teachers to also feel like they have more tools to be able to do that kind of work and have those conversations and hold kids accountable because we have this restorative

> justice model for discipline, but I've heard feedback from our staff that like they don't feel that it's necessarily effective."

Teachers experienced challenges with implementing the identity curriculum because of a disconnect between ABE and other school initiatives as well as between the school's various systems and supports for ABE

Although Advisory provided a strong signal to teachers about the prioritization of ABE at the school, teachers did note some implementation challenges—namely, what they felt was sometimes a disjointed scope and sequence, challenges in engaging students in complex, abstract topics, and a lack of PL for or oversight over their use of the identity curriculum. Notably, I interviewed staff during the first year of the redesigned identity curriculum's implementation, which provides useful context for understanding why teachers might have experienced implementation challenges.

Teachers and leaders raised the notion of a disconnect or siloing of initiatives when discussing Advisory, one of the center pieces of East Charter Middle's ABE efforts. There were many school priorities embedded in Advisory, including the school's focus on SEL, implementation of the identity curriculum, various heritage month celebrations, restorative circles, and community building, and teachers and leaders alike expressed a siloing between these initiatives and elements of Advisory. Because Advisory did fulfill so many functions, teachers found it difficult to consistently implement the identity curriculum because they felt pulled away by Advisory's many other priorities. This left the scope and sequencing of Advisory as a whole disjointed. One teacher provided a salient example of this disjointedness, explaining,

> "It honestly sometimes seems kind of random, and sometimes the students have given that feedback too… I mean, the topics really vary. Like today, we had to talk about test taking skills and a growth mindset. And then tomorrow we're talking about the Holocaust… It's just like a lot. I mean, we're talking about the Holocaust because we're going on a field trip… But again, like for the kids' perspective, it kind of came out of nowhere where it's like we were talking about test taking and then tomorrow's the Holocaust."

Another teacher expressed this same sentiment specifically about the identity curriculum, saying, "It's a little disjointed. We do all of them in the beginning of the year and then there is all this other stuff that happens and we don't do them." For instance, this teacher mentioned how the identity curriculum came from the CMO, but the school also chose to integrate lessons about various cultures through its heritage month celebrations. As a result, the many different focuses of the Advisory period might make it difficult to engage in consistent implementation of the identity curriculum throughout the entire course of the school year.

Even within the identity curriculum itself, one interviewee mentioned that the final capstone project within the identity curriculum felt disconnected from the rest of the identity curriculum. The capstone project, where students would research and present on a social issue of interest to them, comprised the final unit of the identity curriculum for each grade level. This interviewee felt that students and teachers lacked opportunities throughout the school year to develop the

skills necessary to carry out an intensive project-based research opportunity. As a result, this interviewee felt that students had difficulty understanding the reasoning behind such a project or how it connected to what they were doing before in the identity curriculum.

This idea of a disconnect also arose when staff discussed their ABE PL, which they felt did not connect to the curricula they used to teach ABE or to practices they could use in the classroom. About half of school staff felt the PL was redundant and ultimately disconnected from their educator practice because it did not extend past staff's examination of their own identities and biases and towards a focus on application of skills they could use in the classroom or to have hard conversations with students, families, or other staff, which ultimately led to staff disengagement. One leader explained, "I kind of was always hoping at the next one that it would go to the next and the next where we were really talking about the problems that we were seeing with our teachers and our students and really helping teachers become better equipped to handle those things in the moment. But we never got to that." Another teacher, who did appreciate aspects of the PL, similarly expressed, "I did think it was helpful though to take an even deeper dive into like, 'OK, where do I come from? Like what biases am I bringing to the table?' ...So I do think they were helpful… but we didn't really get to 'OK, this is like how this is going to look in your classroom.'"

Meanwhile, staff also expressed that even though they were given a curriculum to use by the school and CMO, there was little oversight of how they used the curriculum. While the school had systems in place for monitoring key outcomes related to its ABE efforts, such as the extent to which students feel diversity is valued and whether students experience safety and belonging in the school, this monitoring process did not extend to the implementation process. One teacher summed up this sentiment, saying,

> "I think that it's just every classroom is a little bit on their own island and so how they are implementing the work can look different even though there is like a shared curriculum… there isn't necessarily an… alignment factor or like kind of a check in that that is done at the school for better or worse that kind of takes away from maybe that kind of whole collective pushing."

Finally, teachers also talked about how they experienced challenges in engaging students in topics as complex as identity, as students might struggle when lessons were too abstract, open-ended, or did not appear relevant to their lives. About half of the interviewed school staff mentioned that students struggled to engage deeply with the Advisory identity curriculum. Three school staff mentioned that they felt that the identity curriculum was not relevant or concrete enough to help students engage with the lessons. For instance, one teacher said, "The questions are a little lofty and then there are also questions that either go over students' heads and they don't really know how to articulate an answer or find a concrete example of what the question is asking… I know they want to keep it open-ended, but sometimes it goes over your head when something is too abstract." Another teacher felt it was hard to have students "generate" information on their own, without prompts to help guide their thinking. Two teachers mentioned

it would be helpful if the curriculum provided students with more concrete examples, scenarios, or prompting questions that students could react to, rather than high-level questions like, in the words of one teacher, "What does acceptance look like? What does tolerance look like?" Rendering abstract concepts more concrete could help make discussions more accessible to students. Similarly, a school leader also expressed a desire for more immersive, experiential learning to help students experience the abstract concept concepts taught through the identity curriculum. While not explicitly noted by interviewees, it's possible that the CMO's vision for more open-ended inquiry within the identity curriculum, in alignment with its constructivist philosophy, could have been too open-ended for instruction about ABE-related topics. Instead, more concrete scaffolding may have helped teachers better engage students in the lessons provided by the identity curriculum.

Reliance on individual capacities in the absence of efforts to bolster organizational capacity could result in variation in implementation and leave the school vulnerable to turnover

Although the school benefited from individuals' strong beliefs in the school's mission and values, reliance on the individual skills and knowledge of key staff members in the absence of organizational routines or infrastructure could hamper sustainability and consistency in implementation. The departure of the assistant principal in the middle of the school year was a key example of this theme. Interviewees expressed that it was helpful to have the assistant principal at the school because she owned the school's ABE work. But when the assistant principal left, some of the schools' systems and supports around its ABE work, like PL, also fell away. Leadership turnover also made it harder for the school to connect its existing initiatives, as I mentioned earlier, because this AP was not only responsible for ABE-related PL but also PL on restorative practices, which teachers identified as a challenge to their implementation of ABE. And once the AP left, no one stepped in to take her place. This one teacher said,

> "We lost our assistant principal this year… [She had] a very clear vision of how restorative justice tied into [anti-bias education], and like how our discipline tied into it … She left our organization, so I feel like that work has kind of not been discussed."

In contrast, because the school already had instructional time set aside for ABE and an identity curriculum that was embedded into the school schedule, that remained relatively intact even with the assistant principal gone. These provide examples of institutionalized practices that can be more resistant to staff turnover. As I will discuss further in Chapter Six, this experience of turnover underscores findings from extant research on building capacity to provide whole child education, which suggests that it is important to build organizational capacity alongside individual capacity to enable sustainable changes to practice, even in the face of leadership and staff turnover (Bush-Mecenas et al., 2023).

Reliance on individual skills and knowledge among teachers can similarly lead to inconsistency in implementation. Teachers varied in terms of how long they had been teaching, how long they had been at the school, and therefore the experience and depth of skills and knowledge that they brough to their teacher practice. For instance, as described earlier, some teachers clearly articulated a deep integration of ABE into their academic instruction, while others described a shallower integration.

This same theme also arose when interviewees talked about implementation of the identity curriculum in their Advisory classes. The implementation of the identity curriculum depended heavily on teachers' facilitation of the curriculum because of the open-ended, exploratory nature of discussions. As a result, the effectiveness of the identity curriculum depended on teachers' skill in facilitating the lessons, which could result in significant variation in the quality and depth of implementation across classes. One system-level who was deeply involved in the development of the curriculum explained,

> "This content is not meant to be taught. It's meant to be facilitated. And teachers are not always intuitively facilitators, and so that's a skill set and skill level that needs to be added to the repertoire for teachers who are doing [Advisory], which is comfortable for some, is naturally comfortable for some teachers and is naturally very uncomfortable for other teachers."

As a result, this system-level leader noted, "You can have the same lesson and have one teacher and one room do it entirely different than the teacher next to them, even with guidance. And the impact will be entirely different."

Teachers echoed this same sentiment, noting that even though they were given the same curriculum to use, implementation varied across classrooms. For instance, one teacher emphasized the importance of teachers' in-the-moment "improvisational skills" in facilitating the curriculum to make it more concrete and engaging for students. This teacher described using their own personal experiences to illustrate concepts taught in the identity curriculum; for instance, in explaining to students the concept of consent, they provided students with the concrete experience of having people touch their hair without consent. Another teacher similarly explained that they use the curriculum but often "pivot" and "adjust it to meet the needs of the students in my room." Perhaps because of teachers' varied approaches to implementation, one teacher noted, "I don't necessarily feel like that's the case in my classroom, but I've heard from other teachers, like 'We just don't go there. We don't go there in terms of reality and the truth that are being explored in these [Advisory] slides.'" Indeed, one teacher who struggled to engage students in the curriculum admitted, "Sometimes, I feel like that curriculum isn't as impactful as it should be a little bit because of my facilitation of it."

Teachers lacked access to PL, as noted earlier, that supported their use and understanding of the identity curriculum. There was also little oversight over teachers' use of the curriculum. Thus, although the literature does emphasize the importance of teacher autonomy in crafting and molding lessons to align to students' identities and interests, providing teachers autonomy while

relying heavily on teachers' own individual knowledge, skills, and experiences without accompanying organizational routines or infrastructure to build capacity throughout the organization could create inconsistency in the quality and depth of ABE implementation across classrooms.

East Charter Middle and its CMO was in the midst of advancing efforts to support greater coherence and organizational capacity

An examination of East Charter Middle's efforts to implement the tenets of ABE demonstrate that the school has many of the key elements in place to support implementation, including numerous systems and supports embedded throughout the school, leaders and teachers deeply committed to the school's vision for ABE, and a family and a school community largely supportive of the school's ABE efforts. However, staff identified disconnects between the school's various systems and supports enacting ABE, leading teachers to, in some cases, to figure out the details of implementation for key initiatives in the school— such as the school's identity curriculum or restorative justice—on their own. The absence of organizational supports to build staff's own individual capacities to implement ABE-related practices in some cases resulted in uneven implementation across the school. In short, East Charter Middle has engaged in considerable work to implement the tenets of ABE, and its next phase of implementation and deeper institutionalization of ABE will likely require the strengthening of cohesion between existing systems and supports as well as organizational capacities.

At the time of data collection, East Charter Middle and its CMO were already in the process of advancing to this next phase of implementation. For the first time, the CMO brought in a leader whose main responsibility was to oversee the CMO's ABE efforts. Prior to the creation of this CMO-level role, some CMO-level systems for supporting ABE within schools were more ad hoc or reactive. For instance, CMO-level PL tended to arise in reaction to challenges that schools or staff were facing, and the CMO had some touchpoints with families around its ABE efforts, but otherwise, schools had significant autonomy to determine their own strategies for PL and family engagement. With the establishment of this CMO-level leader, the CMO was in the process of more systematically supporting schools to provide ABE. As one school leader said, "The idea being that if you really want the work to happen in your network of schools, there needs to be somebody that that owns that strand of work from start to finish."

As an example of how the CMO was planning to support schools in the more coherent implementation of ABE, the CMO was planning to roll out a new, commercially-produced ABE curriculum throughout the network. The roll-out of this curriculum would be accompanied by PL. During an initial pilot phase, pilot teachers would have opportunities to provide feedback and recommendations for wider implementation. One CMO leader explained that the curriculum could easily be integrated into academic and SEL instruction, such that the focus on ABE would not be siloed but rather integrated into instruction. In addition, the CMO leader felt that the new

curriculum would align well with the school's constructivist philosophy, because it would allow teachers the flexibility and autonomy to incorporate these lessons as they see fit. At the same time, the curriculum would provide teachers with more structure to teach complex ideas in more concrete ways. Although the actual implementation of the new curriculum had not yet taken place at the time of data collection, plans around implementation signal efforts towards greater alignment between ABE curriculum and PL, a deeper and more systematic integration of ABE into academic instruction, and a consideration of how constructivism should be balanced against the challenges of teaching complex topics like identity and diversity. However, one new challenge for the network will be to consider how this new curriculum works together with the existing identity curriculum.

Future plans for staff PL also demonstrated efforts to strengthen the coherence between different systems and supports for ABE as well as to more systematically build capacity throughout the organization. For instance, the school had plans to provide staff with more PL on facilitating conversations about ABE with families—a need identified through staff surveys. In this instance, the school leveraged its systems for tracking outcomes related to its ABE efforts to enhance staffs' capacity. To strengthen the consistency in the implementation of the Advisory and the identity curriculum, the CMO also began to provide teachers with PL to help them understand the purpose of Advisory and the identity curriculum, the role Advisory and the identity curriculum play in the network's ABE efforts, and what implementation of Advisory and identity curriculum should look like.

Finally, leaders at both the CMO and school levels expressed the importance of expanding the capacity of stakeholders across school community to engage in ABE, such that implementation is not the responsibility of a sole individual, but rather a collective responsibility held by many. This reflection was especially notable given East Charter Middle's experience of losing a key implementation leader, which then led to the falling away of implementation supports like PL.

Already, the CMO leader had plans for how to more systematically build capacity throughout the organization. For instance, the CMO intended to place a greater focus on parent education during the next school year. One facet of this plan was to invite several parents from each school to undergo training on how to be an "equity facilitator" so that they can facilitate "equity dialogues" with other parents in their schools. The school also intended to leverage a "train the trainer" model to develop the capacity of some staff members to use the new ABE curriculum and thus build "coalitions" of stakeholders who have the skills to support a broader roll out of the curriculum. The CMO leader recognized that they alone did not have the capacity to provide PL for the entire network and thus intended to enlist support from external PL vendors. In this way, the CMO was working towards imbuing capacity throughout the organization, which could also render the organization more resilient to shocks like staff or leader turnover.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I draw on one school's experience of implementing the tenets of ABE to provide a concrete example of how a school might go about the implementation process, as rooted in its institutional and local context. I first explained the core mission and values underlying the school's model for student education. Then, I described the numerous systems that the school put in place to support the schoolwide provision of ABE, including dedicated time towards ABE instruction, PL to support staff's critical reflection, the enrollment of a diverse student body, and infusion of ABE throughout the way the school functioned, among others. According to staff, families, and students, this model allowed students to develop the capacity to work across lines of difference and to feel empowered to understand their own identities and to be their authentic selves. Following the description of East Charter Middle's model, I identified some factors that facilitated or hindered the schoolwide implementation of ABE. Despite the challenges that East Charter Middle faced, interviews with school and system leader suggested that East Charter Middle was working towards addressing many of those challenges in its next phase of implementation through, for example, the installation of a new leader who would oversee the CMO's ABE efforts, an ABE curriculum that could be integrated into academic learning, and PL tied to the ABE curriculum. Altogether, these findings provide an understanding of one potential implementation model for ABE as well as the strategies that other schools might seek to adopt in their implementation of ABE and the challenges they might expect to encounter.

These findings confirm the importance of people, policy, and place, as detailed in my conceptual framework as well as the complex nature of high-quality ABE implementation. It is clear that one of East Charter Middle's greatest assets in its implementation journey lied in the types of people leading and teaching in its hallways and classrooms. Leaders at each level of the organization—the national, regional, and school levels—were steadfast in their commitment to school's vision for ABE. Their support of the school's ABE efforts trickled down to teachers, who expressed confidence that their leaders would support their ABE efforts. All interviewed teachers expressed alignment with the school's vision for ABE, and expanded on their own conceptualization of how ABE manifested in their classrooms—through exposing students to diverse and marginalized perspectives, protecting minoritized students from stereotype bias, or providing students the opportunity to grapple with real-world issues of justice or equity. Families also largely expressed alignment and belief in the school's vision for ABE, which is important given the role that families can play in pressuring schools and families to shy away from ABE-related topics. Of course, the presence of these types of individuals was not by chance; instead, the school crafted policies for staff hiring and practices for student recruitment that fostered this supportive environment. Where East Charter Middle was located likely also facilitated the high level of buy-in for its ABE efforts. East Charter Middle was situated in a very-liberal community, meaning it likely had a larger pool of both candidates and families aligned to its

vision upon which it could draw. This aligns with my survey findings, which found that efforts to provide ABE were most insulated from political pressures in very-liberal communities in states without restrictions—similar to the community in which East Charter Middle was situated. However, buy-in to the school's vision is likely not sufficient to provide high-quality ABE consistently; while staff may have the heart and will to engage in ABE, varying levels of skills, experience, and comfort with providing ABE could hamper consistency in the depth of implementation. In addition, some teachers—such as math teachers—may experience different types of barriers to certain aspects of ABE implementation, such as the integration of ABE into academic learning.

The experience of East Charter Middle also highlights the many school-level policies and systems that schools likely must consider and put into place to provide schoolwide ABE. As with the schoolwide implementation of SEL, the schoolwide provision of ABE could be seen through not only explicit ABE instruction but also the cultivation of a supportive, inclusive learning environment and the integration of ABE throughout the operations, academics, and culture of the school. While East Charter Middle had many systems in place to support and provide ABE, my findings suggest that, as schools evolve and mature in the implementation process, they should also begin to consider how these systems work in concert with each other.

In the next and final chapter, I present implications for policy and practice drawing on both my survey and case study findings.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Implications

In this dissertation, I explore teachers' provision of ABE in a unique moment in U.S. history. In the midst of calls for greater attention to equity and diversity in students' learning experiences, there has also been pushback against the notion that schools and teachers have a role to play in educating students about equity and diversity. It is within this contentious sociopolitical context that I sought to understand the prevalence of ABE across the nation, what teachers view as the impacts of ABE, how teachers approach ABE, and the actions schools can take to systematically provide ABE. In what follows, I provide a high-level summary of findings from my two sets of analyses. I then discuss the implications of these findings for policy and practice. I conclude with future directions for research on ABE.

Summary of Findings

At the start of this dissertation, I described a conceptual framework that outlined factors I hypothesized would be critical for the implementation of ABE, based on existing literature on the implementation of other related practices, such as SEL and culturally responsive teaching. Specifically, I named the characteristics of policies, places, and people that might influence ABE implementation. I hypothesized that recent state policies restricting how teachers can discuss issues relating to race, gender, or sexual orientation might constrain teachers' provision of ABE, while state policies that support or even require instruction about diverse identities or equity might create an environment that is welcoming to teachers' provision of ABE. Indeed, I found that the prevalence of ABE across the nation prior to the enactment of any state restrictions was relatively high, as about three-quarters teachers reported providing ABE in spring 2021. However, by the time I collected data in spring 2022, 17 states had enacted restrictions on teachers' instruction, and numerous other states had considered the passage of similar policies (PEN America, 2024; Schwartz, 2021a). In the wake of state restrictions, teachers' reported provision of ABE fell, particularly in states with restrictions. However, teachers' provision of ABE remained relatively high in states with policies that support teachers' instruction related to diversity and equity, on par with levels prior to the passage of any state restrictions. These findings suggest that state policies can play a meaningful role in signaling to teachers whether they should provide ABE and can even insulate teachers from pressure to shy away from conversations about anti-bias topics. The importance of state policies remains relevant because the political pressures teachers experience around how and whether to teach about race, gender, diversity, and equity are not likely to abate in the near future, as states have continued to attempt to pass new restrictions through the 2023 and 2024 legislative sessions (PEN America, 2024).

In my conceptual framework, I also hypothesized that local policies at the school and school system level could also enable teachers' provision of ABE. I posited the importance of local policies such as those around the adoption of high-quality curricula to teach ABE, opportunities for PL, systems for using data to support continuous improvement, and integration of ABE into academic learning, school climate, and school operations. When studying the implementation of ABE at one school, I found that these school- and CMO-level policies for supporting ABE were indeed in place. However, my survey findings suggest that many teachers across the nation are not provided instructional materials from their school or district they can use to teach ABE, do not have PL that prepares them to teach ABE, and lack access to data that helps them adjust and continuously improve their provision of ABE to students. Instead, many teachers are working independently to find or create materials to provide ABE, without support from others in their schools or districts.

As suggested in my conceptual framework and confirmed by my research findings, whether and how teachers provide ABE is influenced not only by the policies in place but also by teachers' political and school context—in other words, the characteristics of the implementation site. Teachers in more-liberal counties and urban schools were more likely than their counterparts in more-conservative and rural schools to report the provision of ABE. While teachers in more-liberal counties in states without restrictions appeared relatively insulated from the influence of state restrictions on their provision of ABE, their counterparts in very conservative counties were much less likely to report the provision of ABE after the passage of state restrictions, even though they were not formally subject to any state restrictions. These findings underscore the importance of *where* ABE implementation takes place and suggest that strategies for implementation might need to look different for schools in different communities. For instance, East Charter Middle was situated in a racially and ethnically diverse and very-liberal county, which were factors that potentially allowed the school to enjoy relatively high buy-in to its ABE efforts from families in the school community. Possibly because East Charter Middle was situated in a broader community that was likely more welcoming of its ABE efforts, leaders at East Charter Middle were able to stand firm and unwavering in their vision for ABE, even in the face of conflicts with parents. However, schools in other types of communities might experience different pressures on their provision of ABE and thus may need to employ different strategies for community and family outreach, engagement, and communication.

Finally, I posited that the characteristics of people themselves—including the beliefs, knowledge, and skills that they bring to their work—are factors that could influence ABE implementation. At the national level, I observed variation in teachers' reports of ABE by teachers' demographic characteristics, such as their race or ethnicity, gender, years of teaching experience, grade level, and subject; teachers from minoritized backgrounds themselves, teachers who were earlier in their careers, elementary teachers, and teachers likely to encounter ABE topics in their academic instruction were more likely to provide ABE, at least prior to the passage of state restrictions. Following the passage of state restrictions, some patterns by

teachers' demographic characteristics shifted because state restrictions also differentially influenced the instructional choices of different types of teachers. My survey findings also shed light on teachers' beliefs about ABE and suggest that teachers' beliefs are not a significant barrier to implementation. Large majorities of teachers reported that they believe ABE can lead to positive student- and school-level outcomes. This was true even when teachers reported that their schools did not engage in ABE. Instead, my results suggest that teachers may require additional supports to help them provide ABE, particularly as they navigate a contentious sociopolitical environment. Indeed, the experiences of East Charter Middle suggest that a strong commitment to ABE is perhaps a necessary condition for high-quality implementation, but it is not sufficient to guarantee high-quality implementation across all classrooms when teachers have varying degrees of experience and skills with teaching ABE.

Implications for Policy and Practice

I identified four implications for policy and practice that result from my survey and case study findings.

Develop a clear, shared definition of anti-bias education

My survey findings suggest that teachers may benefit from more guidance about what ABE is and is not. Developing a shared and consistent understanding of what ABE entails is critical for helping teachers understand how ABE may be connected to but distinct from other related approaches (e.g., SEL, culturally responsive teaching, restorative practices) so that they can better identify practices or instructional resources that are tailored towards developing students' ABE competencies. In spring 2021, nearly three-quarters of surveyed teachers reported that they provided anti-bias instruction in some form. However, teachers' open-ended responses revealed that they engaged in a variety of activities and practices while providing ABE, suggesting that some teachers were, at times, conflating approaches that are related—but not equivalent—to ABE. Only a small proportion of teachers reported using instructional materials that explicitly focused on anti-bias concepts. Instead, teachers more commonly reported using SEL curricula for anti-bias education. Some teachers also noted the use of other equity-oriented approaches, such as restorative practices or positive behavioral interventions and supports. Others reported obtaining their anti-bias materials from a variety of sources, including most commonly Teachers Pay Teachers, current events websites, or YouTube. Among teachers providing ABE, over half were finding their own materials online or from other sources, about a third were creating their own materials, and over half were engaging in ABE without the use of instructional materials.[15] That teachers are turning to repositories of instructional resources as well as finding and creating

[15] Totals add up to more than 100 percent as respondents were able to select all sources of instructional materials used.

their own resources may be especially concerning in light of my finding that teachers are often conflating ABE with other equity-oriented or whole-child approaches.

Altogether, these data suggest that the wide-ranging nature of the materials, activities, and approaches teachers are leveraging for ABE might make it difficult for education leaders to assess their quality and content. Thus, a more standardized definition for anti-bias education and a framework for implementation would allow policymakers, education leaders, and educators to share a common language, which can facilitate discussions of how to ensure high-quality implementation by clarifying goals and objectives. State and district leaders could collaborate with local school leaders and teachers to adopt or adapt the definition and framework to meet the needs and goals of their communities. A shared definition and vision can then form the basis for other activities and supports, including curriculum selection and development, PL, and progress monitoring. The organization Learning for Justice has developed Social Justice Standards that outline grade band–specific student competencies keyed to the four domains of identity, diversity, justice, and action (Learning for Justice, 2022). These standards might provide a starting point for state or local policymakers who are developing a vision for what ABE could look like in their school communities. As in SEL implementation, such a vision can be used to communicate the student skills and outcomes that stakeholders prioritize and the policies, practices, and strategies that can be leveraged to reach those outcomes (Jones et al., 2019).

Of course, states, school systems, and schools may have different needs and visions for student education rooted in their local contexts. This can make it more difficult for all schools providing ABE to share the exact same conceptualization for ABE. Thus, stakeholders may benefit from a better understanding of the different menu of options available when selecting an ABE framework to use. Indeed, part of the ambiguity around the goals of ABE and how ABE is operationalized in practice may also stem from the burgeoning array of education frameworks that are focused on helping students understand issues of equity, diversity, and social justice as well as ensuring that students from diverse identities feel a sense of belonging at school. For instance, as noted earlier at the start of this dissertation, scholars and practitioners have become increasingly concerned with how SEL can promote equity, resulting in a tSEL framework that shares many goals with ABE (Jagers et al., 2019). One 2023 study of districts' mission statements found that about a third of districts reference diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in their statements (Odabaş and Aragão, 2023). However, as the concept of DEI has become increasingly politicized and perceived as partisan, districts and states have been reorienting their message towards fostering "inclusion and belonging" for students (Najarro and Peetz, 2024). As equity-oriented frameworks continue to emerge and the terminology used to describe these frameworks continues to shift, policymakers and practitioners may benefit from tools to help them understand the nuances and commonalities between different frameworks. The field of SEL provides an example of how to create more clarity and transparency between different frameworks. The Ecological Approaches to Social and Emotional Learning (EASEL) Lab used a coding scheme to determine which terms and constructs appeared within and across existing SEL

frameworks. The EASEL research team then used this coding scheme to produce visual tools that allow policymakers and practitioners to explore the domains and skills covered by each SEL framework, determine how frameworks overlap or are distinct from each other, and to search for SEL skills across different frameworks (EASEL Lab, nd). By providing more clarity around the contents of SEL frameworks, these tools can help practitioners become more precise about the skills they endeavor to develop in students and the strategies they can use to reach their goals. By exploring the differences and commonalities between different frameworks, such tools can also help stakeholders across the field, including researchers, policymakers, and practitioners, collaborate and communicate with those who are engaging in similar initiatives (Jones et al., 2019). ABE may similarly benefit from such research as the field continues to grapple with how to best build safe, supportive, and equitable learning environments.

Greater clarity around what ABE is (and is not) is particularly important in the current sociopolitical climate in which discussions about diversity and equity are politicized and contentious. Such clarity might help teachers who are in states with restrictions. Given the confusion that teachers experience in the face of state and local restrictions and community pressure to avoid topics related to diversity and equity (Woo et al., 2023; Woo, Diliberti, and Steiner, 2024), it is important that education leaders, including state, district, and school leaders, clarify how ABE is distinct from the content that is prohibited by these restrictions. Greater clarity around what teachers are allowed to say and teach can give teachers more confidence to discuss these issues in the classroom rather than straying away from them for fear of losing their jobs or facing repercussions from the community or their administrators (Woo et al, 2023). Indeed, large majorities of teachers reported that they provide ABE, that they consider culturally relevant content and approaches within their instructional materials to be important, and that they prefer more support from their leadership. Therefore, state and local policymakers and school leaders should consider how they can provide teachers with tools—such as PL and curriculum materials—that meet teachers' needs and desires to address anti-bias topics without violating the policies in their states. This may entail closely reviewing state policies to dispel misconceptions about the types of instruction that are prohibited. For instance, some policies specify that they do *not* prohibit the discussion of the "issues of the day" or ideas that some may find contentious, or that they are intended to support the "right of others to express differing opinions" and "freedom of inquiry and instruction" (see Sanders, 2023; Idaho Legislature, 2021). Education leaders should ensure that teachers are familiar with the policies in their states so that teachers are equipped to engage in ABE in a way that does not violate state policies.

Prior research suggests that teachers in states with restriction have relatively low awareness of the restrictions in their states (Woo, Diliberti, et al., 2024). Teachers' low awareness of state policies is not uncommon. For instance, following the adoption of the Common Core, teachers had imperfect knowledge about what the standards entailed, although teachers who had more knowledge were more likely to engage in standards-aligned approaches (Kaufman et al., 2018a; Kaufman et al., 2018b). This research reinforces the notion that teachers' knowledge about the

policies to which they are subject does influence what they practice in the classroom. In the case of ABE and state restrictions on teachers' instruction about race, gender, or sexual orientation, providing teachers with greater clarity on the distinction between ABE and content prohibited by state policies can help teachers understand the both the boundaries of state restrictions and opportunities for ABE within state restrictions. Greater clarity can also help teachers explain and justify their instruction if they work in a state or local community less welcoming of ABE or in the face of conflict with parents or community members.

Identify, encourage, and support the use of high-quality, evidence-based instructional materials for anti-bias education

Drawing on a shared definition and vision for anti-bias education, policymakers, education leaders, and other stakeholders, such as curriculum developers and researchers, might consider how they can develop, offer, and promulgate a set of high-quality, evidence-based instructional materials that schools and teachers can adopt across different grades and subjects.

First, researchers should aim to collaborate with curriculum developers, policymakers, and teachers to strengthen the evidence base behind materials designed to address anti-bias topics. For example, the curriculum Facing History and Ourselves, which is designed to use "lessons of history to challenge teachers and their students to stand up to bigotry and hate" (Facing History and Ourselves, undated), is among one of the materials deemed by CASEL to be an evidence-based program (CASEL, undated-c). One study using a randomized controlled trial found that students who engaged with the program reported stronger civic self-efficacy and more tolerance for differing viewpoints; the students also felt more positively about their classroom climate compared with students who did not engage in the program (Barr et al., 2015). To the extent that some anti-bias instructional materials do not yet have an evidence base to support their use, policymakers and curriculum developers could collaborate with researchers to start developing that evidence base.

Second, my findings suggest that anti-bias instructional materials that are specifically designed to teach about systemic inequities, such as Facing History and Ourselves and Learning for Justice, are not widely used, indicating that many teachers are leaving resources and instructional materials that support anti-bias education untapped. Teachers might not be aware of the existence of such materials, or they might not have adequate support in understanding how to use them. Education leaders, including state, district, and school leaders, can play a significant role in helping teachers gain access to these materials. Education policymakers might consider (1) reviewing existing anti-bias materials, (2) curating and promoting a set of instructional materials that align with their vision for anti-bias education, and (3) providing PL to support teachers' access to and use of those materials. To the extent that some materials have an evidence base to support their use, policymakers might consider ensuring that local school leaders and educators are aware of the research and evidence behind those materials to better support buy-in and uptake. As an example, researchers have identified and compiled SEL

interventions that meet evidence requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (Grant et al., 2017). In selecting ABE programs and instructional materials, as with SEL interventions, policymakers and leaders should prioritize the selection of those which have evidence of their effectiveness and consider contextual factors such as practical constraints to implementation (e.g., availability of time during the school day to provide ABE instruction) and local capacity, including the resources and human capital available to support implementation (Wrabel et al., 2018). Providing teachers with a pool of evidence-based resources to draw upon can also help schools and teachers message the benefits of ABE and respond to family or community concerns about ABE.

However, ensuring that instructional materials lead to desired outcomes may not be sufficient for teachers' buy-in for and effective use of materials. My case study findings shed light on the qualities of instructional materials or programming that teachers find useful for teaching ABE. For instance, case study findings suggest that ABE does not exist in a vacuum; rather, the presence of a safe classroom climate sets the foundation for effective ABE. Thus, curriculum developers seeking to develop ABE materials might consider how they can embed opportunities for community- and relationship-building. Teachers who participated in the case study also highlighted the importance of ensuring that instructional materials provide activities that are scaffolded enough to help students understand complex, abstract topics like identity, diversity, and justice. This might involve providing students with concrete, tangible examples, experiential learning opportunities, or prompts to help guide their thinking. Related approaches like culturally responsive teaching similarly emphasize the importance of trust and relationship building to support student learning (Hammond, 2015). Research on instructional materials for academic learning also highlights the importance of scaffolding instruction from more-concrete topics to more-abstract topics to allow students to understand increasingly complex ideas (Larkin, 2002; Wang et al., 2021). Given the abstract nature of ABE concepts as well as the potential for disagreement or emotionally-charged discussions within the classroom when teaching ABE, it may be especially important that curriculum developers attend to community-building and scaffolding when designing ABE programs.

Case study findings also demonstrate that teachers would benefit from PL connected to their specific ABE instructional materials. While teachers received some PL on ABE topics, they felt that this PL remained focused on the exploration of their own identities and did not advance to their classroom practice or use of their identity curriculum. While PL that asks teachers to engage in critical self-reflection may be useful for teachers who are new to ABE, PL that focuses primarily or exclusively on teachers' self-reflection about ABE topics may not translate to supporting their curriculum use or facilitation of classroom discussions. Instead, as with academic subjects like ELA or math (Chu et al., 2022), curriculum-specific PL may be necessary to build teachers' capacity to use ABE curricula, particularly because using ABE curricula is a skill that is unlikely to be covered by teachers' preparation programs. Indeed, only about four in ten teachers who have completed their preparation programs in the last ten years reported that

their program covers how to use curricula provided to them, even for academic subjects like ELA, math, and science (Doan et al., 2023b). Given the relatively low usage of commercially-produced ABE curricula, it is unlikely that teachers may have developed the skills to facilitate ABE curricula in their teacher preparation programs.

Research on curriculum implementation has found that teachers transform tasks within the curriculum during the implementation process (Coburn, 2001). I also observed evidence of this in how teachers implemented the identity curriculum at East Charter Middle, as teachers adjusted their use of the curriculum in ways that they felt would support their students' engagement and understanding. Indeed, teacher autonomy is a critical part of the process of providing ABE. In general, a lack of autonomy in the classroom is one reason that teachers report leaving the classroom (Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond, 2017). Moreover, teacher autonomy allows teachers to supplement their curriculum materials to integrate their students' identities and experiences, address students' emotional needs, and draw on current social issues that may be impacting students or their communities (Rivas-Drake et al., 2021). However, the potential for teacher autonomy in the process of providing ABE also highlights the importance of ensuring that teachers understand the underlying pedagogical principles of the instructional materials that they use to provide ABE. This further underscores the need to provide teachers with learning and development opportunities that will build teachers' capacity to use high-quality ABE instructional materials.

One avenue might be through their in-service PL, as I will discuss next, which can be useful for providing teachers with learning opportunities that are highly tailored to their specific school's context and instructional materials and which leverage the skills and knowledge of surrounding staff members. Another avenue might be through teachers' preparation programs. Preparation programs can provide a place for pre-service teachers to gain exposure to the types of instructional materials they can use to meet both academic and social justice aims, practice engaging in instruction about contentious topics, and reflect on how to respond in inevitable moments of discomfort and uncertainty in the classroom (Struthers Ahmed and Ali, 2020). As suggested by my survey findings, integrating ABE concepts into teachers' preparation program experiences can help teachers feel more prepared to provide ABE, which, importantly, is associated with teachers' reported provision of ABE.

Develop institutionalized routines to build capacity to provide ABE throughout the school community

The experience of East Charter Middle highlights the importance of ensuring that schools and school systems have institutionalized routines to evenly build capacity across the school community. Indeed, one of East Charter Middle's strengths was that stakeholders across the school community were deeply committed to the school's vision for ABE, which was in part a result of its processes for staff hiring, student enrollment, and family engagement. However, staff also came into the school with varying levels of knowledge, skills, and experience, resulting in

variation in the depth of ABE integration into academic learning and the quality of facilitation of the school's identity curriculum. Some teachers reported significant autonomy to choose texts and create units to weave ABE concepts in their academic instruction. Other teachers struggled to stray from their provided academic curriculum and balance competing pressures like state testing. And finally, some teachers were comfortable adjusting or improvising on the identity curriculum in-the-moment to engage students, while others struggled more with facilitating the identity curriculum.

East Charter Middle relied heavily on one school leader to lead its ABE initiatives, but the departure of this school leader meant that the school no longer provided staff with ABE PL. Thus, rather than relying on the skills and knowledge of pockets of individuals within the organization, schools and school systems should endeavor to develop structured routines for building the capacity of stakeholders across the school community. Such a practice can soften the blow of leader or teacher turnover, such that implementation can continue on even in the absence of any single individual. Building capacity through organizational routines can also support consistency in the quality and depth of implementation.

As noted in Chapter Five, East Charter Middle is working towards building the capacity of stakeholders across its school community through new organizational routines. For instance, the school system intends to hold family workshops to train parents to facilitate critical dialogues with other parents. As another example, the school intends to leverage partnerships with external organizations to provide school leaders and teachers with PL, which allows the school system to draw on external capacity and expertise to build internal capacity throughout the organization. Other opportunities for building institutionalized routines might include setting time aside for peer collaboration so that teachers can share, develop, and apply knowledge and skills. Peer collaboration could be an especially useful tool because, among all different types of PL, including collaborative learning, workshops or trainings, or coaching, teachers view collaborative learning as most useful for improving teaching and learning (Zuo, Doan, and Kaufman, 2023). This strategy might also be particularly useful for schools like East Charter Middle, where there is a wealth of existing knowledge and skills, especially among the more-experienced teachers and staff. Peer interactions are also critical for influencing and changing teachers' instructional beliefs (Spillane et al., 2018), meaning peer collaboration could be a useful tool for schools struggling to generate buy-in for ABE among its staff. Another example of building institutionalized routines for supporting ABE implementation might include systematically embedding opportunities for coaching or observations of teachers' use of ABE curricula and integration of ABE into academic learning rather than allowing these opportunities to be more ad hoc or reactive.

When developing institutionalized routines within the school to support ABE, leaders might consider drawing on the voices, experiences, and expertise of Black teachers and teachers of color. Survey findings suggest that Black teachers and teachers of color were more likely to feel somewhat or very well prepared to provide anti-bias instruction when compared with their

counterparts. There are numerous ways that these teachers can contribute their knowledge. They might take on, and be appropriately compensated for, leadership roles in curriculum development, review, adoption, and implementation processes. They also might lead PL or provide mentorship to teachers who feel less prepared to provide anti-bias instruction, especially in subject areas where teachers might struggle to obtain content-specific anti-bias instructional materials.

Some types of teachers as well as some types of schools might especially benefit from such routines to build their individual capacities, including their knowledge, skills, and beliefs. Although the provision of ABE was highly prevalent at the national level, some types of teachers were less likely to report that they were providing ABE. Teachers with more years of experience, math and science teachers, male teachers, rural teachers, secondary teachers, and teachers in more-conservative communities were more likely than their counterparts to report that they do not provide anti-bias instruction. These teachers might not be engaging in ABE for a variety of reasons—they might lack support from leadership; believe that anti-bias education is not appropriate in schools or for their subject matter; have difficulty prioritizing it among their other responsibilities; or lack resources and materials that are appropriate for their subject, which might be especially pertinent for math and science teachers. The reasons that teachers are not engaging in anti-bias education likely vary according to individual and local context, so education leaders should seek to better understand the barriers that teachers are facing. One first step might be to collect data from teachers about their beliefs, the resources they have available, and the needs and challenges that they face. These data can support local leaders in better building institutionalized routines to support teachers' provision of ABE by, for instance, tailoring PL or curating and offering appropriate instructional materials.

The need to build in-service routines for developing teachers' capacity to provide ABE might be especially pertinent to ABE as compared with academic subjects because my survey findings suggest that the preparation experiences of about 40 to 50 percent of new teachers—that is, teachers with 5 or fewer years of experience—do not prepare them well to support students' ABE competencies. Given that more-experienced teachers were less likely than novice teachers to provide ABE in spring 2021, it is possible that even fewer experienced teachers had preparation experiences that touched on ABE topics.

Engender deeper integration of ABE into academic instruction and coherence between ABE and other school initiatives

My findings suggest opportunities to more deeply embed ABE into existing school-level efforts by intentionally integrating ABE into academic instruction and generating more coherence between ABE and other school initiatives. Indeed, research on the implementation of improvement programs stresses the importance of coherence between those programs. Without strong program coherence, initiatives may not receive the sustained attention they need to effect actual change for students (Newmann et al., 2001). Whole-child initiatives are particularly

vulnerable to program incoherence because the boundaries between different whole-child efforts may sometimes seem ambiguous or such efforts may be housed in siloed parts of an organization or supported by different streams of funding (Walrond and Romer, 2021).

Integrating anti-bias elements into academic curricula could reduce the burden on teachers by allowing them to meet academic and anti-bias objectives simultaneously, especially because elements of ABE are linked to positive academic outcomes. Indeed, my survey findings suggest that many more teachers provide ABE through their school- or district-provided materials for their subject area than through instructional materials designed to address ABE concepts. My analysis of teachers' open-ended survey responses also indicate that many teachers are thinking of ABE as intertwined with their academic instruction and curricula. These findings suggest that supporting the integration of ABE into academic instruction is a fruitful avenue for bolstering ABE implementation.

Case study findings provide illustrative examples of what integration of ABE into academic instruction could look like. At East Charter Middle, school leaders and teachers described numerous ways that they conceptualized ABE as manifesting in their academic instruction. For instance, ELA and social studies teachers emphasized the importance of exposing students to diverse perspectives, minoritized voices, and figures that represent students' identities. Teachers in the school were intentional about the texts and topics to which they exposed students and used classroom discussions, assignments, and projects to build students' capacity to engage in perspective-taking and ability to read, write, and speak about social issues. In this way, anti-bias instruction and academic instruction were intertwined such that these teachers did not experience a conflict between ABE and academic learning but rather were able to meet both goals simultaneously. Already, researchers have highlighted the interconnected nature of academic instruction and social and emotional development by, for instance, noting the SEL skills that can support mastery of ELA, math, and science college and career readiness standards (Johnson and Wiener, 2017). Policymakers and practitioners seeking to advance ABE implementation may similarly make concrete the connection between ABE and academic learning and how one can enhance the other.

Not all teachers who participated in the case study, however, integrated ABE into their academic instruction to the same extent. For instance, teachers of other subjects, including math and special education, desired a deeper integration of ABE into their academic instruction but encountered barriers like a lack of integration of ABE into their school-provided academic curriculum, an inability to deviate from their scripted curriculum, or a lack of time and capacity to weave ABE topics into academic instruction. Survey findings suggest that these experiences at East Charter Middle may reflect broader trends. At the national level, ELA teachers were more likely than teachers of other subjects to report that they used their school- or district-provided materials for their subject area to teach ABE. As a result, curriculum developers might consider how they can integrate anti-bias elements into academic curricula so that teachers—especially math or science teachers—are equipped with resources they can leverage to promote both anti-

bias competencies and academic standards. Because survey findings indicate that teachers felt that their materials more adequately addressed identity and diversity than justice and action, curriculum developers also might consider how they can more deeply integrate the concepts of justice and action within their content in addition to the representation of diverse identities. For instance, in math instruction, curricula might provide opportunities for students to apply mathematical skills to issues that are relevant to their personal lives or communities (Aronson and Laughter, 2016; Morrison et al., 2008). Students at one predominantly African American school used their mathematics skills to investigate the presence of liquor stores close to their school. They examined the laws and regulations that incentivized liquor stores to locate next to their school, used maps and real-life measurements to determine the distance between liquor stores and their school, and communicated their data and findings to the local city council alongside recommendations to offer economic incentives for stores to move (Tate 1995). Curriculum developers might consider how they can infuse instructional activities with such ABE elements so that teachers do not have carry the responsibility of doing so themselves.

States might also leverage their curriculum review processes to support districts and schools in identifying and selecting curriculum materials that address anti-bias topics. For example, the curriculum review process used by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has several indicators on one of its curriculum review rubrics relating to the extent to which materials represent and elevate diverse identities and perspectives and support students in thinking about "identity, equity, power, and oppression" (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, undated). Other curriculum review processes might similarly consider integrating these concepts into their review rubrics to generate greater transparency about whether materials are addressing these topics. Greater transparency and a more rigorous review of anti-bias concepts in instructional materials might support curriculum developers in understanding how they can more adequately address these topics in their materials.

Both survey and case study findings also suggest opportunities to support deeper coherence between ABE and other school initiatives, particularly those related to equity and whole-child development. As noted earlier, survey respondents' conflation of ABE with other approaches underlies the need for a clear and shared understanding of what ABE is. Additionally, this conflation points to a need for schools and school systems to help teachers build an understanding of ABE's place in the education system's overall approach for supporting student learning and development and how ABE overlaps, aligns, or enhances other efforts. To the extent that education leaders are already developing frameworks or beginning initiatives to support the implementation of related approaches, such as culturally responsive education, SEL, or restorative justice, they also might consider how ABE can be integrated into existing frameworks and initiatives such that the overall approach to and messaging around supporting students is coherent.

Lessons drawn from East Charter Middle highlight the importance of coherence between ABE and existing school initiatives. In addition to its ABE efforts, East Charter Middle had numerous initiatives in place to engender a more equitable and student-centered approach for student education, including restorative practices, mindfulness, SEL, and constructivism. Even though these different approaches and initiatives conceptually made sense together—because they aligned to the school's focus on equity and whole child development—in practice, staff sometimes experienced friction between these initiatives and ABE when they were unclear of how the initiatives worked together to support ABE implementation. For instance, even though school staff articulated how and why they expected restorative practices to fit into their anti-bias work, teachers felt restorative practices and ABE were at odds because they struggled with implementing restorative practices effectively and did not yet have the ability to use restorative practices to hold students accountable to the school's vision for ABE. In the case of East Charter Middle, enhancing the implementation of restorative practices could potentially have the additional benefit of enhancing ABE implementation. As another example, some teachers at East Charter Middle expressed that the open-endedness of the identity curriculum, in alignment with the school's constructivist philosophy, was sometimes difficult to balance with the need to scaffold abstract concepts for students. As a result, leaders at schools like East Charter Middle might attend to how they balance constructivism with the scaffolding necessary for ABE instruction so that constructivism can enhance rather hamper ABE implementation, and vice versa.

As schools are often juggling numerous initiatives simultaneously, this implication applies to other schools implementing ABE, even if their other priorities or initiatives may be different than restorative practices or constructivism. Teachers may experience fragmentation between the different messages they receive about what instruction should look like, which can feel frustrating or stressful (Pauketat et al., 2023). Teachers are charged with numerous duties—such as supporting student academic learning, managing student behavior, engaging with families—which may make it hard for them to prioritize ABE in the midst of other competing priorities. Encouraging deeper integration, coherence, and synergy between ABE and academic learning as well as other school initiatives may help teachers feel that they are working towards enacting a single, cohesive approach to supporting student learning and development rather than many different, unrelated approaches. Scholars have stressed the importance of coherence in the implementation of academic standards (Newmann, et al., 2001; Smith and O'Day, 1990). These findings highlight that coherence is also important for these types of whole-child initiatives. It is possible that coherence might be especially important for whole-child initiatives because, when faced with many different priorities, teachers may default to prioritizing daily academic instruction, allowing whole-child initiatives like ABE fall to the wayside. By engendering greater coherence between ABE and other school initiatives, school systems can more deeply embed ABE into how the school approaches student learning and development, such that it does not feel like one additional task that teachers must carry out.

Directions for Future Research

This dissertation provides the first examination of ABE implementation at the national level and within a localized context. ABE provides one avenue to diminish the drivers of the longstanding opportunity gap by providing students of all different backgrounds and identities the chance to see themselves represented in their learning and by equipping students with the tools to understand and address social inequities. While the findings presented in this dissertation present a snapshot of ABE at a critical moment in history—as the nation experiences both a push for and a pushback against educational experiences that center diversity and equity—the policy landscape is continuing to shift, even as of the writing of this paper. In April 2024, the Department of Education under the Biden administration released new Title IX regulations which clarified that discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation is a form of sex-based discrimination, essentially codifying protections for people who identify as transgender in schools (Meltzer and Belsha, 2024). Already, some Republican-controlled states are directing schools to refuse implementation of the new regulation. In May 2024, the National Women's Law Center filed complaints against school districts in Georgia and Florida, arguing that their book removals have "impacted the ability of LGBTQIA+ students and students of color to feel safe and represented in their educations" (Modan, 2024). Thus, there continue to be new policy developments at the federal and state levels, which are likely to influence teachers' provision of ABE in potentially new and unexplored ways.

Future research on ABE might continue to track teachers' provision of ABE as the policy landscape continues to change. In addition, while this paper focused on how teachers' provision of and approach to ABE shifted over the course of a year, future research might also focus on whether and how teachers' access to supports for ABE, such as PL or teacher preparation, have shifted over time. Some state restrictions explicitly target staff training (see: Iowa Legislature, 2021 and Utah State Legislature, 2024), meaning state policies could diminish teachers' provision of ABE not only through restrictions on teachers' instruction but also through restrictions on teachers' access to supports for ABE topics.

The changing policy environment also underscores the need to further understand how to implement ABE in environments that may be hostile to ABE. The case of East Charter Middle illustrates the experience of a school that is enacting ABE in a uniquely favorable setting; because it is a charter school, it is afforded freedoms that may not be available to a traditional public school, and it also operates in a very-liberal community where there is likely a supply of both teachers and families who align with the school's vision for ABE. Future research might explore what ABE implementation looks like in different settings—for instance, in a more politically conservative area, in a traditional public school, in an elementary or high school, or in a state with restrictions. Future research might also examine the implementation process over a longer period of time, or at a different stage of implementation. My findings suggest that, at the time of data collection, East Charter Middle was on the precipice of entering a new stage of more

systematic implementation, as it had a new CMO-level leader tasked with leading its ABE efforts at the helm and plans to institutionalize routines to build capacity in staff throughout the organization. Future analyses could collect data at schools like East Charter Middle over time to examine how the implementation process evolves as it matures. Similarly, East Charter Middle had already been creating systems and supports to provide ABE for years; future research might follow the experience of a school just starting the implementation process to draw out lessons learned for schools in the beginning stages of implementation. Continuing to build this body of work can further advance researchers', practitioners', and policymakers' understanding of how to build models for education that elevate the experiences and identities of all students while preparing students to engage productively in a diverse and multicultural society.

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Appendix A. Fall 2020 and Fall 2021 Omnibus Survey Results

Table A.1. To what extent is anti-bias education a part of the curriculum you teach or a part of your teaching practices?

Response Option	Weighted Percentage
Not at all; I am not interested in this	11%
Not at all; I am interested in this	18%
To a small extent	28%
To a moderate extent	26%
To a large extent	16%

NOTES: Data are drawn from the fall 2020 Omnibus survey (n = 1,489). Anti-bias education was defined for survey participants as "an approach to education that emphasizes the development of students' positive social identities and fosters their comfort and respect for all dimensions of diversity, including, for example, race and ethnicity, gender identity, religious identity, immigration status, sexual identity, socioeconomic status, and ability status. It is also intended to raise their awareness of and promote their capacity to act against bias and injustice."

Table A.2. During the 2019-2020 school year, which of the following instructional materials or resources did you use or reference to plan your anti-bias instruction?

Response Option	Weighted Percentage
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)	2%
Rethinking Schools	5%
Teaching Tolerance	30%
Teaching for Change	8%
Instructional materials intended for particular academic subjects (e.g., materials for civics or social studies, or novels and books for ELA)	40%
Instructional materials and/or resources that I create myself	46%
Instructional materials and/or resources my school or district created	34%
Other	9%
N/A – I do not use any instructional materials or resources for anti-bias instruction	15%

NOTES: Data are drawn from the fall 2020 Omnibus survey (n = 1,043). Only respondents who reported that anti-bias education is a part of the curriculum they teach or a part of their teaching practices to a small, moderate, or large extent were presented with this question. Percentages do not sum to 100 because teachers could select all that apply.

Table A.3. To what extent do you need the following to help you provide anti-bias education?

Response Option	Weighted Percentage

	Not a need; I have all the resources/ support I need	A minor need	A moderate need	A significant need	N/A; I am not interested in this.
Standards related to anti-bias education	14%	21%	29%	31%	6%
Model lesson plans that include anti-bias education goals	12%	19%	30%	36%	3%
Professional development related to anti-bias education	13%	19%	28%	36%	3%
Tools to measure students' progress in developing anti-bias competencies	10%	19%	32%	33%	6%
Explicit prioritization of anti-bias education goals from school or district/ CMO administration	12%	20%	28%	35%	5%
Support for anti-bias education from students' families	10%	19%	31%	37%	4%
Other	65%	1%	5%	9%	20%

NOTES: Data are drawn from the fall 2020 Omnibus survey (n = 320 – 1,306). Only respondents who reported that anti-bias education is a part of the curriculum they teach or a part of their teaching practices to a small, moderate, or large extent or that they were interested in providing anti-bias education were presented with this question.

Table A.4. Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements about the current school year (2021-22).

Response Option	Weighted Percentage				
	N/A – My school does not engage in anti-bias education.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
My school has developed a clear vision for what anti-bias education should look like.	37%	7%	22%	30%	4%
My school has conducted a needs assessment to determine how to allocate resources appropriately to support the implementation of anti-bias education.	40%	10%	26%	21%	3%
I received adequate professional learning from my school to address anti-bias education in the classroom.	37%	11%	23%	24%	4%

The policies and practices of my school (e.g., staff hiring, academic instruction, budgeting, discipline) are well-aligned with the goals of anti-bias education.	35%	7%	17%	35%	6%
I have access to high-quality data that help me adapt the pace, content, or strategies of anti-bias instruction2 in my classroom.	38%	13%	27%	19%	4%
I have access to high-quality research and/or evidence-based resources to support my implementation of anti-bias education in the classroom.	38%	12%	23%	24%	3%
Pressure to improve student academic achievement makes it hard to focus on anti-bias education.	35%	5%	23%	28%	9%

NOTES: Data are drawn from the fall 2021 Omnibus survey (n = 994-995). Anti-bias education was defined for survey participants as "an approach to education that emphasizes the development of students' positive social identities and fosters their comfort and respect for all dimensions of diversity, including, for example, race and ethnicity, gender identity, religious identity, immigration status, sexual identity, socioeconomic status, and ability status. It is also intended to raise their awareness of and promote their capacity to act against bias and injustice."

Table A.5. Please complete the following statement. I believe anti-bias education has the potential to improve…

Response Option	Weighted percent
Student academic achievement	66%
Student engagement in learning	69%
Student civic engagement	65%
Student behavior	73%
Student sense of belonging	85%
Student sense of safety	70%
School climate	81%
Educational equity	66%
None of the above	6%
Other	1%

NOTES: Data are drawn from the fall 2021 Omnibus survey (n = 993).

Appendix B. Case Study Interview and Focus Group Protocols

Interview Protocol for System-Level Administrators

Background Questions

I'll begin by asking some general background questions.

1. First, please briefly state your position in the CMO.
    a. How long you have been in this position?
    b. What is your role, if any, with respect to anti-bias education within your district/CMO?

System-Level Approach to Anti-bias Education

2. Can you tell me about your CMO's approach to anti-bias education? In other words, how do you define it? [Probe on whether they draw on any standards or other resources or information to inform their conceptualization of ABE].

3. When and why did your district/CMO adopt an anti-bias approach?

4. What is your district's/CMO's vision for anti-bias education?
    a. How did your district/CMO decide upon a vision for anti-bias education? [Probe on the involvement of stakeholders, including families and staff, and the use of literature / research]
    b. How is this vision communicated to the schools within your district/CMO?
    c. How does each school go about implementing its vision for anti-bias education?
        a. Does the CMO encourage each school to adopt its own vision, or does the CMO expect each school to adopt / adapt the CMO-sanctioned vision? [Probe on how much autonomy each school has to implement its vision of anti-bias education; probe on the elements that are consistent across schools]
        b. What requirements are there, if any, for school leaders in your district/CMO to enact anti-bias education in their schools? [Probe on the aspects of anti-bias education that are required, including PD or use of curricula]
        c. If there are no requirements, what forms of guidance or encouragement does the CMO/district provide to school leaders?

5. What are your district's/CMO's priorities with respect anti-bias education?
    a. [If not mentioned]In one-frequently used approach to anti-bias education, there are four broad goals—developing students' positive social identities, helping students

develop comfort with diversity, helping students understand bias and systemic inequities, and empowering students to act against bias and systemic inequities. Which of these four goals does your CMO/district prioritize? Why?
    a. [Probe on logical sequence of goals, if one goal is considered higher leverage than another, or if one goal is considered more difficult to implement than another]

6. What are your district's/CMO's main endeavors or initiatives supporting anti-bias education (e.g., whether related to family engagement, adoption of curricula, professional learning, etc.)?
    a. What are new endeavors or initiatives as of this school year? Why did you add them?
    b. Thinking across the school years that your district/CMO has provided anti-bias education to students, are there any endeavors that you were implementing, but that you have stopped? If so, why?

System-Level Supports

7. What instructional materials, if any, does your district / CMO provide to schools to use for anti-bias instruction?
    a. How or why did you choose these instructional materials? [Probe on the sources of information that they used to select materials, including drawing on research or the knowledge of peers]
    b. How, if at all, do you see instructional materials as a lever for implementing anti-bias education in your CMO/district?
    c. To what extent and how is anti-bias education integrated with academic content? [Probe on whether it is taught as a stand-alone topic, or as mostly integrated with academics]

8. What professional learning opportunities, if any, does your district/CMO require or offer to school leaders and staff on how to implement anti-bias education? [Probe on the providers (e.g., outside experts or internal experts), frequency, format, content, and objectives of professional learning opportunities]
    a. What are the main competencies, skills, or mindsets that you are working to develop among school leaders and staff in your district/CMO? [Probe on differences between professional learning for school leaders and staff]
    b. Besides formal professional learning, what other opportunities do school leaders and staff have to develop their skills in implementing anti-bias education? [Probe on time for peer collaboration, PLCs, use of coaches, outside consultants]
        a. How do you determine the quality of those supports and opportunities?

9. How do you monitor and support the implementation of anti-bias education in your schools?
    a. How do you ensure schools' alignment to your district/CMO policies and guidance?
    b. What challenges do you perceive schools face in aligning to district/CMO policies and guidance?

10. To what extent, if at all, does your district/CMO collect data to understand the implementation of anti-bias education at your schools?
    a. How do you identify areas for further growth and continuous improvement?

11. How, if at all, do you see anti-bias education as fitting in with other initiatives that your district/CMO is undertaking, especially those relating to equity (e.g., SEL, culturally responsive teaching, policies around discipline)?

12. How, if at all, do you see operational aspects of your district/CMO (e.g., staff hiring, budgeting, allocation of CMO/district resources) as related to anti-bias education in your district/CMO? [Probe on aspirations versus actual practice]

Conclusion

13. Overall, what challenges have you faced in implementing anti-bias education in your district/CMO?
    a. How, if at all, have you addressed these challenges?

14. What factors have facilitated the implementation of anti-bias education in your district/CMO?

15. What kind of impacts, if any, have you observed as the result of your district/CMO's implementation of anti-bias education? [Probe on student impacts, staff impacts, impacts on school climate]

    a. Are there specific activities that you believe have had or will have the biggest impact on students' anti-bias competencies?

16. What advice would you offer to an organization (e.g., district or CMO) that is considering or planning to adopt anti-bias approaches?

Interview Protocol for School Administrators

Background Questions

I'll begin by asking some general background questions.

1. First, please briefly state your position in the school.
    a. How long you have been in this position?
    b. What is your role with respect to anti-bias education at your school?

School-Level Approach to Anti-bias Education

2. Can you tell me about your school's approach to anti-bias education? In other words, how do you define it? [Probe on whether they draw on any standards or other resources or information to inform their conceptualization of ABE].

3. When and why did your school adopt an anti-bias approach?

4. What is your school's vision for anti-bias education?
    a. How did your school decide upon a vision for anti-bias education? [Probe on the involvement of stakeholders, including parents and staff, and the use of research / literature, direction from the CMO]
    b. Can you share some specific examples of what that vision looks like in practice?

5. What are your schools' priorities with respect anti-bias education?
    a. What are the main anti-bias competencies, skills, or mindsets you are hoping to instill in your students through anti-bias education?
    b. [If not mentioned] There are four broad goals associated with anti-bias education—identity, diversity, justice, and action. Which of these four goals does your school prioritize? Why?
        a. Probe on logical sequence of goals, if one goal is considered higher leverage than another, or if one goal is considered more difficult to implement than another
    c. How are the school's priorities and vision with respect to anti-bias education influenced by the CMO's vision and priorities?
        a. How are the vision and priorities of the CMO communicated to school leaders?
        b. Does the CMO encourage each school to adopt its own vision, or does the CMO expect each school to adopt / adapt the CMO-sanctioned vision? [Probe on how much autonomy each school has to implement its vision of anti-bias education; probe on the elements that are consistent across schools]
        c. What requirements are there, if any, for school leaders in CMO to enact anti-bias education in their schools? [Probe on the aspects of anti-bias education that are required, including PD or use of curricula]

1. If there are no requirements, what forms of guidance or encouragement does the CMO/district provide to school leaders?

6. What are your school's main endeavors or initiatives supporting anti-bias education (e.g., whether related to family engagement, adoption of curricula, professional learning, etc.)?
    a. What are new endeavors or initiatives as of this school year? Why did you add them?
    b. Thinking across the school years that your district/CMO has provided anti-bias education to students, are there any endeavors that you were implementing, but that you have stopped? If so, why?

7. Within the school community, who are the stakeholders most involved in the implementation of ABE?
    a. What are their job titles / roles?
    b. What are strategies the school has used to generate buy-in for anti-bias education?

School System Components

8. What instructional materials, if any, do your staff use to implement anti-bias education at your school?
    a. How or why did you choose these instructional materials? [Probe on the sources of information that they used to select materials, including drawing on research or the knowledge of peers]
    b. How, if at all, do you see instructional materials as a lever for implementing anti-bias education at your school?
    c. To what extent is anti-bias education integrated with academic content? [Probe on whether it is taught as a stand-alone topic, or as mostly integrated with academics]
    d. How is anti-bias education woven into other aspects of the school day or school culture? Could you provide a specific example?

9. What professional learning opportunities, if any, do your staff participate in to support their implementation of anti-bias education? [Probe on the frequency, format, content, and objectives of professional learning opportunities]
    a. What are the main competencies or skills that you are working to develop among teachers and other staff in your school?
    b. Besides formal professional learning, what other opportunities do staff and teachers have to develop their skills in implementing anti-bias education? [Probe on time for peer collaboration, PLCs, use of instructional coaches]

10. How do you monitor and support the implementation of anti-bias education in your school?
    a. To what extent, if at all, does your school collect data to understand the implementation of anti-bias education?
    b. Probe on whether it's sufficient
    c. How do you identify areas for further growth?

11. How, if at all, do you see anti-bias education fitting in with other initiatives that your school is undertaking (e.g., SEL, culturally responsive teaching, policies around discipline)?

12. How, if at all, do you see operational aspects of your school (e.g., staff hiring, budgeting, allocation of school resources) as supporting anti-bias education at your school?

13. How, if at all, do you communicate with families about anti-bias education?
    a. And if yes, how do they respond to or engage with this work?
    b. Have you encountered any challenges, successes, or surprises?

Context

14. To what extent, if at all, do you feel that that the identities and backgrounds of your staff shape anti-bias education at your school?

15. To what extent, if at all, do you feel that that the identities and backgrounds of your students shape anti-bias education at your school?

16. What, if any, guidance have you received from your district / CMO on how to implement anti-bias education at your school?
    a. What supports from your district / CMO have you found the most helpful?
    b. What supports from your district / CMO have you found the least helpful?

Conclusion

17. Overall, what challenges have you faced in implementing anti-bias education at your school?
    a. Can you provide an example? What happened?
    b. How, if at all, have you addressed these challenges?

18. What factors have facilitated the implementation of anti-bias education at your school?

19. What kind of impacts on students, if any, have you observed as the result of your school's implementation of anti-bias education? [Probe on academic, behavioral, or social impacts]

    a. To what extent have you observed impacts on school staff as the result of your school's implementation of anti-bias education?
    b. To what extent have you observed impacts on school climate as the result of your school's implementation of anti-bias education?
    c. Are there specific activities that you believe have had or will have the biggest impact on students' anti-bias competencies?

20. If another school is considering or planning to introduce ABE into its practice, what advice would you offer them?

Interview Protocol for Teachers

Background Questions

I'll begin by asking some general background questions.

1. First, could you state how many years you have been teaching—at this school specifically, and overall?
    a. What grades and subjects do you teach this current school year?
    b. What grades and subjects have you taught previously?

School-Level Approach to Anti-bias Education

2. What is your vision for anti-bias education?
    a. To what extent do you feel that your vision for anti-bias education overlaps or aligns with the school's vision for anti-bias education?
    b. To what extent do you, or other staff, provide input on how the school shapes its vision for anti-bias education?
    c. To what extent do you believe that a common vision for anti-bias education is consistently shared across staff in your school? [Probe: teachers, support staff, administrators)

3. What are your priorities with respect anti-bias education?
    a. What are the main anti-bias competencies, skills, or mindsets you are hoping to instill in your students through anti-bias education?
    b. [If not mentioned] There are four broad goals associated with anti-bias education—identity, diversity, justice, and action. Which of these four goals do you prioritize? Why?
        a. [Probe on logical sequence of goals, if one goal is considered higher leverage than another, or if one goal is considered more difficult to implement than another]
    c. To what extent do you feel that your priorities for anti-bias education overlap or align with the school's priorities for anti-bias education?

4. What are your main endeavors or instructional activities supporting anti-bias education (e.g., class projects, assignments, lessons, activities)?
    a. Probe on changes from years past:
        a. What are new endeavors or activities as of this school year? Why did you add them?
        b. Thinking across the school years that you have provided anti-bias education to students, are there any activities or initiatives that you were implementing, but that you have stopped? If so, why?

School System Components

5. What instructional materials, if any, do you use to implement anti-bias education at your school?
    a. How or why did you choose these instructional materials? [Probe on the sources of information that they used to select materials, including drawing on research or the knowledge of peers]
        a. How does your school support you to find or choose instructional materials?
    b. Do you think that these materials are effective for promoting students' anti-bias skills and mindsets? Why or why not?
        a. What makes them effective or ineffective? Can you give me an example? [Probe on the characteristics of instructional materials that make them effective or ineffective]
        b. How, if at all, do you modify your instructional materials to make them more effective for addressing anti-bias goals?
        c. Are there ways that you think your instructional materials could be improved to support students' anti-bias skills and mindsets?

6. To what extent is anti-bias education integrated with academic content? [Probe on whether it is taught as a stand-alone topic, or as mostly integrated with academics]
    a. Can you give me an example of a lesson that includes anti-bias education objectives?
        a. What are the benefits and drawbacks of integrating anti-bias education with academic content?
        b. What are the benefits and drawbacks of teaching anti-bias education as a standalone topic?
    b. To what extent, if at all, do you experience a tension between providing academic content and providing anti-bias education?

7. How is anti-bias education woven into other aspects of the school day or school culture?

8. What professional learning opportunities, if any, do you receive to support your implementation of anti-bias education in the classroom? [Probe on the source, frequency, format, content, and objectives of professional learning opportunities]
    a. To what extent are the professional learning opportunities you receive helpful for supporting your implementation of anti-bias education in the classroom?
        a. What aspects of professional learning are most helpful? Least helpful?
    b. Besides formal professional learning, what other opportunities do you have to develop your skills in implementing anti-bias education? [Probe on time for peer collaboration, PLCs, use of instructional coaches]
        a. What further professional learning opportunities that you do not currently receive would be helpful? Why?

9. How do you monitor the implementation of anti-bias education in your classroom, for instance, to understand student progress or student growth in ABE competencies?

a. To what extent, if at all, do you collect data to understand the implementation of anti-bias education in your classroom?
b. How do you identify areas for further growth for your classroom?

10. How do your school leaders monitor the implementation of anti-bias education in your classroom and in your school as a whole?
    a. To what extent, if at all, does your school collect data to understand the implementation of anti-bias education for the whole school?
    b. How do school staff identify areas for further growth for the whole school?

11. How, if at all, do you see anti-bias education as fitting in with other initiatives that your school is undertaking, especially those relating to equity (e.g., SEL, culturally responsive teaching, policies around discipline)?

12. How, if at all, do you see operational aspects of your school (e.g., staff hiring, budgeting, allocation of school resources) as supporting anti-bias education at your school?

13. How, if at all, do you communicate with families about anti-bias education?

    a. And if yes, how do they respond to or engage with this work?
        a. Can you give me an example?
    b. Have you encountered any challenges, successes, or surprises?

Context

14. To what extent, if at all, do you feel that that your own identities and background shapes how you approach anti-bias education in your classroom?

15. To what extent, if at all, do you feel that that the identities and backgrounds of your students shapes how you approach anti-bias education in your classroom?

16. Are there any aspects of your school context (e.g., demographics, political orientation of the community) that hinder or facilitate the implementation of anti-bias education in your classroom?

17. Of the guidance you've received from your school leaders or district/CMO on implementing anti-bias education, what has been most helpful? Why? Can you provide an example?
    a. What has been the least helpful? Why? Can you provide an example?

Conclusion

18. Overall, what challenges have you faced in implementing anti-bias education at your school? Can you give me an example?
    a. How, if at all, have you addressed these challenges?

b. What additional resources or supports would improve anti-bias education in your school or classroom? [Probe on instructional materials, assessments, professional development, teacher collaboration, coaching]

19. What factors have facilitated the implementation of anti-bias education at your school?

20. What kind of student impacts, if any, have you observed as the result of your school's implementation of anti-bias education? [Probe on academic, behavioral, or social impacts]

    a. To what extent have you observed impacts on school staff as the result of your school's implementation of anti-bias education?
    b. To what extent have you observed impacts on school climate as the result of your school's implementation of anti-bias education?
    c. Are there specific activities that you believe have had or will have the biggest impact on students' anti-bias competencies?

21. If another school is considering or planning to introduce ABE into its practice, what advice would you offer them?

Focus Group Protocol for Families

Background Questions

Let's begin with a little background information from everyone...

1. Can each of you please introduce yourself and share how many students you have at [CMO/School], and what grades they're in?
2. Why do you send your students to [School]?
    - What distinguishes [School] from other schools in the area?

Parents' Knowledge and Perceptions about Anti-bias Education

3. What do you think the school's priorities are? [Probe on whether families see academics, safety, discipline, SEL, ABE, or something else as the school's major priorities]
    - Do you agree with these priorities? What do you think the school should prioritize?
    - How do you know what the school's priorities are? What kind of messages or communications do you receive from the school? [Probe on the content, frequency, and mode of communication]

4. What are your thoughts on topics like ABE?
    - What makes you think about it in this way?

5. What, if anything, have teachers or other staff at [school] told you about how the school is teaching students about ABE? [probe on how they've heard – newsletters, conversations with staff]
    - What do you think about [school]'s approach to teaching students about diversity, inclusion, equity, and belonging?
        - What do you like about [school]'s approach?
        - What do you think could be improved?

6. In what ways, if any, have you been asked to get involved in the school's ABE activities?
    - [probe on communication sent from teachers and other staff, probe on curriculum materials sent home, requests from school staff to discuss at home, school events related to anti-bias education]

7. Do you think ABE will help your student? [probe on why or why not]
    - In what ways do you think ABE will help your student?
    - Have you seen any changes in your student as a result of the school's ABE activities? [Probe on academic, social, or behavioral impacts]

8. Is there anything you'd like to change about how [school] addresses ABE? [probe on what and why]

Focus Group Protocol for Students

Background

Let's begin with a little background information from everyone...

1) Can each of you please share the grade you are in and how long you have been attending this school?
   a) How long have you been attending [school]?
2) Why did you decide to come to this school? Or, why did your parents have you come to this school?
3) What keeps you wanting to come back?

Culture and Climate

4) What do you think your school really cares about? In other words, what is really important to your school?
   a) How do you know?
   b) What are the ways that teachers show that these things are important?

5) What's special or different about your school?
   a) What does this mean for how the teachers interact with students?
   b) What does this mean for how students interact with other students

Students' Experiences with ABE In School

6) What kinds of school activities, like your classes, clubs, projects, or assignments, do you participate in that help you learn about topics like diversity, identity, equity, or social justice?
   a) These might include conversations about parts of your identity or other people's identity like your race or gender, or about ways to help make sure that different groups of people are treated fairly, or ways to address the big problems that we see in our communities and in our world.
      i) How do your teachers address these topics in your classes or clubs?
      ii) How do your teachers address these topics outside of classes and clubs?
      iii) What kind of activities or interactions have been the most useful in helping you learn more about these topics?

   b) What do you like about the way your school teaches you about these topics?

   c) What do you think could be improved?
      i) Is there anything else you think the school could do to support you in understanding these topics better?

7) Over the time you have attended [school] in particular, how, if at all, has the school changed the way it approaches topics like diversity, identity, equity, or social justice?
   a) What do you like about these changes?
   b) Is there anything you don't like about these changes?

8) Do you think that learning about diversity, identity, equity, or social justice has helped you as a student?
   a) Why or why not? Can you give me an example? [Probe on academic, social, or behavioral impacts]

9) Do you know about any ways that your school tries to involve your parents or community members in your learning about issues like diversity, equity, identity, or social justice?
   i) If so, what do you think has worked well?
   ii) Have you seen any challenges?

Conclusion

10) What are your favorite things about your school?
   a) Why? Can you give me some examples?

11) If you could change anything about your school, what would it be?

12) Are there any other thoughts about your school that you'd like to share?

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