

**Title of Presentation:** Black Community Educational Leaders: Knowledge Production Influence in Education

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**Statement of intent/purpose:** This dissertation explores how the knowledge production (wisdom) of local BCEL can help confront or address the root causes of racialized exclusionary practices and structural inequities that affect Black youth in schools and communities.

**Brief description of the evidence used in the research or project:** While the structural inequities leading to the school-to-prison pipeline (STPP) are well documented in scholarly literature, there is surprisingly little research that centers Black Community Educational Leaders (BCEL) knowledge and experiences relative to this injustice. Research suggests Black and students of color are disproportionately at higher risk of expulsions, suspensions, overrepresentation in special education, and under representation in gift classes compared to their white peers. To offer a critical perspective on racial disparities directly targeting Black youth, in a qualitative study this research used counter-narratives/storytelling as the methodology to interview BCEL who challenged normative or status quo perspectives in a critical case study.

**Brief description of examples used in the presentation:** Promise Neighborhood communities, supreme court cases, critical race theory (CRT), community cultural wealth (CCW), and direct quotes from participants.

**Summary of conclusions:** The BCEL in the study encountered generations of students and families through the education system and greater community. This research was not about trying to fix a broken system, but to redefine how we reimagine and view non-traditional leaders in a community. The key findings from the BCEL root cause analysis is a pivot away from normative (deficit-based) thinking of Black youth and their experiences. The wisdom or asset-based thinking of BCEL provided strategies and recommendations that require accountability, positive relationships, historical value, high

expectations, cultural awareness, and healing-centered engagement to improve structures and practices in education.

