

# Oral Defense Announcement

University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree  
Doctor of Education with an emphasis in Educational Practice

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## The Spirit-Murdering of Black Students from White Educators

Date: April 20, 2024

Time: 11:30 am

Place: Remote

### **Abstract**

In this collection of autoethnographies, four researchers explored our deeply personal experiences and encounters with racialized oppression in the form of spirit-murdering. Using Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Whiteness Studies, this dissertation explores how two white educators have committed spirit-murdering against Black students and how two Black educators have both experienced spirit-murdering as students and have spirit-murdered their Black and Brown students as classroom teachers. We wanted to elevate our voices using counter-stories as a tenet of CRT, and examples of our teaching practices. We aimed to elicit relatable suggestions to combat spirit-murdering from white educators toward Black students during their grade school and college experiences. All four educators also hoped that by sharing, we exposed not only the existence and effects of spirit-murder and ways we were working to eliminate these unfair acts and practices, but also shared ways to better support Black children in classrooms where racist school systems still exist. We reflected on the personal damage caused to us as Black children and created by us towards Black children as white and Black educators. We analyzed the importance and value of a person's spirit, the term "murder," and the phrase "spirit-murder," as they related to our experiences. Encounters were shared from grade school to college classrooms in public, private, urban, and suburban settings. Our cohort dissertation group is made up of a Black male who is an assistant principal, a white male who is a former visual arts teacher who is now an athletic director, a white female who is currently a high school English teacher, and a Black female that is a district culture and climate coordinator.

### **Defense of Dissertation Committee**

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