Factors Contributing to Career Success: Perceptions from African American Male School Administrators

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FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CAREER SUCCESS: PERCEPTIONS FROM AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

by

Oliver Wilson

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
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Advisor: Van Cooley, Ed.D.

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In this qualitative study, interviews were conducted with seven Black male school administrators in the Michigan school district who held the position of assistant principal or principal. The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of Black male school administrators in Michigan school districts. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Using a phenomenological approach the participant responses were codified, grouped, and analyzed for emergent themes. Five themes emerged as a result of the data analysis:

1. Colleague support is a key mechanism in the success of Black male school administrators.

2. Parental involvement is important in the success of Black male school administrators.

3. Connection to the community is important in the success of Black male school administrators.

4. Support of higher administration is critical to the success of Black male school administrators.

5. Access to adequate resources is important to the success of Black male school administrators.
These themes provided answers to the research questions concerning the facilitating and negating factors that contributed to the success of Black male school administrators employed in a public school district in Michigan. The researcher identified those factors that Black school administrators perceived to make a difference in their successful careers with the school district. Participants' responses to the interview instrument were the basis of the recommendations set forth in Chapter V of this dissertation.
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DEDICATION

To my parents and grandparents who strongly encouraged their children and grandchildren to create a vision and to follow the path of education to fulfill their lifelong challenges and dreams. To my brother Cornelius, and to my sister Cynthia, thanks for your support through the years. To my mom, Ora Wilson, who stood by my side and who coached and supported me through some of my most difficult times with those encouraging words of, “you MUST go all the way to the top and make your mom and this family proud…you can do it.”
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

There is no evidence that identifies support systems that contribute to the recruitment and retention of Black male K-12 administrators in urban districts. Traditional protocol in the K-12 educational arena often prescribes and requires school administrators to have prior teaching experiences before advancing to a career in school administration. However, within this framework, there is a severely limited pool of Black male teachers in the United States. Thus the opportunity for Black males to become school administrators is woefully inadequate. There are no incentives to attract Black male school administrators such as recruitment programs, scholarship programs, state or federal grants, or mentoring programs.

In general, about 7% of the teaching force is Black, compared to 17% of the student body (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). Ethnic teachers represent about 9% of U.S. public school teachers, but that number is expected to drop to less than 5% in the coming years. Ethnic students constitute 40% of the total student body in the United States, and this proportion is expected to significantly increase (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education [AACTE], 1999). The majority of elementary and secondary teachers are female (74%) and White (87%) (AACTE, 1999). This seems to suggest that a racial imbalance occurs in the distribution of Black male school adminis-
trators, further eroding the career opportunity to become school administrators. Additionally, during 1999–2000, a total of 83,790 principals worked in public schools across the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). Of all public school principals, less than 11% were Black (Digest of Educational Statistics, 2002). One of the difficulties in examining this data is that “Black males” and “Black females” were placed in one category. Because males and females are lumped together, it is difficult to make unique distinctions. These statistics alone represent an incredible disparity among Black administrators. Therefore, it is not always clear if references to “minorities” include both men and women. Considered together, these racial imbalances are alarming and clearly warrant reform in the educational system.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of Black male school administrators in a Michigan school district and to identify the factors that contributed to the recruitment and retention of successful Black male school administrators. This study is critical given there is a negligible amount of research on Black male administrators. Lomotey (1989) conducted a study that asserted Black administrators serve a vital function for all students and for school staff and concluded that it is important to document the accomplishments of these individuals and to encourage both Black men and women to continue to take leadership positions in educational administration. The specific roles Black men and women play as school administrators have important implications for policies and practices in education. Clearly, there is a need for more of these individuals to serve not only Black students but all students.
Because the district superintendent and the administrative team are responsible for hiring new assistant principals and principals, it is critical the administrative team understand what it requires to effectively recruit and retain Black school leaders. Therefore, the major focus of this investigation is to closely examine and study the self-reported factors that contributed to the recruitment and retention of successful Black school administrators, specifically assistant principals and principals in a Michigan school district.

There is substantial research explaining why Black males do not succeed in general. However, there is no evidence that speaks to the factors that contribute to the recruitment and retention of successful Black male school administrators.

Objectives of the Study

The current investigation was undertaken to provide insight into the facilitating and negating factors that have enabled Black school administrators to achieve success as school administrators in a particular district. To be more specific, the following questions will probe into the individual, family, community, and institutional factors that Black practitioners have identified as influencing their attainment of principalship. Useful information will emerge to assist the educational community in fostering a more equitable representation of Blacks in Michigan public education.

1. What are the facilitating and negating factors related to the individual domain of Black male school principals?

2. What are the facilitating and negating factors related to family involvement of Black male school principals?
3. What are the facilitating and negating factors related to the community for Black male school principals?

4. What are the facilitating and negating factors related to institutional inequalities for Black male school principals?

Significance of the Study

Because there is a paucity of research on Black male school administrators and the number of minority students in the public school system is increasing, school districts will benefit from this investigation to determine ways to effectively recruit and retain Black males into professional careers as educational administrators. This research can be used to also prepare employees of color for the experiences they might encounter as a school administrator. These employees of color might be able to positively respond to challenges faced by Black male school administrators. Furthermore, without Black male school administrators serving as role models in America’s school system, young Black male students will likely continue to experience a limited amount of school success which encourages them to drop out of school.

Therefore, this study is significant to gain insight from the experiences and perceptions of Black male assistant principals and principals to help recruit and retain school leadership among future Black male leaders.

Research Design

To achieve the purposes of this study, qualitative research methods were employed. According to Lancy (1993), the use of qualitative research methods has grown...
considerably in education, a field that has traditionally relied upon a quantitative custom of standardized testing, surveys, and numbers crunching.

Creswell (2003) defined qualitative research as

using multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic. The researcher looks for involvement of their participants in data collection and seeks to build rapport and credibility with the individuals in the study. The researcher often goes to the site (home, office) of the participant to conduct the research. (p. 181)

Through formal semi-structured interviews, conducted in school environments, the researcher elicited the responses of program participants pertaining to the factors that contributed to the success of school administrators in a Michigan school district. The interviews covered a variety of topics including educational and occupational history; entry into administrative role; perceptions of their implementation of the administrative role; their relationship to students, parents, school staff, and the community; views and the needs of their students; and the views of the impact of race on their roles. Each interview was approximately 90 minutes in length. Following the in-depth interviews, I transcribed the interview tapes and shared the transcripts with the participants for further input and feedback as well as for analysis. Following qualitative research convention, all data was recorded anonymously and remained confidential. Respondents were labeled participants A, B, C, D, E, F, and G to ensure confidentiality. The data were recorded and categorized. An independent auditor (John Zaugra, Grand Valley State University) reviewed the analysis to validate and confirm the results of this study. After interviewing each participant, the researcher developed a biographical portrait of each individual. Biographical portraits were analyzed by the investigator for each research question. This
analysis will provide insight into the ways in which Black male school administrators are successful as public school administrators.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of this study include collecting data from one school district in state of Michigan. There were three limitations to this study:

1. The size of the sample was limited to seven comprehensive interviews.

2. As commonly found in qualitative studies, the researcher’s interpretation of the data collected may not reflect the true opinions of the participants in the research.

3. This study was limited to one Mid-western school district.

In Chapter II, literature related to the current study is reviewed. The topics discussed are as follows: history; Black males and the criminal justice system; job satisfaction; barriers Black males faces in education (parental involvement, gatekeeping measures); disparities in opportunities for African American students; racial identity; Black males as role models; and Black males’ views on teaching as a career. The methodology used to conduct this study is presented in Chapter III. The chapter begins with the researcher’s primary purpose of the study. The research design, procedures, and a description of the study setting are discussed next, followed by a description of the pilot study. The method of data collection is presented next and the data analysis procedure is also reviewed. Results of the investigation are discussed in Chapter IV. A summary, conclusion and recommendations for future research are explained in Chapter V.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Majors and Billson (1992) reported although many Black males are successful, not enough of these success stories are documented. Historically, researchers in the social sciences have portrayed negative aspects of Black males, resulting in the examination of the Black male from a deficit viewpoint. In order to bring success factors of the Black males “close to home” for inner city youth, this study investigated and documented the factors that contributed to the success of a group of Black male school administrators in Michigan as well as the social hardships they faced in pursuing their goals. As a result of the Black male administrator’s persistence, they are in leadership roles in society. Through naturalistic inquiry, the study sought to answer what qualities compelled Black male administrators in Michigan to persist and overcome adversity to achieve success. The need for this study seeks to improve the quality of education for Black males. At a time when American society is desperately seeking to alleviate the plight of inner-city black youth, to save a truly lost generation and transform destructive behavior into constructive behavior, this study may serve as a tool for those responsible for teaching and socializing young Black males who believe that they have little or no chance for success. There is a critical need for successful Black males to serve as positive role models. Black school administrators who have successfully overcome several obstacles could provide
the community and Black youths with success with hopes the student completes their K–12 education.

In a review of the literature on the success, failure, and retention of Black male school administrators, there is very little information. In this chapter, literature related to the current study is reviewed. The following are the major themes that emerged from the literature: History of Black school administrators; Black males and the criminal justice system; job satisfaction; barriers Black males face in education; Black males as role models; Black males and student achievement; and Racial Identity.

History

One cannot discuss issues or experiences pertaining to Blacks as school administrators without examining how the past continues to inform and influence the role of Black school administrators today. The history of Black Americans as school administrators in America has been long and involved. However, much of the relatively sparse literature about Black school administrators begins with the assumption that they are relative newcomers to this role (Franklin, 1990; Perkins, 1983).

Prior to the Civil War, many states developed laws prohibiting the education of Blacks, which made it illegal to teach slaves to read and write. Watson (1994) noted Black Americans have always had a love affair with education. Even during the days of slavery, when severe punishment was meted out to those who dared teach slaves to read and write, some Blacks acquired literacy and passed their knowledge on to others. In the difficult years following the Civil War, Blacks saw education as a means of building dignity and respect as well as developing the skills needed to gain control of their lives.
However, because fields such as engineering, physics, chemistry, business and industry, finance, and banking were closed to Blacks, many of the brightest graduates entered teaching. They were thus able to educate generations of Blacks who in turn entered these fields when the walls of exclusion were periodically breached (Watson, 1994).

According to Jones (1983), after the Civil War, Blacks in the south operated clandestine schools. These schools consisted mainly of one- or two-room schoolhouses with one teacher. Black schools opened because of White men's refusal to permit persons of African descent to attend White schools.

The first Black school administrators mentioned in history, which were the equivalent of our school administrators today, were those in the Quaker-sponsored institutions. Black principals managed the Quaker-sponsored Institute for Colored Youth in Philadelphia from 1802 to 1903. Black administrators and faculty also wielded influence in determining the educational objectives and practices of Quaker-sponsored Black institutions during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Haven, Adkinson, & Bagley, 1980).

The next wave of Black school administrators were the Jeanes supervisors. At the turn of the twentieth century, Anna T. Jeanes, a Quaker, began a movement directed toward maintaining and assisting rural, community, and county schools for southern Blacks with an endowment of $1 million. The Jeanes supervisors, 80% of whom were Black women, concentrated their early work on bringing the school and community together and raising the general standard of living. Later, they trained teachers by assisting with curriculum development, demonstrating new teaching methods, and conducting in-service education designed to disseminate recent findings on child growth and
development. Still later they focused on efficient school management and rapid dissemination of current information, and became increasingly recognized as professional leaders with professional degrees, and as members and active participants in learned societies and national professional organizations. They used their experiences to develop and disseminate supervisory strategies for Black schools and often coordinated their work with the educational leaders in college and universities. As the number of Black principals increased, the school system’s growing size and bureaucratization contributed to the demise of the Jeanes program (Haven et al., 1980; Jones and Montenegro, 1982).

Around the turn of the twentieth century, African American women began to lose influence as community leaders (Perkins, 1983). This was, in part, as a result of Black men taking on the sexist attitude prevalent in the dominant society. Perkins (1983) further notes that, during the twentieth century, education for Black women began to focus heavily on teaching and uplifting the race but not on leadership. In addition, Black women in leadership positions both in schools and in the community at large, were thwarted by White women suffragettes who discouraged political participation in the society and by White social scientists who saw their activism as deviant (Giddings, 1984).

Foster (1990) and Franklin (1990) identified that another factor that diminished the role of Black administrators in educational settings was the desegregation movement, which began in the 1950’s. One result of desegregation of schools, especially in the South, was that Black administrators lost jobs and influence. Furthermore, as desegregations spread, Black administrators became less tied to Black schools. Those who were able to keep their jobs were moved into larger school systems, where they found it more
difficult to have an impact on the school experiences and social conditions that influ-
enced the educational success of Black children (Foster, 1990; Franklin, 1990).

Following segregation, southern African American students were taught by both
African American and White teachers. The racial biases, assumptions, and expectations
came into the classroom and replaced the affirming and comfortable climate with a
hostile learning environment (Perkins, 1983).

Since 1970 the number of Black teachers has declined. In 1970, African Ameri-
can teachers accounted for 12% of the teaching profession (King, 1993). By 1991, the
number of African American teachers significantly declined to 8% (National Education
Association, 1991). This information also supports the explanation of the decline in
Black school administrators. Black administrators were extremely important in the edu-
cational roles they served in the schools where Blacks attended. They served as role
models and advocates for Black students.

In 1993–94 a total of 79,618 principals worked in public schools across the United
States (Holloway, 2000). Of that total, 52,114 were men and 27,505 were women.
Eighty-five percent were White, 10% were African American, 4% were Hispanic, and 1%
Asian Americans and others.

Today, women and men of color are still a woefully inadequate presence in
today’s nations’ schools (Montenegro, 1993). Although most recent works have focused
on classroom teachers, Black principals are another important group to consider. Unfor-
nately, research on school administrators has paid little attention to the experiences of
African Americans.
Black Males and the Criminal Justice System

In 1980, research compiled by the Justice Policy Institute revealed 463,700 Black men were enrolled in institutions of higher education while 143,000 were incarcerated. A more recent study conducted in 2000 found 603,032 Black men were enrolled in higher education, whereas 791,600 were languishing in jails and prisons (Black Issues in Higher Education, 2003). More attention is being directed at providing funding to construct more prisons for expanding populations, which is increasing at the expense of providing ample resources to educate those who might be facing the judicial system.

According to the United States Bureau of Justice Statistics, the nation's state, federal, and local prison population now exceeds 2 million inmates. The U.S. not only has a greater proportion of its citizens in prison than in any time during its history, but it now has a greater proportion of its citizens in prison than any other nation, including the former Soviet Union and South Africa. As the national inmate population has increased in recent decades, the impact on Black communities has been particularly dramatic. The fact that Blacks represent 13% of the total U.S. population but represent more than 50% of the prison population gives an impression of racial bias in the criminal justice system (Bureau of Justice Statistics). The fact that 1 in 3 Black males are under supervision of the criminal justice supervision (i.e., in prison, on probation, or parole), while only 1 in 15 White males are under criminal justice supervision, further fuels concerns of racial discrimination in the criminal justice system (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics). Moreover, when data from specific states with substantial but not majority Black populations are examined, Blacks are arrested as much as 50 times the rate of Whites in some states.
In the state of Maryland, for instance, where Blacks comprise 28% of the population, 77% of prisoners are Black. Together these observations underscore the need for broad-based intervention.

One avenue to address the inequities in America's criminal justice system is through the educational system. For example, students who leave school early increase their chances of being incarcerated; up to 80% of the prison population dropped out of school (Whaley & Smyer, 1998). When these numbers are broken down by race it becomes apparent that the highest level of formal education completed by Black prisoners is markedly lower than that attained by White prisoners. Currently, 27% of Whites in state prisons have not graduated from high school or received a GED compared to 44% of Black prison inmates. Furthermore, 30% of Whites in state prisons earned a high school diploma while 43% passed the GED, compared to only 26% of Blacks in state prisons who earned a high school diploma and 30% who passed the GED (U. S. Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, 2003).

Job Satisfaction

Many of the most promising teachers have left the teaching profession expressing a lack of confidence that the school would reward good teachers (Hart, 1992). The survey results of nearly 2,000 public school teachers in 1984 showed that 53% of the respondents would not advise a young person to pursue a career in education. Fifty-two percent indicated that they did not feel respected by society, and nearly 20% were satisfied with their jobs as a public school teacher (Metropolitan Life, 1985). Nevertheless,
the teacher has remained the key element in the success of the educational organization (Fullen & Stiegelbauer, 1991).

Most research on teacher job satisfaction is rooted in the pioneering work of Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) who identified the satisfying and dissatisfying factors. However, Herzberg et al. suggested that this is not so, and that the opposite of satisfaction is no satisfaction. Thus by eliminating sources of dissatisfaction, one may placate, pacify, or reduce the dissatisfaction of a worker, but this does not mean that such reduction either motivates the worker or leads to job dissatisfaction. Traditionally, it had been believed that the opposite of job satisfaction is job dissatisfaction; thus eliminating the sources of dissatisfaction from work, the job would become motivating and satisfying (Owens, 1991).

Workers' attitudes toward their jobs provide insight into the factors that lead to job satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). As a result of the research on workers' attitudes and motivation launched by Herzberg et al. (1959), the Motivation-hygiene theory was developed (Herzberg et al., 1959). Simply put, the Motivation-hygiene theory classifies all human needs into two sets: pain avoidance and growth. A distinction is made between the types of incentives that will satisfy these sets of needs. Within the context of the workforce, the only incentives that satisfy the pain-avoidance needs are environmental or external to the job (i.e., working conditions and security), which are called hygiene factors. The factors are termed as such because they are maintenance factors and are primarily preventative. The incentives that satisfy the growth needs are internal to the job (i.e., achievement and responsibility), which are called motivator factors. Herzberg et
al. (1959) recognized that an affective difference exists qualitatively in the satisfaction of the growth and pain avoidance needs.

An important concept in the two-factor theory is that people tend to see job satisfaction as being related to such intrinsic factors as success, the challenge of the work, achievement, and recognition, whereas they tend to see dissatisfaction as being related to such extrinsic factors as salary, supervision, and working conditions (Owens, 1991). According to Dinham and Scott (1998), Herzberg’s “two-factor theory” associates the satisfying factors, the “motivators,” with the higher order needs and the dissatisfying factors, the “hygiene factors,” with the lower order needs.

Herzberg (1964) conducted a study and identified fourteen factors from the respondents in reference to sources of good or bad feelings about their jobs. The factors according to Herzberg’s Motivation-Hygiene theory, with 1 to 6 considered motivation, and 7 to 16 considered hygiene, were as follows:

1. Achievement
2. Advancement
3. Possibility of growth
4. Recognition for achievement
5. Responsibility
6. Work itself
7. Interpersonal relations with peers
8. Interpersonal relations with subordinates
9. Interpersonal relations with supervisor
10. Job security
Herzberg (1979) proposed four approaches to job enrichment. First, the orthodox job enrichment, which is the traditional hierarchy approach in which managers plan the work and motivate people to complete the work. This involves redesigning the work people do in ways that will tap the motivation potential in each individual. Also, this includes making the job more interesting, more challenging, and more rewarding. Second is the socio-technical systems approach. This approach suggests more participation in making decisions as to how the work should be done. The third is participative management. The primary need for personal involvement can be satisfied through worker participation and will provide the commitment necessary to motivate workers. The last approach is industrial democracy. This approach promotes the philosophy of democracy, and the main objective is to foster presentation and involvement in all the decision-making organizations to provide ownership.

In the educational world, Sergiovanni was influenced by Herzberg’s (1966, 1968) Motivation-Hygiene theory. In 1969, Sergiovanni replicated Herzberg’s investigation by using nearly 100 teachers as subjects. His study was aimed to determine whether the factors resulting in work satisfaction were connected to the work itself or whether the factors resulting in dissatisfaction were linked to the work environment. The subjects
were interviewed using the critical incident technique directly adapted from Herzberg. The study concluded that the satisfiers and dissatisfiers tended to be mutually exclusive and that the factors identified applied to all teachers in the study, regardless of sex, teaching, level, or years of teaching. The most frequently described satisfiers were achievement, recognition, and responsibility. The most frequently described dissatisfiers were interpersonal relations, supervision, and policy and administration (Sergiovanni, 1969).

Maslow (1954) outlined the most influential of content theories. Maslow argued that human motivation can be broken down into five basic categories of need. Listed in ascending order, they are:

1. Physiological needs (such as food, air, water, sex, shelter, and sleep) are the first level on the hierarchy.

2. Security needs (such as protection of job security as well as protection from danger, illness, economic disaster, and the unexpected) are the next level.

3. Social needs (such as the desire for affection, friendship, and approval for others) are the next level.

4. From these needs, the individual can move up the hierarchy to higher order needs. Self-esteem needs for recognition and a belief in oneself is the next level. On this level, you find the desire for achievement, mastery, competence, independence, and freedom.

5. Finally, the progression leads to the need and desire to fulfill all one's individual potential, which is termed self-actualization. Only a small proportion of the population achieves this level.
This theory was not intended as an explanation of motivation in the workplace; however, many managerial theorists have enthusiastically adopted it. The theory suggests that employees will always tend to want more from their employers. When they have satisfied their subsistence needs, they strive to fulfill security needs. When jobs are secure they will seek ways of satisfying social needs and if successful will seek the means to the ultimate end of self-actualization.

Alderfer (1972) suggested individual needs can be divided into three groups:

1. **Existence needs**, which include nutritional and material requirements (at work this would include pay and conditions.)

2. **Relatedness needs**, which are met through relationships with family and friends and at work with colleagues.

3. **Growth needs**, which reflect a desire for personal psychological developments.

Alderfer’s theory differs from Maslow in a number of important respects. Alderfer argued that it was better to think in terms of a continuum rather than a hierarchy; from concrete existence needs to least concrete growth needs and argued that you could move along this in either direction.

Maslow argued that when satisfied, a need becomes less important to an individual, but Alderfer found that relatedness or growth needs become more important when satisfied. This means that team-working arrangements can continue to motivate employees and are not necessarily superseded by growth needs.

Mumford (1976, as cited in Changing Minds, n.d.) argues that workers have:

1. **Knowledge needs**, work that utilizes their knowledge and skills.
2. *Psychological needs*, such as recognition, responsibility, status, and advancement.

3. *Task needs*, which include the need for meaningful work and some degree of autonomy.

4. *Moral needs*, to be treated in the way that employers would themselves wish to be treated.

Mumford’s assumption was that employees did not simply see their job as a means to an end but had needs, which related to the nature of their work.

Barriers Black Males Face in Education

Parental Involvement, Gatekeeping Measures

Several researchers have noted that the needs of Black learners, particularly those from impoverished backgrounds, have been neglected. According to Boykin (2001) and Hale (2001), Black learners have experienced disastrous outcomes in school settings and this trend continues. Accordingly, Black males are the most at-risk students in America’s schools. As a percentage of the population, Blacks are not only more likely to be the victims and perpetrators of violent crimes, or incarcerated, but most likely to be placed in special education, drop out of school, and/or be suspended (Ford & Harris, 1996; Lisella & Serwatka, 1996; Oakes, 1985).

Black students are disproportionately relegated to special education (Harry & Anderson, 1994) and remedial education classes (Gay, 2000). Conversely, Black children who are often excluded from advance placement and gifted classes (Patton &
Baytops, 1995). Furthermore, Whaley and Smyer (1998) contend that Black youth leave school before graduation at an alarming rate. Nationally, among youth ages 16 to 24, 6.9% of White youths were high school dropouts compared to 13.1% of Black youth high school dropouts (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). Factors identified as contributing to limited academic performance among Black youths include academic tracking, limited teacher support, cultural mistrust, and disidentification with the academic culture of the school (Fine, 1991; Finn, 1989; Oakes, 1985; Steele, 1992; Terrell, Terrell, & Miller, 1993). In addition to experiencing negative academic outcomes, they encounter poor social and behavioral experiences in schools. In other words, Blacks, especially males, are suspended and expelled more often than other groups (Harry & Anderson, 1994). Harry and Anderson (1994) contended Black students receive exclusionary forms of discipline two to three times the percentage in the general school age population. These disciplinary actions, as Townsend (2000) argued, activate vicious cycles of lowered expectations concerning Black students and foster the belief that remediation is needed.

As a result, the educational disconnect encountered along with Black males' imprisonment has much to do with the rising Black male unemployment rates. In fact, several studies showed that Black men historically have not participated fully in the economic prosperity of our country. For example, Black men have the highest unemployment rates. In the first half of 2000, the unemployment rate averaged 6.9% for Black men (20 years of age or older) as compared to 2.8% for white men (U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003). Dreier and Reiman (1994) concluded in their study this disparity is even greater among younger males, the demographic group most likely to engage in
street crime. Because Black males are excluded from their relevance of education, once pushed out of the school system, they return to the street for immediate application. About 39% of Black males in the crime-prone ages of sixteen to nineteen are jobless, compared with 16% of White males (Dreier & Reiman, 1994).

It is evident that the significant alienation Black males experience in America’s schools plays a major part in their future. The consequences of what Black males experience in America’s schools are major limitations on socioeconomic ability, ultimately leading to high rates of unemployment, crime, and incarceration for massive numbers of young Black men.

Last, a related issue that deserves equal attention as the two previously mentioned concerns regarding Black males is parental involvement. Polite and Davis (1999) reported Black males experience little parental involvement, and are victims of many teacher prejudices and stereotypes. For this reason, the educational experiences of Black males are unique and demand special attention. As indicated by Rich (1996), schools cannot be the only source of education for America’s children as they prepare for the future. The positive effects on students of parent involvement in the schools are well documented. For example, Fan (1999) claimed that as schools become more culturally diverse, parent involvement could be particularly beneficial for teachers as well as for students. Parents from diverse cultures can help teachers better understand and communicate with their students, thereby reducing teacher frustration and improving student learning. As an added benefit, involving parents in the classroom can help transform an isolated, unwelcoming school building into a valued institution reflective of and respected by the wider community. Parents must and should play an integral part of that
process. Parent involvement has been found not only to improve student achievement but also to produce significant long-term benefits: better school attendance, reduced drop out rates, and decreased delinquency. Witherspoon (2002) asserted that developing a comprehensive realistic plan to target Black families is a first step in the right direction for getting parents involved in their children’s education. Proper planning, resources to support families in their involvement, and training families and school staff are all necessary ingredients. Opportunities for family members to strengthen their parenting skills augment their academic knowledge and skills, and developing leadership skills and advocacy skills should be a part of any long range plan from all influential sources that include parents, teachers, administrators, researchers, and Black males themselves. The importance of parental involvement and support of their children’s educational pursuits has been well documented and demonstrates that when parents are involved in the education of their children, the results are an increase in student achievement and improvement of student attitude (Henderson & Berla, 1994).

The decline in the numbers of people of color selecting teaching as a career can be attributed in part to various gatekeeping measures or “screens” that both regulate their entrance into teacher education programs and restrict their ability to meet certain teaching certification requirements. Competency, admissions, and certification tests, along with pre-service teacher assessment programs, often create limited access for people of color to the teaching profession (Goodwin, 1991; Reed, 1986; Waters, 1989). Similar gatekeeping measures also may be preventing minority teachers from becoming administrators.

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**Disparities in Opportunities for African American Students**

Disparities in standardized test taking and the widening gap between Black and White standardized test-takers is another alarming issue that should bring about a national concern. Standardized tests have long been considered unfair and biased against students from ethnic minority and/or impoverished backgrounds because these tests are based in large measure on the experiences of middle class Whites (Hilliard, 2000; Neil & Medina, 1989). The achievement gap between Black learners and White learners is widening.
(Taylor, Casten, Flickinger, Roberts, & Fulmore, 1994). In 2002, the average score of Black students on the combined math and verbal portion of the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) test was 857, and the mean score of White students on the combined math and verbal SAT was 17% higher at 1060 on a scale of 1400. There are a number of reasons that can explain the continuing and growing Black-White SAT scoring gap. Clearly, one of the main factors is that Black students across the board are not being adequately schooled to take these tests. Public schools in many neighborhoods with large Black populations are under funded, inadequately staffed, and ill-equipped to provide the same quality of secondary education as is the case in predominantly White suburban school districts. The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education reported two other reasons contributing to the large scoring gap between Blacks and Whites on the SAT are as follows:

1. In many cases Black school children are taught by White teachers who have low opinions of the abilities of Black kids from the moment they enter the classroom. These teachers immediately write off Black students as academic inferiors and do not challenge them sufficiently to achieve the skills necessary to perform well on standardized tests.

2. School administrators and guidance counselors often believe that Black students are less capable and less able to learn. They routinely track Black students at an early age into vocational training or into a curriculum that is not college preparatory. Black students are rarely recommended for inclusion in gifted education, honors, or advanced placement programs. Once placed on the slow academic track, most Black kids
can never escape ("The expanding scoring gap between Black and White SAT test takers," 2002, p. 3).

In 2003, the scores of Black students on the college entrance examination of the American College Testing Program (ACT) were reported to be a cause for increased concern as well. Many students in the Midwest, the Deep South, and the Rocky Mountain states take the ACT for college admissions rather than the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT). According to a report published by The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, nationwide, 120,311 Black students sat for the ACT test in 2002. This is only slightly fewer than the 122,684 Black students who took the SAT in 2003. In 2002, Blacks made up 10.8% of all ACT test takers. Blacks made up 11.4% of all students who took the SAT test. In 2002, the median score for whites on the ACT was 21.7. (The ACT test is scored on a scale of 0 to 36.) For Blacks, the median score was 16.8. Thus, on average, Blacks scored 14% lower on the ACT than did Whites ("The expanding scoring gap," 2002).

Discussions about the educational status of African American males and the nature of their precarious educational position are infused with compelling metaphors such as "endangered species," "epidemic of failure," and "institutional decimation." Many believe that schools are not only failing to meet the particular social and developmental needs of African American males but are academically abusing them (Holland, 1989; Leake & Leake, 1992; Polite, 1993). Davis (2000) reported Black males experience negative school outcomes more than any other group of students. As a percentage of the population they are most likely to be placed in special education, drop out of school, be suspended, be victims or perpetrators of violent crimes, or be incarcerated.
African American communities are becoming increasingly frustrated over the school’s inability to educate African American urban children, particularly their young men (Wynn, 2000).

Two categories that influence dropping out are push and pull effects (Gambetta, 1987; Rumberger, 1987; Wehlage & Rutter, 1986). Push effects are factors located within the school itself that negatively impact the connection adolescents make with the school’s environment and cause them to reject the context of schooling. Conversely, pull effects view school merely as one aspect of the complex adolescent social milieu (Jordan, Lara, & McPartland, 1996). For example, many poor students of color often have outside responsibilities that may interfere with their school attendance and academic progress. As researchers have noted, living in poverty places a considerable amount of strain on the adolescent and the family and that too can impede school performance causing one to drop out (Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, & Rock, 1987).

Researchers have reported evidence suggesting that minority males have the greatest academic difficulty expediting the move from middle-level schools and high schools (Felner, Primavera, & Cauce, 1981; Roderick & Camburn, 1999; Simmons, Black, & Zhou, 1991). Roderick and Camburn (1999) conducted a study in Chicago and found Black males were 50% more likely to fail major subjects in the first semester of the 9th grade than Black females. Roderick and Camburn (1999) also reported these dramatic changes in school performance as students advanced to high school could have been strongly shaped by the academic and social environments students encounter in urban school environments.
Furthermore, research on motivation found Black males’ engagement and performance in school declined markedly as they moved from elementary school to junior high school and that urban students are the most at risk. According to researchers, these declines are linked to school drop-out (Blyth, Simmons, & Carlton-Ford, 1983; Crockett, Petersen, Graber, Schulenberg, & Ebata, 1989; Eccles, Lord, & Midgley, 1991; Felner & Adan, 1989; Felner et al., 1981; Reyes, Gillock, & Kobus, 1994; Roderick, 1993; Seidman et al., 1994; Simmons & Blyth, 1987; Simmons et al., 1991). Analyses of surveys and attitudinal scales found that urban adolescents’ perceptions of the quality of their school environment, degree of challenge from course work, academic expectations from teachers, and the quality of relationship with peers and teachers decline markedly as students move into high school (Reyes et al., 1994; Seidman et al., 1994; Simmons & Blyth, 1987; Simmons et al., 1991).

The literature further states as Black males move into secondary schools it is more likely that teachers will rely on stereotypes and prior expectations in forming their relationships with them—therefore, causing some teachers to be less proactive in reaching out to Black males and being less likely to provide them with academic support and high expectations (Irvine, 1990).

Bireda (2000) described Boskin’s interpretation of the most predominant stereotypes: “Sambo” and the “Brute.” The “Sambo” image originated during slavery and characterizes Black males as being lazy, unintelligent, irresponsible, and servile. The other archetype, the “Brute” depicts Black males as being overly aggressive and needing to be controlled. Bireda (2000) describes contemporary images that continue to support these stereotypes:
Unfortunately, the Sambo and Brute stereotypes survive in some form today and continue to have a negative impact on African American students. The Sambo image inhibits both the academic achievement of African American males and their relationships with their teachers, leading to low expectations as well as disproportionately high referral rates to special education and low referral rates to higher level and gifted courses. In many instances, teachers are more comfortable with the playful, jovial African American male students than with the serious, quiet ones, who are perceived to have an “attitude.” The Sambo image also creates greater acceptance for the African American male student who is submissive rather than assertive, the latter being perceived rather as aggressive or defiant.

The Brute image leads to a preoccupation with control and unjust labeling. African American male students are held to a higher standard of behavior than their peers. They are most likely to be punished for minor infractions, and they receive penalties disproportionate to their conduct. In the same way that African American male students are tracked academically, they are tracked behaviorally. When one misbehaves, he is quickly branded as a troublemaker and is henceforth never able to escape the label. In many instances, African American male students are set up for misbehavior. The teacher knowing which “button to push” can easily provoke the student to an angry response and thus have cause to remove him from the classroom. (pp. 9–10)

Jacquelyne Eccles (Eccles et al., 1991) argued declines in performance and motivation occur due to the mismatch between the developmental needs of youths and the educational environment of junior high and high schools. Roderick (2003) posited in order for Black males to manage the stress and demands of transitions requires them to have coping resources that provide both motivation and strategies for working through problems.

Researchers studying motivation and achievement have demonstrated the importance of a sense of efficacy, of competence, and of a clear sense of goals and what the future holds in shaping response to new stresses (Ferguson, 1994; Markus, Cross, & Wurf, 1990; Markus & Nurius, 1986). How schools structure students’ opportunities to learn has been shown to influence academic achievement (Epstein & MacIver, 1992; Lee...
& Bryk, 1988). Educational experiences often serve as antecedents to many of the social and economic ills students face later in life. Thus, inequities in schooling experiences have potentially broad consequences for students’ future educational attainment, employment, and family relations. Access to academic experiences through curriculum, teachers, and other school activities is of particular importance for students such as African American males, who are already marginalized in school settings (Finn & Cox, 1992; Irvine 1990; Sanders & Reed, 1995).

Several notable scholars have found that urban adolescents’ perceptions of the quality of their school environment, the academic expectations of their teachers, and the quality of relationship with peers and teachers declined markedly as students move to high school (Reyes et al., 1994; Seidman et al., 1994; Simmons et al., 1991; Simmons & Blyth, 1987). Previous negative school experiences and students’ awareness of teachers’ perceptions of their group may lead to making Black males feel less competent and less efficacious in developing their school performance (Steele & Aronson, 1998). The lack of clear payoffs to education also deprives Black males of a critical coping mechanism (Markus et al., 1990; Markus & Nurius, 1986). Ogbu (1990) contended that African American youth may question the value of a high school diploma in the face of high levels of unemployment regardless of high school attainments and the existence of underground economies in their neighborhood where educational credentials mean nothing. Because many youth are clear regarding the negative impact of dropping out of high school, the lack of clear payoffs to persistence and well-defined pathways to success make it difficult to invest in the future (Oyserman, Gant, & Ager, 1995).
Other evidence points to several unique academic and social challenges faced by African American males—namely, their disproportionate numbers of suspensions and expulsions, relatively poor scholastic performance, tendency to avoid academic engagement and competition, and decreasing college attendance rates (Carter & Wilson, 1992; Garibaldi, 1992; Polite, 1993). For example, Simmons et al. (1991) found Black males showed the greatest increase in incidence of suspensions and probations after the transition to junior high school. Harry and Anderson (1994) reported African American students receive exclusionary forms of discipline at two to three times the percentage in the general school-age population. According to Roderick (2003) the trend throughout the 1990s that supported get-tough approaches to violence disproportionately affected Black males. For example, the conflict that occurred in Decatur, Illinois, where a group of Black males who participated in a stadium brawl during a rival football game received tough expulsions that essentially terminated their high school careers, illuminated the trend in school policies that provide no room for error made by Black males. Furthermore, many scholars believe that negative school experiences and outcomes for students are often products of school contextual and structural factors that limit learning opportunities, especially for Black males (Ferguson, 1994; Polite, 1993).

In schooling environments, students develop a sense of order, place, and expectations determined in part by schools’ structure and curriculum and by students’ interactions with peers, teachers, and parents (Alder, Kless, & Alder, 1992). While most researchers agree that teachers and peers are especially influential in shaping the school-related behaviors of African American males, little attention has been given to explaining their academic behavior and social behavior relative to other structural and contextual
influences in school settings. Delineating the role of the curriculum, teachers, peers, and other school factors would constitute a major effort in addressing the poor academic and social alienation of many Black males in schools.

Typically, schools have been conceived of as having two primary functions: (1) promoting and structuring the intellectual development of students; and (2) socializing young people for their roles and responsibilities in society. However, current thinking suggests schools are falling short of these goals, especially for African American males. One reason commonly mentioned for the alienation of poor academic performance of some Black males is that they perceive most schooling activities as feminine and irrelevant to their masculine identity and development (Holland, 1989). Gender-role socialization that encourages and rewards Black males for not achieving academically has also been placed at the core of this crisis (Fordham & Ogbo, 1986). The differences in role expectations are reflected in differential academic performance and effort. Thus Black males are seen both as victims and participants in their own educational demise. Gender-exclusive school environments have been suggested as a measure to reverse the disproportionate rates of school failure experienced by Black males (Leake & Leake, 1992). Others contend that the increased presence of committed and successful Black male adults in educational settings is essential to enhancing Black boys' academic and social development and countering inappropriate sex-role socialization and maladaptive identity (Cunningham, 1993; Holland, 1987; Oliver, 1989).
Racial Identity

Fewer discussions have focused on the ways school practices promote unhealthy racial and self-identities among Black children. One inequitable practice involves school personnel's preoccupation with standardized tests to assess children and classify schools based on student performance. Standards-based school reform can impede the development of healthy racial and ethnic identities. Several researchers have linked achievement to racial identity (Ford, Harris, & Schuerger, 1993; Smith, 1989) and found underachievement among disproportionate numbers of Black learners—even those identified as having academic gifts and talents (Ford & Harris, 1997). Even before such dramatic emphasis on high stakes assessment, it was suspected that some Black learners sabotaged their academic gifts and talents to avoid peer ridicule and accusations of "acting White" (Ford & Harris, 1992; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Several theorists have identified this as a process by which individuals develop racial identities.

In 1971, William Cross published the Nigrescence Model of racial identity. Nigrescence is defined as the transformation from preexisting (non Afrocentric) identity into one that is Afrocentric (Cross, 1971). The Nigrescence Model consists of five stages: pre-counter, encounter, immersion/emersion, internalization, and internalization commitment (Cross, 1971). In the first, or Pre-encounter stage, Blacks may have attitudes that range from believing that their race plays no role in their lives or neutralizing their race to hating others of the same racial group; that is, at one end of the continuum, the individual can be very unaware of racial issues whereas at the other end, he or she can view his or her race as a social stigma. In the second stage, the Encounter stage, the
person’s Afrocentrism begins to emerge. Cross suggested that, in this stage, events or encounters are experienced and personalized and cause persons to reexamine their worldviews about their race. The events or encounters can be negative experiences involving racism or positive ones that cause persons to confront their beliefs about race.

The third stage is Immersion-Emersion where persons attempt to shed their old identities and become immersed in their Black culture while rejecting the dominant culture. The other aspect of this stage is that of Emersion in which individuals adopt more of a substantive perspective regarding their ethnicity. Instead of focusing primarily on symbols of Black culture, individuals in this stage of racial-identity development affiliate with persons who are substantively committed to issues related to Blacks. Internalization, the fourth stage, is characterized by an inner peace and reconciliation of events that incited emotionality and anger in the previous racial-identity stages. Individuals in the Internalization stage, on the other hand, would process the event and focus more on ways to address institutional racism as opposed to remaining agitated about that one specific incident. The last stage is Internalization-Commitment, in which people move beyond awareness of their Black culture as a means of personal satisfaction to demonstrating a long-term commitment to issues that are relevant to Blacks. In effect, they are able to translate that consciousness to one of action on behalf of other persons of color.

Crocker, Luhtanen, Baline, and Broadnax (1994) argued that racial identity and self-concept is linked to student achievement. Definitions of self-concept often include self-esteem and self-image. Campbell-Watley and Comer (2000) acknowledged “the role of home and family in shaping children’s self-concepts, but also recognized the power of children’s schooling experience to positively or adversely shape them” (p. 226).
Brenda Townsend (2000) states,

Cross (1997) conducted a study of urban teachers’ perceptions of their students’ needs related to self-esteem. Cross’s study revealed teachers assumed that the children who lived in urban or inner city areas inherently suffered from low self-esteem. Stated another way, those teachers overwhelmingly believed that all urban children have poor self-esteem because of their urban living conditions. It is interesting that teachers did not view the school environment as contributing to low self-esteem. In large part, the teacher equated positive self-esteem with feeling good about and believing in oneself. In addition to holding notions of self-esteem based on their intuition and common sense, these teachers were convinced that as a group, they engaged in activities that increased their students’ self-esteem. Several teachers in the investigation noted that their efforts to increase self-esteem often took precedence over academic activities because many of them intuitively believed that children must feel better about themselves in order to learn. In essence, academic activities were abandoned to focus on improving the children’s self-esteem (B. E. Cross, 1997). Hence, academic instruction was dictated by teachers’ perception that all urban children have low self-esteem. This is one example of how Black learners are exposed to pedagogical styles that both underestimate and undermine their academic potential. (Townsend, p. 226)

Another one of Cross’s studies (1997) revealed that the activities teachers perceived as necessary for raising student self-esteem (e.g., verbal praise and affirmations, positive notes, student of the week) centered on raising students’ self-esteem as opposed to challenging their levels of academic achievement. Also, Cross reported, “urban teachers believed that their urban students had poor self-esteem and spent inordinate amounts of time and energy on activities whose efficacy has not been researched. Several scholars have urged teachers to promote academic achievement over self-concept for Black learners” (Hale [2001], p. 226).
Black Males as Roles Models

Having a role model is critical for Black male youth development and promoting school achievement. Bryant and Zimmerman (2003) completed a study of research on role models among Black adolescents. The authors examined whom 679 Black ninth-graders from urban environments identified as role models and how their role model choices relate to their academic engagement. In the article, the authors claim how the presence or absence of role models may be associated with problem behavior, psychological well-being, and academic engagement.

In contrast, few researchers have focused on role models or examined how the presence of a salient role model may influence adolescent outcomes (Jung, 1986). R. L. Taylor (1989) reported that research on role models in the psychological development of Black males has received less attention. Ronald Taylor (1989) argued the lack of male role models in the lives of African American males deprives them of critical levels of support, particularly during adolescence.

However, several researchers have found that identifying certain adults as role models indicates that youth believe these individuals are worthy of imitation and that their attitudes and values are ones they would like to assimilate (Bell, 1970; Pleiss & Feldhusen, 1995; Taylor, 1989). According to Kemper (1968), role models are key references for adolescents considering they provide a window to the future, model positive behavior, and display adaptive techniques adolescents can aspire to achieve. However, for many adolescents, developing close relationships with adults outside the family and school could be challenging (Coates, 1987; Csikszentmihalyi & Larson,
This may explain why many young African American males do not have role models in their lives. In contrast, W. J. Wilson (1987) suggested negative outcomes during adolescence may be associated with a lack of role models in urban areas; however, this link has not been widely studied.

Nelson and Valliant (1993) conducted a study and found that for adolescent male offenders who did not reside with their father, having a substitute adult role model (i.e., "Big Brother") was associated with outcomes similar to those of males with fathers than to those of males who fathers did not reside in the home with them. Masten (1994) claimed effective parents and mentors make youths feel worthwhile, and these close relationships provide youths with opportunities and resources.

Shade (1983) noted that support and encouragement from immediate family and extended kin are key elements in promoting school achievement among African American youth. Ainsworth (1989) noted young adolescents may adopt parent surrogates, such as older siblings or grandparents, especially when they have not been able to establish a bond with their biological parents. Extended family members can also act as parental surrogates when adolescents are facing difficulties with their parents (Gottlieb & Sylvester, 1996). Several researchers have noted African American youths are more likely to live with and receive support from extended family members than White adolescents (Levitt, Guacci-Franco, & Levitt, 1993; McAdoo, 1998; Wilson, 1989). Clark (1983) studied high- and low-achieving economically disadvantaged African American youth and found that compared to low-achieving students, high achievers had parents or other significant adult role models who spent time and were involved in their educational experiences.
Simmons and Blyth (1987) contend African American males have been shown to have fewer familial resources and may receive less guidance and support as they advance in school. A number of researchers have conducted studies and have found adolescents whose parents maintain high involvement and support during high school do significantly better and are more likely to adopt positive coping strategies in response to academic difficulty and stress (Baker & Stevenson, 1986; Newman, Myers, Newman, Lohman, & Smith, 1998; Rumberger, Ghatak, Poulos, Ritter, & Dornbusch, 1990; Simmons & Blyth, 1987; Spencer, Dupree, & Swanson, 1996). However, parental involvement in school and in monitoring children's education declines during adolescence (Eccles & Harold, 1993; Roderick & Stone, 1998).

Black Males’ Views on Teaching as a Career

School districts and teacher educators have continued to express their concern about the critical under-representation of minority groups in the profession of teaching (Banks, 1991, 1994; Case, Shive, Ingebretson, & Spiege, 1998; Golinick & Chinn, 1986; Gordon, 1993; Greer & Husk, 1989; Holmes, 1986; Mack & Jackson, 1998; Smith, 1988; Speliman, 1998). In 1993 minority students comprised 30% of the student population (Hodgkinson, 1993). That figure is now approximately 38%, and six states (California, Hawaii, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, and Texas) and the District of Columbia have majority minority populations (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). Yet, only 12% of teachers in the United States are members of minority groups (Duarte, 2000).

The racial mismatch between students and teachers is quite striking. African Americans represent approximately 17% of students in public high schools, but constitute
only about eight percent of the teaching staff (AACTE, 1999). In fact, the racial mis-
match has reached the point that many students of color can go through 13 years of public
education (K–12) without meeting a single teacher from their same racial group. In
school districts in which minority students outnumber white students, two-thirds (66
percent) of the teachers are white. Of these districts, African American teachers com-
prise of only 21% of the teaching force. Even in high minority populated central cities in
the United States, minority teachers still account for only 27% of the teaching force
(Recruiting New Teachers, 2000). The literature speaks to part of the issue of recruiting
Black males into teaching has to do with gender roles. Social scientists have long pointed
out that men and women are socialized early to learn appropriate gender roles
(Chodorow, 1978; Thorne, 1993; Weitzman, 1975). Unfortunately, teaching, especially
in the elementary grades, has long been defined as women’s work with minimal representa-
tion of males (Acker, 1995; Allen, 1993; Apple, 1994).

Jackson and Salisbury (1996) noted that children, especially boys, need exposure
to alternative ways of being male, a range of masculinities. Among the key issues that
stand out as affecting African American male identity is ethnic distinctiveness and role
model identification. A reason commonly mentioned for the alienation and poor aca-
demic performance of some African American males is that they perceive most educa-
tional experiences as irrelevant to their masculine identity and development. Further-
more, it is argued that schools and teachers impose a “feminine” culture on males that
inadvertently induces oppositional behavior (Barnard, Havingh, Nezewk, & Proy-Bayard,
2000; Harris, 1995; Hudson, 1991; Polite & Davis, 1999). Given the alienating school
contexts and consequences, particularly those focusing on gender, many African Ameri-
can males become both victims and participants of their own education marginalization (Polite & Davis, 1999).

Smith and Mack (2004) completed a study of research on African-American male honor students' and their views on teaching as a career choice. The survey group included 38 African American male honor students from five high schools in the Gary (Indiana) School District. Of the 38, twenty-four interview instruments were returned with a return rate of 62%. In their article, the authors claimed that while 50% of those surveyed indicated they would consider career in teaching, not one identified teaching as a primary career choice. Instead the participants choose careers in computer related fields, engineering, business, medical/health, and other areas. Reasons noted by the participants for not considering a career in teaching were varied; however the responses centered around disciplinary problems in school, low salaries, job satisfaction, and negative personal experiences with schooling.

Following are a few sample statements, but particularly telling comments made:

- I'm going into a career that would be lucrative and everybody knows that teachers are underpaid and overworked.
- With all the stupid things kids are doing in school and to the school I would be a fool to be a teacher. Kids are bringing guns into schools and shooting the school up. Why would I subject myself to that?
- Teaching is not stimulating for me. I would like to enjoy my career, and teaching would not make me happy.
- I would not consider teaching as a profession because that is not where my interest lies. Educating children is a tough profession because you have so
many variables involved. Also, the monetary compensation for the difficult task of teaching is not worth the headache.

- I would not consider a career in teaching because of the disciplinary problems. Generally, parents are not as supportive of teachers as they once were.
- They don't pay teachers enough for what they all have to endure. I don't have time for bad kids and low pay.
- I probably couldn't stand teaching bad kids. I would probably lose my temper at one of them and end up hurting them.
- I would not consider a career in teaching because a career has to be something that you love. It (teaching) might be boring.
- I don't like repeating myself over and over again. In teaching you are faced with that situation repeatedly.

Wilder (1999) posited for many African American students, making money and gaining occupational stability factors in career selection, but more often than not, a career decision is likely to involve interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic considerations (Johnson, McKeown, & McEwen, 1999).

Summary

Black males continue to face challenges as well as social hardship based on the traditional protocol of pursuing leadership positions in today’s school districts. Nevertheless, Black male administrators’ persistence has afforded them an opportunity to serve in leadership roles in society. The literature reveals the importance of focusing on some
of the historical, cultural and critical issues affecting the educational success of African American males.

Indeed, the problem is much larger than the social ills facing African American males. The development of better recruitment and support programs as well as adequate training in the vast areas of educational leadership to develop them for positions of real authority is critical to the success of African American male school administrators.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to focus on the facilitating and negating factors that contributed to the success of Black male school administrators employed in a public school district in Michigan. The overarching research question for the study posed to guide the collection of data for this study was: What are the facilitating and negating factors related to the career of Black male school principals? To be more specific, the study analyzed the factors in the realms of four social trajectories: (1) family, (2) individual, (3) institutional, (4) community, that facilitate or hinder the professional development of Black males into educational leadership position. The four research questions are listed as follows:

1. What are the facilitating and negating factors in the family involvement domain as perceived by Black male school principals?

2. What are the facilitating and negating factors in the individual domain as perceived by Black male school principals?

3. What are the facilitating and negating factors in the institutional inequalities domain as perceived by Black male school principals?

4. What are the facilitating and negating factors in the community domain as perceived by Black male school principals?
Research Design

Qualitative research techniques were employed to examine the personal experiences of active Black males in educational leadership positions. In-depth interviews provided the opportunity of uncovering descriptive data and the nuances of a particular phenomenon or culture where little knowledge has been previously recorded.

This research design was based upon the characteristics of qualitative research that Creswell (2003) describes. Creswell stated,

Qualitative research is a method of inquiry that allows a researcher to understand a social phenomenon in a deep complex way. Unlike quantitative methodologies where the investigator uses extensive surveys and collects extensive numerical data, qualitative research methodologies best serve a researcher who wants to acquire depth of information rather than breadth.

The use of qualitative research methods has grown considerably in the field of education (Lancy, 1993), a field that has traditionally relied upon a quantitative custom of standardized testing, surveys, and numbers crunching.

Creswell (2003) describes qualitative research as a study that uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic. The methods of data collection are increasing, and involve active participation by participants and sensitivity to the participants of the study. In addition, the actual methods of data collection may include open-ended observations, interviews, and documents, now include a vast array of materials, such as sounds, e-mails, scrapbooks, and other emerging forms of data collection. Creswell (2003) defined qualitative research as:

An inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports...
detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. (p. 15)

Measures

The Interview Instrument

The interview instrument consisted of 28 open-ended questions in five distinct spheres of inquiry: (1) family, (2) individual, (3) institutional, (4) community, and (5) comprehensive (Appendix A). The questions within each sphere of inquiry elicited the necessary data. The questions within each sphere were as follow:

I. Family

a. What or who motivated you to become a school administrator?
b. Were your parents involved in your education? How?
c. In elementary school did your parents assist you with your homework? If not, what was the reason you think your parents did not assist you?
d. Who among the family members were/are role models that led you to become a school principal?
e. What family economic or structural plight did you experience as a child? How did that family experience relate to your career choice?
f. Were parental expectations a significant factor for you?
g. How has sibling(s) influence impacted you as an administrator?
II. Individual

a. What particular variables help motivate your interest in positively facilitating the lives and experiences of the student population in which you serve?

b. What particular strengths do you feel you have brought to the position as a school administrator that have positively impacted your: (1) students, (2) school, (3) community, (4) district?

c. List any awards or recognition that you have received as a school administrator for your work as a school administrator?

d. List any challenges you have encountered as a result of your work as a school administrator?

e. What support have you received from personnel within the context of your school environment that has facilitated your work as a school administrator?

f. Describe any training you have received that was specifically designed to assist you in your role as a Black school administrator?

g. What particular strategies, processes and procedures have you found that have contributed to your success as a school administrator?

h. How does your personal belief system influence your role as an administrator?

i. How has educational philosophy changed as a result of your work as an administrator?

j. Was the academic track of your secondary school experience an important factor in your role as an administrator?
III. Institutional

a. What do you think are the factors and dynamics that explain the shortage of Black male leaders in the school district in which you currently work?

b. How many Black male teachers have applied for teaching positions at your school within the past academic year and how many have you hired?

c. What advice would you share with other Black males interested in becoming a school administrator?

d. What were the greatest obstacles or challenges you encountered while preparing to become a school administrator?

e. Do you feel as if there are institutional practices that impact Black males in their mission as administrators?

f. Does the school district in which you are employed provide leadership training? If so, how has it impacted your role as a school administrator?

g. Does the school district in which your work provide opportunities for teachers to advance into administration?

IV. Community

a. What factors in the community facilitated your becoming a school administrator?

b. What factors in the community impeded your becoming a school administrator?
V. Comprehensive

a. Please list three most important factors that facilitated your becoming a school administrator.

b. Please list three most important factors that negatively impacted your becoming a school administrator.

Pilot Study

Following the development of the interview instrument, a pilot study was conducted. The purpose of the pilot study was to establish the reliability and validity of the researcher-designed instrument. Further the purpose of the pilot study was to determine the clarity of the interview questions, estimate the time it would take to conduct the interviews, and to ascertain if any additional areas needed to be covered. This pilot study was administered to a Black male retired elementary school principal. The participant provided oral feedback. The results of the pilot study were used with developing the informal interviews with study participants.

Research Participants

This particular Michigan school district has educated students in the community for more than 150 years. Currently, more than 25,000 students take part in this school district, which consists of preschool through high school programs. The district employs approximately 4,000 highly trained staff to provide all students with public education. The student population is predominantly comprised of students of color (African
American approximately 44%, Hispanic approximately 23%, Asians approximately 1% and Native Americans approximately 2%, totaling 70% of the total student population. Conversely, out of the approximately 1,247 instructional staff in the district approximately 15% are African American.

A letter of invitation was mailed to all Black male school assistant principals and principals in the school district. Seven participants positively responded to the letter of invitation. From this point forward, these participants will be referred to as participants A, B, C, D, E, F, and G. All participants met the following criteria:

1. Each participant identified as Black.
2. Each participant agreed to participate in an in-depth interview.
3. Each participant currently holds an educational leadership position in GRPS.

Method of Data Collection

This study was approved by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (see Appendix D) and conducted during the winter 2005. The researcher conducted interviews with seven Black participants who currently hold a leadership role (K-12) in the Michigan school district. The interview instrument was delivered to each of the participants in their professional setting. The participants were then read and asked to sign a consent form (Appendix B). The participants were informed that they would be read each item on the interview instrument and were to respond orally to each item while being tape-recorded. To insure the anonymity of the participants none were identified by name on the recorded transcript. Participants were identifiable by a system of codification known only to the researcher. The data collected from the audio-recorded interviews...
were transcribed. Participants were provided with a copy of the transcript for the purpose of reviewing and correcting any information they later decided they would like to have removed from the study. Using a phenomenological approach, participant responses from the researcher-designed questionnaire were codified, grouped and analyzed for emergent themes.

Analysis of Data

Once interviews were completed and transcribed by the researcher, an identification number was assigned to each participant's response to the interview instrument that consisted of 28 open-ended questions. Written comments were noted and compiled for later use, but were not used for coding. The responses of the participants were grouped into five distinct spheres of inquiry: (1) family, (2) individual, (3) institutional, (4) community, and (5) comprehensive. This process was utilized to analyze the similarities that evolved into common themes that emerged from the participants' responses. Five themes emerged as a result of the data analysis:

1. Colleague support is a key mechanism in the success of Black male school administrators.

2. Parental involvement is important in the success of Black male school administrators.

3. Connections to the community are important in the success of Black male school administrators.

4. Support of higher administration is critical to the success of Black male school administrators.
5. Access to adequate resources is important to the success of Black male school administrators.

This chapter described the methodology used in the study, including the selection of the population subjects, research design, validity and reliability, pilot field-testing of the instrument, and the procedures for data analysis. Chapter IV presents the findings of the study.
CHAPTER IV

REPORT OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to focus on the facilitating and negating factors that contributed to the success of Black male school administrators employed in a public school district in Michigan. The overarching research question for the study posed to guide the collection of data for this study was: What are the facilitating and negating factors related to the career of Black male school principals?

The interview instrument was a researcher-composed protocol that consisted of 28 open-ended questions in five distinct spheres of inquiry: (1) family, (2) individual, (3) institutional, (4) community, and (5) comprehensive. Following the development of the interview instrument, a pilot study was conducted to establish the reliability and validity of the researcher-designed instrument. A letter of invitation was mailed to all Black male school assistant principals and principals in a Michigan school district. Seven participants positively responded to the letter of invitation. The participants in the study are identified as A, B, C, D, E, F, and G. All participants met the following criteria:

1. Each participant identified as Black.

2. Each participant agreed to participate in an in-depth interview.

3. Each participant currently holds an educational leadership position in a Michigan school district.
Results are reported under the headings of the four research questions that guided the study. Where appropriate, each conclusion is noted in relationship to the related literature from Chapter II. In this section, the results from this study are discussed in relation to the findings from other studies related to Black males and education. The conclusions from the common themes that emerged from the interview responses are discussed as it relates to the current literature.

Research Question 1: What Are the Facilitating and Negating Factors in the Family Involvement Domain as Perceived by Black Male School Administrators?

Respondents indicated parental involvement was a significant factor that helped shape their lives in becoming a school administrator. Also, the data suggested that extended family members, community leaders as well as school mentors were important in molding the lives of the respondents. Parental involvement helped provide the participants with role models and mentors that assisted with the development of their self-esteem which made the participants feel worthwhile. The data also supports the assertion that young Black males who have an opportunity to identify and view certain individuals as a role model can further their identity development and foster resilience.

Respondents received support and encouragement from their family members. This support and encouragement were key elements in fostering their academic achievement. The positive effects on students of parental involvement in the schools are well documented. Shade (1983) noted that support and encouragement from immediate family and extended kin are key elements in promoting school achievement among African American youth. As indicated by Rich (1996), schools cannot be the only source
of education for America’s children as they prepare for the future. Participants’ responses were consistent with the literature as it relates to the topic of the facilitating and negating factors regarding family involvement. The researcher’s findings also supported the literature in that family members’ and school mentors’ involvement is a key and critical element in the success of future Black school administrators. Five respondents indicated parental involvement was an important factor, which contributed to their success as a Black male school administrator. The impact the African American family can have on Black male youth cannot be discounted. Parental support has been found not only to improve student achievement but can also contribute significantly to the many benefits associated with retaining and graduating Black males: the importance of furthering their education, reduced dropout rates, and decreased peer problem behavior. Parental involvement for Black male youth can assist with providing the key to the future, model positive behavior, and display adaptive techniques in which youth believe are worthy of imitating. Furthermore, the impact of parental involvement for Black male youth can have a profound impact and play a pivotal role in reducing the increasingly incarceration rate of Black males. Last, schools should become more involved in the process of ensuring role model presence by developing a set of coordinated strategies to increase the number of Black male educators to compensate for the lack of role models in today’s school setting. They can also find meaningful ways to involve community based nationally recognized Black male organizations into the school environment.

Furthermore, parental involvement is important in the success of Black male school administrators. Respondents indicated that family members and school mentors were influential and helped motivate them to become a school administrator. Participants'
Participant A stated, "My mother involved and very influential in my life." Participant B stated, "A superintendent during the time I was teaching school, Superintendent Rocco, challenged me to get my Master’s degree and encouraged me to pursue school administration." Participant C stated, "My father was very influential and involved in my childhood life." Participant D: My parents were very involved in my life. They always said to me, "You can be anything that you want to be." Participant E stated, "I had some good teachers. They were very influential in my life. I was without a father. I grew up with my Mom and my four siblings. Also, I was involved in sports and my coaches were always involved in my life and served as mentors." Participant G stated, My father was involved in my life. I watched him drive back and forth to Michigan State to obtain his diploma so he could become an elementary teacher. His goal was to become an administrator. Unfortunately he passed away prior to achieving his goal. Therefore, I decided to follow in his steps to become a school administrator.

Also, participants reported parents, extended family members, the church as well as coaches being involved in their education and having expectations was a significant factor for their success as being a Black male school administrator. Participant A stated, "My uncles were school administrators and were involved in my education. I didn’t have a father in my life." Participant B: "I don’t know if it was expectations or dreams. I was the first in my extended family to get a college education. Therefore, I think I had a role, a real burden to make sure I helped my cousins understand that achieving a college education was possible." Participant C stated, "Yes, my father, my mother, a couple of teachers, coaches, and a couple of religious leaders were involved in my life." As it pertained to having parental expectations, respondent indicated, "Yes.
There were expectations for me and my parents wouldn’t waver from the expectation that they set for me.” Participant D stated,

It took a village to raise kids and in my community we had that village of people. We had aunts, uncles, neighbors, and first cousins interested in our lives. We had everyone in our little community such as ministers from the church that took a big role in our lives and assisting us in becoming whatever we chose to do at that particular time.

As it pertained to having parental expectations, respondent indicated, “My parents had high expectations. They often encouraged by telling me, ‘You can do it.’ I needed that pat on the back. I needed that hug. I needed that handshake from my father. I needed that look in their eyes that said, ‘You’re a strong man.’” Participant E stated,

I had coaches, teachers, and some employers, who were very influential in my life. In high school I was fortunate to get connected with a few Black male teachers who reassured me, as long as I kept my head and focused on what I needed to get accomplished things would work out for the best.

Participant F stated, “Probably the most influential person in my life would have been my mother, she always stressed education and that was very influential in my life. Also a couple of coaches were influential in my life.” As it pertained to having parental expectations, respondent indicated,

Yes absolutely there were parental expectations for me. Based on our economic situation we had to be independent. We had to be able to take care of ourselves and the best way to accomplish this task was to have something to offer the world and to have a good education. Those were the type of expectations that were instilled in us.

Participant G stated, “My father was my largest role model. Also, I had my first African American male schoolteacher in the sixth grade. He was a very positive role model for me to continue my education in school.” As it pertained to having parental expectations, respondent indicated, “My parents had high expectations for me. They
believed I was raised as a young man, and I should always act as a responsible young man.

Research Question 2: What Are the Facilitating and Negating Factors Related to the Individual Domain of the Black Male School Administrators?

Respondents indicated receiving awards and recognition for their work is critical to their success as Black school administrators. If Black male school administrators are to be successful they have to be recognized for their contributions as Black male school administrators. Furthermore, the data clearly indicates that community and supervisory support is necessary and important to the success of Black male school administrators. Recognizing and rewarding Black male school administrators for their work could serve as an advantage to keep these people motivated and functioning at a higher level.

The data also supports the assertion that Black school administrators who have their work recognized and rewarded for their achievements could increase their motivation potential. The study concluded the most frequently described satisfiers related to job satisfactions as achievement, recognition, and responsibility. Based on the findings of this study it is clear that rewards, recognition, and support are important in the lives of successful Black administrators.

Another particular variable indicated by the respondents was the challenges and lack of support they encountered from their colleagues as a result of their work as a Black school administrator. The data clearly supports that Black administrators require the support of their supervisor, colleagues, and of the community in addition to having their work being recognized and rewarded for the achievements they have accomplished. Per-
ception of respondents indicated they encountered negative support from subordinates because they were not respected for their academic knowledge, intellect, or leadership. Black school administrators require support today more than ever and support for new principals is even more critical. This can be addressed through support mechanisms and mentoring programs. Results are consistent with research conducted by Herzberg and Sergiovanni. For example, Herzberg (1979) stated job satisfaction is related to intrinsic factors such as success, the challenge of the work, achievement and recognition, whereas dissatisfaction with the job has been related to extrinsic factors such as salary, supervision, and working conditions. Sergiovanni (1969) conducted a study to determine whether the factors resulting in work satisfaction were connected to the work itself or whether the factors resulting in dissatisfaction were linked to the work environment. Participants' responses were consistent with the literature as it relates to the topic of the facilitating and negating factors related to the individual domain as a Black male school administrator.

Four participants indicated that they received no recognition or rewards for their work as a school administrator. It is imperative that Black male school administrators receive rewards and recognition for their work. Employee reward and recognition can serve as an effective tool of communication that reinforces the most important outcomes Black male school administrators create for their building, community, and school district. Also, when you recognize Black male school administrators effectively they become motivated and inspired to repeat the desired actions and behaviors of their supervisors. Furthermore, job satisfaction is positively related to participative decision-making and transformational leadership. The work of school leadership fosters the cultural
model for effecting real transformation. Transforming the culture for Black school
administrators to be involved in the decision making process of hiring Black teachers can
foster a cultural model for effecting real leadership as well as unite people and ultimately
promote a shared school vision. These opportunities could assist with issues regarding
retention, and help to reduce feelings of isolation, low morale, low job satisfaction, and
lack of support that would not be tolerated in other professions.

Participants indicated that colleague support is a key mechanism in the success of
Black male school administrators. Respondents indicated they received no awards or
recognition for their work as a school administrator. Participant D stated, “I [received
no awards or recognition] as a principal. However, there are many individuals at dif­
ferent schools within and outside of the district who know me for doing this or that.”
This experience was shared by a majority of the participants. Although participants were
rewarded in other areas for service, their work as a school administrator has not been
recognized. The fact they did not receive any awards or recognition for their work
indicates lack of colleague support. “However, there are many individuals at different
schools within and outside of the district who know me for doing this or that.” Participant E stated, “I have not received any awards as administrator, this is my first year. I
was a supervisor at Job Corp and received recognition for outstanding achievement for
the health of students. But as a current administrator in the public school district, I have
not received any awards or recognition.” Participant F stated, “I haven’t received any
awards or recognition for my work as a principal.” Participant G stated, “This is my
4th year in administration and I have yet to receive any awards or recognition for my
work as an administrator.”
Another negating factor related to the success of Black male school administrators is their different vision for social change than those of White administrators. Participants identified the resource disparity between Black and White students as a major reason of Black students' underachievement. However, participants feel frustrated that some of White administrators are not fully aware of this problem and internalize the dominant perception of Black students and lower their expectations to academically challenge Black students. Participant A stated,

I think one of the major challenges people have is with change. Change is hard for a lot of people. For some reason it appears to me that we are setting low expectations for our kids. Many of my White colleagues believe students of color cannot perform academically as well as their counterparts. That is a major challenge. Many of my White colleagues believe students of color graduating from high school is good enough and they are not setting challenging goals for these students to have a life after high school. On the other hand, I think we have to assist with instilling a dream into those students. Often, these students don’t come from well-educated families or a place where goals have been set for them. Sometimes you can set goals for children and they achieve the goals you have set for them.

Also, some of the participants expressed concern about the insufficient number of Black staff, according to Participant E, “who are familiar with the students’ ethnic background or culture in which they service.”

Age is another challenge that Black administrators face on top of race. One participant mentioned that his ability is constantly questioned because of his young age. Participant C stated,

Many of my colleagues and the staff I am responsible for are a lot older than me. Having direction, knowledge, and expertise was a major challenge in terms of getting started. You have older staff in place for twenty, thirty years, who challenge your competency. They would question your expertise as well as your ethnicity. There are times as an African American male school administrator I was not viewed as being as knowledge-
able, as skillful, and as efficient or quote unquote 'questionable leadership.'

Participant E stated,

There are quite a few challenges and staff is just one of those challenges. I mentioned staff because the public school district employs many non-minority teachers who are not familiar with the student's ethnic background or culture in which they service. They didn't grow up with Black people, they don't know and understand the norms and traditions, nor do they understand the language we use to communicate with each other. [Participant E responded in reference to White people] they have a lot of earned privileges as a result of the color of their skin. Also, the district appears to be unstable at times. It seems as if they change directions about where they are going with certain issues at times. And, that makes it challenging. The district needs structure and the community needs to have a better idea of what's going on at all times.

Participant G stated,

I think the biggest challenge is getting many of the non-minority teachers onboard. Getting some of the teachers to understand you can't just sit at the computer and do other things, while your students are involved in other unrelated activities. We have to make sure our students are on task and getting as much information. I think the biggest barrier is making teachers really care about students of color and care that every child that leaves their classroom has been provided the opportunity to learn.

Research Question 3: What Are the Facilitating and Negating Factors Related to Institutional Inequalities for Black Male School Administrators?

Respondents indicated race as the ultimate deterring factor related to institutional inequalities pertaining to their success as Black male school administrators. It is well documented that racial biases that are related to the institutional inequalities for Black male school administrators negatively impacted their roles as effective school administrators. Respondents indicated White teachers do not have high expectations nor do they challenge young Black males to succeed academically. It is evident that the significant
alienation Black males experience in America’s schools plays a major part in their future. The consequences of what Black males experience in America’s schools are major limitations on socioeconomic ability, ultimately leading to high rates of unemployment, crime, and incarceration for massive numbers of young Black men. Factors identified as contributing to limited academic performance among Black youths include academic tracking, limited teacher support, cultural mistrust, and disidentification with the academic culture of the school (Fine, 1991; Finn, 1989; Oakes, 1985; Steele, 1992; Terrell et al., 1993).

Furthermore, African American communities are becoming increasingly frustrated over the school’s inability to educate African American urban children, particularly their young men (Wynn, 2000). It is also well documented that when Black males move into secondary schools they are more likely to learn that teachers will rely on stereotypes and prior expectations in forming their relationships with them.

An example of this would be the “Sambo and Brute” stereotype that continues to have a negative impact on African American students. The “Sambo” image inhibits both the academic achievement of African American males and their relationships with their teachers, leading to low expectations as well as disproportionately high referral rates to special education and low referral rates to higher level and gifted courses. In many instances, teachers are more comfortable with the playful, jovial African American male students than with the serious, quiet ones, who are perceived to have an “attitude.”

The “Sambo” image also creates greater acceptance for the African American male student who is submissive rather than assertive, the latter being perceived rather as aggressive or defiant. The “Brute” image leads to a preoccupation with control and un-
just labeling. African American male students are held to a higher standard of behavior than their peers (Townsend, 2002). They are most likely to be punished for minor infractions, and they receive penalties disproportionate to their conduct. In the same way that African American male students are tracked academically, they are tracked behaviorally. When one misbehaves, he is quickly branded as a troublemaker and is henceforth never able to escape the label. In many instances, African American male students are set up for misbehavior. The teacher knowing which “button to push” can easily provoke the student to an angry response and thus have cause to remove him from the classroom (pp. 9–10).

Furthermore it has been clearly documented that educational experiences often serve as antecedents to many of the social and economic ills students face later in life. Thus, inequities in schooling experiences have potentially broad consequences for students’ future educational attainment, employment, and family relations. Access to academic experiences through curriculum, teachers, and other school activities is of particular importance for students such as African American males, who are already marginalized in school settings (Finn & Cox, 1992; Irvine, 1990; Sanders & Reed, 1995).

Several notable scholars have also found that urban adolescents’ perception of the quality of their school environment, the academic expectations of their teachers, and the quality of relationship with peers and teachers declined markedly as students move to high school (Reyes et al., 1994; Seidman et al., 1994; Simmons et al., 1991; Simmons & Blyth, 1987). Previous negative school experiences and students’ awareness of teachers’ perceptions of their group may lead to making Black males feel less competent and less efficacious in developing their school performance (Steele & Aronson, 1998). The lack
of clear payoffs to education also deprives Black males of a critical coping mechanism (Markus et al., 1990; Markus & Nurius, 1986). Ogbu (1990) contended that African American youth may question the value of a high school diploma in the face of high levels of unemployment regardless of high school attainments and the existence of underground economies in their neighborhood where educational credentials mean nothing. Because many youth are clear regarding the negative impact of dropping out of high school, the lack of clear payoffs to persistence and well-defined pathways to success make it difficult to invest in the future (Oyserman et al., 1995).

In contrast, to the literature related to institutional inequalities many of the participants indicated support of higher administration is critical to the success of Black male school administrators. **Participant A:**

I’ve received major support from the building principal when I have had to correct the staff in situations and perform administrative actions with staff. I’ve also received support from the superintendent, city administrators, and the administrators from the High School Administration. They have been very supportive in what I have had to do with change.

**Participant B stated,** “Having had the opportunity to working for some competent administrators, I learned a lot from them and they were able to provide me with the necessary support to implement a few programs I wanted in my schools.” **Participant C stated,**

The personnel ... what I have experienced in my time here is that my outcome from my work has garnished my influence. People will listen when I speak. People respond when I speak. I think it is directly linked to the personnel support I have been connected with or that I had a major part in developing. So, I think my work speaks for itself. People see that. Therefore, when I need assistance or support, I don’t get a whole lot of hesitation about why I need it or if I need it. The support has done wonders for me.
Participant D stated,

I receive great support from my coach, chief assistant superintendent, professional development, and trainings. In fact, we’ve done more training in the last two or three years than we have in a lifetime. This training is not only focused on the role of being an administrator, but a big part of this training has had administrators pay closer attention to what teachers are doing. Recent training is requiring us to have a better understanding of what the teachers go through on a daily basis. This sort of training has helped us as administrators prepare our teachers get in shape for school action plans for learning. So, we’ve had great support, out of town support ... I just finished a course last weekend in preparation to get a mind set to do things. So, there is great support in the system right now.

Participant E stated,

I have received support from personnel and from my teachers. I feel like my principal is very supportive. I think he believes in me. He has provided me the opportunity to work for commercial things. I think the teachers here are very supportive. The other assistant principals are very supportive. There are a lot of parents in this community that are supportive of what the school is attempting to do and I think some parents are supportive of me.

Participant F stated, “We have a support group called the ‘Principal Academy.’

Principals meet for support to implement district programs and to talk about the concerns in the district. This group also provides support for relationship building within the district.”

Furthermore, access to adequate resources is important to the success of Black male school administrators. Respondents indicated that they did not receive training that was specifically designed to assist in them in their role as a Black school administrator.

Participant A stated,

Well, we received training that was provided to assist with establishing a relationship with students. We also received training to provide me with an opportunity to learn the school’s computer system. I received training for scheduling so I could quickly resolve scheduling conflicts for students. There were some major training sessions during the summer, instructional
leadership team, and quite a few other trainings. Weekly and monthly meetings as administrators, but no training that assisted me in my role as Black male school administrator. To attend national conferences to receive this type of invaluable information always presented a problem … no resources to attend the conference.

Participant B stated,

My master’s program was Education for the Disadvantaged. They enlisted Michigan’s Leadership Program. My doctoral work was … in the area of Leadership and Management Supervision at University of Michigan. I think that both of those programs gave me a good basis to not only research, but also to have an impact in the urban setting.

Participant C stated,

In my formal training, I received very little to no support or training to assist me in my role as a Black administrator in an urban school district setting. Being African American some of my training comes from interpersonal relationships with other African American men in leadership roles. There is a need for training based on how African American males, not only in Michigan, but in society, are perceived. So, having some sort of allegiance or alliance with other Black males, and a forum where training and information is provided based on the experiences of Black males could be invaluable. The district needs to buy in and support these types of endeavors by providing adequate resources to have other different types of training to help us be more effective as administrators for the communities we serve.

Participant D stated,

Right before I started we had a leadership program that met on Saturdays. The training was very intense. However, to better understand the communities we are serving, training has to be provided to assist us with our work as Black male school administrators. This type of training is not being offered in the district. We need to look outside of the district and looking outside the district requires support and adequate resources to bring that information to the community or for Black administrators to travel outside and bring it back to the district.

Participant F stated, “There are no available resources specifically for training to assist me with in my role as a Black male school administrator. That’s one of the things that I spoke with the superintendent about and he agreed.” Participant G stated,
The largest training was the last workshop I attended on saving the Black male student. The workshop was profound for me. Not to mention my objective is to take the information I received from the workshop one step further. I hope to share the information I received with the rest of the district without stepping on people’s toes. The main goal and objective is to make sure that we take the information that we’ve learned and implement it into school because other Black male school administrators are not being provided these sorts of opportunities due to the lack of resources allocated for these types of training.

Furthermore, respondents reported not reserving any power to recruit and hire Black teachers. Participant A stated, “I know of two Black teachers who have applied to our school. However, I have not hired any teachers, although I know the two who applied were hired.” Participant B stated, “I have hired only one Black teacher while an administrator in this school for more than twenty years. That person hired came in on a special hire. A lot of white females and some white males are hired every time we post a position.” Participant D stated, “There is one Black teacher’s assistant in my school. I have no Black male or female classroom teachers. I have not been involved in the hiring process.” Participant E stated, “I haven’t hired any new Black male teachers. There’s some that have transferred from other buildings.” Participant F stated,

I can’t answer that about the district in terms of numbers, but I know that on the staff here at this particular high school there’s only one Black male teacher. We have a Black teacher that splits time between education specialist and a classroom. We have quite a few subs that are Black male in our building. However, I was not involved in the process to hire them.

Participant G: “In the four years that I’ve worked here, one African American male teacher was hired and he has been promoted to an administrator. Nevertheless, I have not been involved in the recruitment and hiring process for any Black male teachers.”

Nevertheless, participants’ responses were consistent with the literature as it relates to the topic of race as a facilitating and negating factor related to the institutional
inequalities for Black male administrators. The researcher concludes that based on the literature and the findings of this study that the barriers Black males face as a result of institutional inequalities race are the ultimate deterring factor that has negatively impacted the success of Black school administrators.

Research Question 4: What Are the Facilitating and Negating Factors in the Community Domain as Perceived by Black Male School Principals?

Respondents indicated that having a role model in the community was a significant factor that contributed to their success as a Black male school administrator. The data also support the assertion that Black administrators serving as role models in the community is critical to the success of Black male youth development and promoting school achievement. As indicated by Kemper (1968), role models are key references for adolescents considering they provide a window to the future, model positive behavior, and display adaptive techniques adolescents can aspire to achieve.

Furthermore it is well documented that the presence of a male role model has been associated with less problem behavior. Nelson and Valliant (1993) conducted a study and found that for adolescent male offenders who did not reside with their father, having a substitute adult role model (i.e., "Big Brother") was associated with outcomes similar to those of males with fathers than to those of males whose fathers did not reside in the home with them. Also, a study that examined high- and low-achieving economically disadvantaged African American youth found that compared to low-achieving students, high achievers had parents or other significant adult role models who spent time and were involved in their educational experiences.
Participants’ responses were consistent with the literature as it relates to the success of Black male school administrators who served as role models in their community. The researcher concludes that based on the literature and the findings of this study that having Black male role models in the community has positively impacted their success as a Black school administrator. Five of the participants expressed how having Black male role models involved in their community had positively impacted their success as Black male school administrators. Having Black male school administrators, churches, and other community organizations actively involved in the schools and communities can assist with supporting the academic achievement of Black males. This type of support coupled with parental and school involvement could be instrumental in taking action to shift the academic outcomes and transform the direction of the damaging disengaging trends associated with the academic achievement gap of Black males. Furthermore, other strategies with community leaders, school administrators, and parents must be devised at the community level to provide Black children with support. For example, there are long-standing traditions within the Black community where parents have turned to the churches and other community organizations as a possible source of effective support for the academic achievement of Black male students. Many believe this strategy allows for churches and community organizations an opportunity to counterbalance for the failings of schools. Shifting the academic outcome through frequent contact with the community represents a potential avenue to reduce the incarceration rates as well as assist with raising the capacity of Black males to be productive, integral and contributing members of society and their community.
Furthermore, connections to the community are important in the success of Black male school administrators. Respondents indicated wanting to impact the families; the student population they served and making a difference was important in their role as Black male school administrators. Participant A stated,

I’ve always wanted to work in an inner city school. In fact, my desire to work in the inner city recently impacted my decision to leave the suburban school district I was teaching at and move back to the inner city for the position I have as a school administrator. It seems like no one wants to work in this community because they fear the people who are a part of this community. There is no fear for me because I grew up in this community. Also, the community has helped facilitate my return because there are many people in the community who urged me to work in an inner city environment. Many from the community informed me, “the students really need your help, and you would be a good administrator and role model for that school.” So, I think those were the community voices talking and wanting more positive Black male role models within the school system.

Participant B stated,

We had major riots in Detroit following the riots in California and Detroit. During those major riots, I was teaching school and many students were not as engaged and the school district wanted to hire people these kids would listen to. The thought process then was, if we could get the students off the streets and back into the classroom that would be good. During those riots, non-minority teachers had a very, very hard time controlling Black students in their classes. As I explained earlier, the superintendent was looking for Blacks he thought would be able to assist in bringing a calm back to our district. The other major riot was caused by bussing students to predominantly white schools. We had just begun to bus Black students from a predominantly African American high school that had been closed, to other schools where they were the minority. As a result of the bussing, racial tension was extremely high. Other schools were bussing Black students to schools where there were no Black teachers, and certainly no Black administrators. I think the superintendent knew he needed to identify young Black men he felt could help bring calm back to this district. That’s where I and ten to twelve other guys were hired to make a difference in the community in which we were serving.

Participant C stated,
There were not many African American administrators when I attended elementary, middle, or high school. There were even fewer in college. However, the one African American male administrator I did encounter was very visible within the community. To see a principal I could watch in the park playing in a pick-up basketball game; to see a principal sit next to me at a community event; or a few rows from me in church; to run into a principal at the grocery store and have conversation with him; to have a conversation at the community gas station, inspired me to be connected to the community in a leadership role. Having that type of interaction and understanding can have a significant impact when you’re connected to the community or the everyday lives of the individuals of the community.

Participant E stated,

In the community? When I first started as an administrator, I was in a different district. When you care about your race, and you care about students, especially students who you share the same ethnicity as you and understating what these students go through in these communities on a day to day basis that should make you want to do something to make a difference. Everyday you see things occurring in these communities that should not be happening. Drive around at 11 a.m. and you see children that should be in school walking the streets. When I worked at the movie theater, students were leaving the theater at 1 a.m. in the morning. These types of incident show there a need for more guidance. When it comes to providing that guidance, I’m not afraid to sit in front of parents and say, “You might want to think about how you are doing things and how to do them better.” For example, I had a family in my office the other day. The student gets out of school at 2:15 p.m. everyday, however, does not go home until 10:00 p.m. I explained to the parent she was contributing to her son’s behavior by not being involved in wanting to know his whereabouts once he leaves school. What do you think a twelve year old is doing at 10:00 p.m. who hasn’t been home all day? What do you think he’s doing? I talked to the student and he informed me “I’m at my girlfriend’s.” Okay ... you can imagine the consequences of this behavior. Therefore, it is these types of experiences in working with the students I serve that keeps me involved in the community.

Participant F stated,

Basically, I was looking for a challenge and I just happened to open my mouth in the right place. It wasn’t anything I was really going to look for wholeheartedly, but I’m glad I have been afforded the opportunity because I’m seeing a lot of different ways that I have and can impact more people and students in this community. The community in which I work needs to see leaders. Students and parents need to see leaders in various types of
capacities, not those types of leaders on the radio and things of that nature. Therefore, it is important I present myself in a positive way to the community. I demonstrate this by being involved, visible, and available to the members of the community. Our community needs to see people like me who are positive influences on a regular basis and I strive to do that.

Participant G stated,

Seeing that the schools are not involved in the community to the extent I would like to see them involved has helped me to better understand why it’s so important to connect to the community even more. When we have problems with students in our school, I think it’s important the community as well as the churches in the community provide support to students and parents. Unfortunately, I don’t see that happening. My goal for next year is to try to get a church to partnership with my high school.

Chapter IV presented the findings of the study. Chapter V presents and discusses the five emergent themes as a result of the participants’ responses to the interview instrument as well conclusions and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of Black male school administrators in a Michigan school district and to identify factors that contributed to the recruitment and retention of successful Black male school administrators. The final chapter consists of summary, followed by conclusions and a discussion of the findings. This discussion is followed by recommendations for future research.

Summary

The overarching research question posed to guide the collection of data for this study was: What are the facilitating and negating factors related to the career of Black male school administrators? To be more specific the study analyzed the factors in the realms of four social trajectories: (1) family, (2) individual, (3) institutional, and (4) community, that facilitate or hinder the professional development of Black males into educational leadership position. The four research questions are listed as follows:

1. What are the facilitating and negating factors in the community domain as perceived by Black male school principals?

2. What are the facilitating and negating factors in the individual domain as perceived by Black male school principals?
3. What are the facilitating and negating factors in the family involvement domain as perceived by Black male school principals?

4. What are the facilitating and negating factors in the institutional inequalities domain as perceived by Black male school principals?

The interview instrument consisted of 28 open-ended questions in five distinct spheres of inquiry: (1) family, (2) individual, (3) institutional, (4) community, and (5) comprehensive (Appendix A). The questions within each sphere of inquiry elicited the necessary data. The researcher conducted interviews with seven Black participants who positively responded to the letter of invitation and who currently holds a leadership role (K–12) in a public school district. Five themes emerged from the participants’ responses to the interview instrument questionnaire.

1. Colleague support is a key mechanism in the success of Black male school administrators.

2. Parental involvement is important in the success of Black male school administrators.

3. Connection to the community is important in the success of Black male school administrators.

4. Support of higher administration is critical to the success of Black male school administrators.

5. Access to adequate resources is important to the success of Black male school administrators.
Conclusions

The following conclusions are derived from the data collected for this study. These conclusions are reported under the headings of the themes that emerged from the four research questions that guided the study. In this section, the conclusions from this study are discussed in relation to the findings from other studies related to Black males and education. The conclusions from the common themes that emerged from the interview responses are discussed as it relates to the current literature.

Table 1 identifies the five themes. Keywords were extrapolated from the interviews based on participant's responses and plotted in Table 1.

Table 1
Emerging Themes Expressed by Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colleague Support</th>
<th>Parental and Role Model Involvement</th>
<th>Community Connections</th>
<th>Higher Administration Support</th>
<th>Access to Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognition from administration</td>
<td>Mother involved and influential</td>
<td>Students needed my help</td>
<td>Major support from building principal</td>
<td>No resources to attend conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working for public schools</td>
<td>Superintendent during the time</td>
<td>Make a difference</td>
<td>Provided me with necessary support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending leadership academy award</td>
<td>Father was very influential</td>
<td>Interaction and understanding can impact</td>
<td>The support has done wonders</td>
<td>Very little to no support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None as a principal</td>
<td>Parents were very involved</td>
<td></td>
<td>I receive great support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None as an administrator</td>
<td>Teachers were very influential</td>
<td>Make a difference</td>
<td>Principal is very supportive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I haven’t received any</td>
<td>Father was involved</td>
<td>Community needs to see positive influences</td>
<td>Principals meet for support</td>
<td>There are no available resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yet to receive any awards</td>
<td>Mother involved in education</td>
<td>Important to connect to community</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 shows that, during the formative years for the participants of this study, the data clearly suggest parental involvement is a key mechanism and a facilitating factor for success as Black male school administrator. However, the during the formative years for the participants of this study, the data clearly indicates there were no emerging themes during the formative, college, teaching, administrative or sustain administrative that were seen as negating factors.

Table 2
Family Involvement Theme Expressed by Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formative</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Teaching</th>
<th>Administrative</th>
<th>Sustain Administrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilitating Factors</strong></td>
<td>Parental involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negating Factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that, during the administrative years, the data clearly suggest that there are two negating factors that have not contributed to the success of the African American male school administrators of this study. One of the negating factors is participants of this study did not receive any recognition or awards for their work as a school administrator. The other negating factor for the African American male school administrators in this study is they lacked support from their colleagues.
Table 3

Individual Domain Theme Expressed by Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Facilitating Factors</th>
<th>Negating Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td></td>
<td>No Recognition for awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No colleague support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustain Admin</td>
<td>Support from principals</td>
<td>Access to resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it relates to the sustaining years of their administration, the data clearly suggest the African American male school administrators lacked having adequate resources. This too, was seen as a negating factor for that did not contribute to the success of the participants of this study. However, during the years of sustaining as an administrative, the data clearly suggest the respondents received support from their principals or superiors as a facilitating factor that contributed to their career success as an African American male school administrator.

Table 4 shows that, during the sustaining of administrative years, the data clearly suggest that making a difference by impacting the community was seen as a facilitating factor that has contributed to the career success of the African American male school administrator who participated in this study. In describing the facilitating and negating factors as a Black male school administrator in a school district in Michigan, the participants indicated their involvement related to the previously mentioned themes expressed. The types of experiences can be characterized by their formative, college, teaching, administrative and sustaining years as an administrator. In conclusion, participants
overall thought their experiences as a Black male school administrator in a school district in Michigan were positive. As a result of their experiences, participants have gained invaluable insights on how critical their role as a Black school administrator is to the parents, students and community they serve.

Table 4

Community Domain Theme Expressed by Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitating Factors</th>
<th>Negating Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustain Administrative</td>
<td>Make a difference by impacting the community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theme 1: Colleague Support Is a Key Mechanism in the Success of Black Male School Administrators

As a result of the data it was clear that colleague support is a key mechanism in the success of Black school administrators. The data clearly supports this emergent theme.

Based on the data collected the response from each of the participants clearly indicates that colleagues' support was important in all of the lives and the success of Black male school administrators. There appears to be general consensus among all the participants of this study. Participants of this study expressed a need to have support and recognition for their work as a Black male school administrator. Senior administrators
must effectively communicate to Black male school administrators they are appreciated and highly regarded for the significant contributions made to school, community and the district. Furthermore, this type of recognition for Black male school administrators must resonate throughout the work environment to impact the school community and culture. Creating a supportive work environment for Black male school administrators, will help induce the pain avoidance needs which are environmental or external to the job (e.g., working conditions) associated with hygiene factors and assist with incentives that satisfy the growth needs internal to the job (e.g., achievement and responsibility), which are called motivator factors.

Theme 2: Parental Involvement Is Important in the Success of Black Male School Administrators

As a result of the data, it was clear that parental involvement is important in the success of Black male school administrators. Participants of this study expressed a critical need to have parents and role models involved in their lives. Parental involvement as well as role models in the early developmental stages of their schooling was critical to the participants of this study. Furthermore, parents and role models can play a pivotal role in the socialization development and academic engagement of Black youth, specifically Black males. The presence and involvement of parents and role models can be particularly important in the lives of Black youths who are searching for individuals worthy of imitating because they portray themselves as role models and model appropriate behavior. Parental involvement and role modeling is one of many avenues to address the inequities for Black males in America’s criminal justice system.
Theme 3: Connection to the Community Is Important in the Success of Black Male School Administrators

As a result of the data, it was clear that connecting to the community is important to the success of Black male school administrators. Based on the data collected the response from each of the participants clearly indicates connection to the community was important to the success of Black male school administrators in the school districts in which they serve. Families, community, and the church are important factors to the success of Black male school administrators as well. Supporters of the community can assist with providing Black male youths with a social message regarding their purpose in life. This extended family approach can assist with developing invaluable relationships that can play a critical role in the development of Black male youths.

Theme 4: Support of Higher Administration Is Critical to the Success of Black Male School Administrators

As a result of the data, it was clear that the support of higher administration is critical to the success of Black male school administrators. Respondents indicated the support they received from personnel within the context of their school environment was critical to their success as a Black male school administrator. Based on the data collected, the response from each of the participants clearly indicates that support from higher administration is critical to the success of Black male school administrators. While many of the participants of this study indicated the importance of receiving support, participants' responses appear to be limited. While Black male school administrators need support in dealing with difficult staff, implementing programs during their
administrative careers, they also need to develop their own professional expertise as school administrators. The need to stay current with curriculum and instruction concerns, have more relevant training and professional development opportunities are also critical to the support Black administrators receive from their supervisors to implement programs and advice to deal with staff who challenge authority.

Theme 5: Access to Adequate Resources Is Important to the Success of Black Male School Administrators

As a result of the data, it was clear that access to adequate resources is important to the success of Black male school administrators. Based on the data collected, the response from each of the participants clearly indicates that access to adequate resources is important to the success of Black male school administrators. The participants of this study expressed a critical need to have adequate financial support for training as well as the authority to hire more Black male teachers to have a sense of achievement as a Black male school administrator. Financial support to build on the existing knowledge can assist with retaining Black male school administrators. Furthermore, involving Black male school administrators in the hiring process of Black teachers can help with the industrial democracy. The approach of affording Black male school administrators to be engaged in the decision making process promotes the philosophy of democracy. Furthermore, the main objective should be to foster involvement in all the decision-making to provide ownership.
Recommendations

Recommendations for Districts to Create a Positive Environment

Based on the results of this research, the following recommendations are made for districts who wish to create a positive and conducive environment for the Black male administrator:

1. Develop a mentoring support program for Black male school administrators at the elementary, middle and high schools.

2. Develop a support program for young Black males.

3. Hire minority males in teaching positions where more than 60% of the student population is non-White. This recommendation suggests an active recruitment policy for Black male schoolteachers in districts that have more than a 60% student population of color.

4. Work with local universities to prepare more people of color for administrative positions.

5. Develop and implement pre-service and in-service diversity training for administrators, teachers, and boards of education to eliminate racial and gender bias as well as inhibiting attitudes, which limit the opportunity for Black males in school environments.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations are offered for future research:
1. Studies should be designed to compare and contrast pertinent achievement data between school districts headed by Black school administrators with those school districts headed by White school administrators.

2. Research should be conducted to investigate the experiences of Black female school administrators.

3. Research should be conducted in different locations with Black male school administrators (e.g., rural or southern districts).

Concluding Statement

Based on the findings of this study and the review of the literature it is clear that Black males continue to be marginalized academically and socially. The unfair treatment of Black males along with the need to overcome discrimination and the struggle for education has resulted in an underclass of how Black males are perceived and gives rise to why Black male teachers and administrators are highly underrepresented in today’s school system. The participants of this study identified characteristics and needs are very similar to the literature review that is critical to the success of Black male school administrators. The need to be mentored by other Black males; the need for parental involvement; the need to receive recognition and rewards for their work; as well as the need for a strong support program, were clearly echoed by the participants. Identifying structures to address the sociological and the professional needs of Black male school administrators will go a long way in building a culture of productive teachers, other administrators and the students they serve. These efforts are paramount considering the ever-changing
nature of the demographics in primary and secondary education that is becoming increasingly more diverse.
SECTION I. Family

a. What or who motivated you to become a school administrator?

Participant A: My mother.

Participant B: Well, a superintendent at the time I was teaching school, Superintendent Rocco, challenged me to get my Master’s degree and move over to the administrative side. That was back in probably 1969.

Participant C: My father.

Participant D: My parents, strong for education. My father, and my mother, my mother was first a teacher and went on from there to become an administrator. My parents always told me that, “You can be anything that you want to be.” I’ll stick with Mom and Dad. They had a third and fourth grade education. They raised eight of us. Out of eight of us, I think five of us went on to get a college degree and Master’s. So, Mom and Dad, I love you.

Participant E: What or who ... I guess I was self-motivated a lot. I loved school when I was in school. I like the situation of the hours and summers off, and I had some good teachers. They were very influential in my life. I was without a father. I grew up with just my Mom and my four siblings. So, I was involved in sports and my coaches were always involved in my life. Then ... helping me through with decisions and choices and very supported. I felt comfortable in the school, and then I wanted to give back and work with kids in kind of a similar situation. So, that’s how I kind of got involved. I’ve always worked with at-risk kids, high-needs kids, for the majority of my life, since I went to college. So then, I guess I was going to be a part of helping kids and taking the next step. My thing was, I did a lot as a teacher, but I think I can do more as an administrator, and my goal one day is to even be a superintendent. So, I think we really need some changes in the state when it comes to administration. Cause in Lansing, when I look at some of the policies that they have in place that affects the urban schools with Detroit, you have your Flint, your Grand Rapids, your Saginaw ... some changes that need to be made. So, I want to get there so I can be a part of that one day.

Participant F: Actually, I got into this by accident. I was at a high school basketball game, my daughter was playing, and the recent member of one of the high school administrative team passed away, and a little time had went by and they were still looking for a person to fill the spot. Just by chance, the principal of the high school was there and I asked her what they intended to do about that position. She asked me, “Why? Would you
like to be considered for it?” I said, “We’ll talk about it.” So, I went over and talked about it and one thing led to another and that’s actually how I became a high school administrator. Maybe another part of that is I was in a classroom and I was getting a little frustrated with the students’ efforts and things like that, and I just wanted another type of challenge.

**Participant G:** My father did. My father was a custodian in Grand Rapids at the community college. And, I watched him drive back and forth to Michigan State to obtain his diploma so he could become a teacher, an elementary teacher. His goal was to become an administrator, you know, but unfortunately he passed away before doing that, and I decided to take that point and move on and become administrator.

b. Were your parents involved in your education? How?

**Participant A:** Yes! My mother was involved in my education.

**Participant B:** My parents were involved in my education to the tune of encouraging me to go to school.

**Participant C:** Yes, very actively involved stressing that I had to have education and then the importance of an education.

**Participant D:** Number one, they were number one.

**Participant E:** I was raised with five children—three girls and two boys—and my brother was high needs as they call ... so my mother was involved as much as she could.

**Participant F:** Not my father cause he wasn’t around, like I said earlier. My mother ... that was her whole focal point, you know ... family, faith, and education. My mom and dad neither of them were high school graduates strongly emphasized the importance of an education. In fact, of the seven children, five of them have a college education and everyone is doing pretty well.

**Participant G:** Yes both of them were teachers, and so they knew the importance of an education.

c. In elementary school did your parents assist you with your homework? If not, what was the reason you think your parents did not assist you?

**Participant A:** Yes, my mother was an elementary school teacher.

**Participant B:** Yes, my Mom did sometimes.
Participant D: They assisted us until we passed them, and then we started helping them. Every night we had a special place in the house to do all the work. It was real funny, you had your chores to do, but you had to finish your homework, then you started on your chores. You didn’t go to bed until that was finished. There were days when we were at the point when Mom and Dad couldn’t help us anymore, because we were getting very... I shouldn’t say smarter, but... you could tell that had put us on a different level and my parents knew that. They were so proud of us because, they just knew, “Now, they’re going to turn around and help us.” And that’s just what we did. We turned it around and started helping Mom and Dad.

Participant E: Yes. At times.

Participant F: As best she could. She would help us with our homework. For the most part she’d make sure that we strove hard to accomplish whatever was we needed to accomplish.

Participant G: Constantly, yes. They thought that... they felt that... that because of you being an athlete, you know, you can only go so far, so it’s very important that you had your homework done, and took your studies personal.

d. Who among the family members were/are role models that lead you to become a school principal?

Participant A: I don’t know, I think it’s my uncle and probably my little brother.

Participant B: No family members led me to the school profession. My family wanted me to graduate from high school. At that time if you were able to graduate from high school you could have a pretty good life.

Participant C: My father that was because if I decided to go into the direction of education, he was always encouraging me to go for the top. If it was going into education, then you had to go into the top leadership role. I’m also a musician and he thought if I was to pursue a career in music, he wanted me to go to the top leadership role in music. I think it was just the concept of being at the top in whatever field that you have chosen is what drove me to pursue a role as a principal.

Participant D: It was my sister who taught me in the seventh and eighth grade. She was an English major, and she would always just put me on a pedestal sometimes saying what I could do... how smart you are, “You can do this,” “You can do that.”... never stop. So, I’ll say my third sister did that.

Participant E: Family members? No, my mom always taught me to work hard and do the best I could and be respectful. I sort of got stuck with education and being involved in the schools and that’s why I’m here.
Participant F: I’m going to say, my younger sister actually got me more interested in education. When I came out of the military, she was teaching. So, that kind of led me into education, not so much administration, but education in general.

Participant G: My mother and my father and my sister. My sister is a teacher as well. So, I would say, “all three of them.”

e. What family economic or structural plight did you experience as a child? How did that family experience relate to your career choice?

Participant A: From poverty probably to working class.

Participant B: Well ... typical Black family in our city, poor. Working poor, because my parents always worked, but we were poor. But, probably not as poor as some of the people around, some of my friends whose parents would not work, or they were the one family ... one parent situation. My parents ... we were never on welfare or anything of that nature, but we did not have a lot.

Participant C: I had working parents that were actually living in two separate cities. I lived in Grand Rapids with my Mom, and my Dad lived in Muskegon, so the average or common struggle of parents who are not together and the financial strains that that could reveal was evident in terms of parents just making sure that you had the needs and not always the wants.

Participant D: I have to say this. We were ... the whole family, I can’t say not middle class, I can’t say upper class. We were loved. We’ll say it like that. We didn’t have ... we were loved. We didn’t have their influence from education, but they had a Ph.D. in common sense. They really used that to their advantage, you know, to raise us. I used to see my mom cry sometimes to ... just to help out to make ends meet, because she couldn’t do it for us. My brother and I would go and do odd things to help out, support the family. So, that’s just where we are. I never looked at it as being poor, because we were very rich in love. We never went to bed hungry. Never woke up hungry. It seemed that God always prepared for us. So, I’ll just say this, we were brought up in the right light and I wouldn’t change it for the world.

Participant E: We were poor. I grew up and lived part of my life I lived with my grandmother. My mom was fifteen when she gave birth to me. But, you know I lived with my grandmother part of my life and actually my grandparents were well off. My grandfather worked for Ford and my grandmother worked for the hospital and I guess back then that was a pretty good job. However, when I moved with my mom, we were poor. We did the Goodwill thing, the handy-me-down stuff, and received food donations from the church.
**Participant F:** Extremely poor. I gave a speech the other night to a group of kids out at church, and I described my initial upbringing, and that we were subsistence farmers in rural Mississippi. So, that kind of tells you a little bit about the history of the people down there, I told them you were a vegetarian before I even knew what the word meant. That’s how poor we were.

**Participant G:** OK, we were middle class. Both my parents were teachers. My mother because she was the only child their family had a little bit more money, because they had... my grandmother had my mother when they were forty. So, they were pretty much set and settled money wise, as far as owning property, and things along that line, so when they passed unfortunately their money and their belongings went to her. And so my mother had a little bit more money than my father. But, after they went to school, and you know, their degrees they were pretty much like the middle class.

f. Were parental expectations a significant factor to you?

**Participant A:** Yeah.

**Participant B:** I don’t know if it was expectations or dreams. I was the first in my family, not just my immediate family, but my extended family, my cousins and everything... I’m the oldest. I was the first one to get a college education. Since that time, both of them have a college education. So, I think I had a role... a real burden on my back to bear to make sure those guys could know that it was possible to go to school.

**Participant C:** Yes. There were expectations because my parents wouldn’t waver from them or give in to accepting anything other than what was expected. So, that was a significant factor in terms of... and also, when there is a sense of self-esteem and pride through the family, you build in the inside expectation that you don’t want to let your family down...you don’t want to let the family name down... or the momentum that your parents or grandparents have gotten you to. You can’t just let that fall apart. So, they are significant.

**Participant D:** The utmost. I needed that, “You can do it.” I needed that pat on the back. I needed that hug. I needed that handshake from my father. I needed that look in their eyes that said, “You’re a strong man... you’re a man.” The house will not leave. You have to do this. You must do this. You’re a man. So, yes!

**Participant E:** No, I mean my mom wanted us to be happy, and she did the best she could to make sure we were taking care of. But her expectations were pretty much just trying to make sure we were happy.

**Participant F:** Yes absolutely. You know, one thing I see... taught us basically through our economic situation was we had to be independent. You know we had to be able to take care of ourselves, and the best way to take care of ourselves is to have some-
thing to offer the world, and to have a good education. Those types of things were instilled and you had a young lady. Because there wasn’t a whole lot of help from anyone else. You had to be able to, you know, take care of yourself and make sure you had some skills in order to do that with.

Participant G: Yeah, yeah, my parents had high expectations for me. They believed that I should … I was raised as a young man, and I should always act, you know during that time of growing, as a young man, a responsible young man. They believed that God and family come first.

g. How has sibling(s)' influence impacted you as an administrator?

Participant A: Well, my brother is a doctor, so he had a big impact on what I did. He knew from day one that he was going to be a doctor, so I kind of didn’t really know. But, his influence was very, very positive, because he thought I was smarter than him and he became a doctor. He thought I should be the doctor. I didn’t think I was that smart. As far as peers … most of the peers that I grew up with are not doing well right now. So, I just didn’t want to be like them.

Participant B: I agree that peer, not so much sibling but, many of the people that I went to high school with, you know, came out of school. At that particular time, there was a real pressure for the Americans, particularly Blacks, to get involved in education at that time. Many of them went into education. Many of my peers went into education. They had a tremendous influence on me, because we could communicate together, talk together. A lot of people that came out with me, have achieved a lot in education. A lot of my peers are educators.

Participant C: Peer and sibling influences? Well, it’s impacted me because in terms of siblings I’m the oldest of my brothers. So, there was a path, or track, or a leadership role in the family that was expected of me in terms of demonstrating and displaying in front of my younger siblings, a route of the path to go in terms of planning toward success and that it was necessary and that it was in fact achievable. In terms of peers, I guess it probably revealed itself more in terms of competition. We all set goals as youngsters and we started out the race of life at the starting line and we were all, you know … eager to see what kind of things we could do. It was more of a competition, more so than anything else. We often heard about class reunions and thirty years later, and forty years later, and you know … what was so and so doing, and those sort of things and so, as it relates to peers, it was more having that drive, because we set our goals early and we wanted to see who actually achieved them.

Participant D: Being the youngest of the pack, they always said, in fact my sister said this not too long ago, “He just have to out do all of us.” I told her, “Without your help, I wouldn’t have did it, because you girls … you just don’t know how you pushed me to
make me what I am. They were very inspirational in helping to raise me, keeping me on
that right path. Again, I have to say it was that village helping to raise each other.

**Participant E:** Peer, the mistakes people have made over their lives, and the fact that
these things, some of my friends have done them. You know guys, who could be into
pearls making money, but they are strung out, or locked up or whatever because of the
choices they made. I think twice about if what I’m doing is putting me in a position of
losing everything I’ve worked for. And luckily I made it to this age so I do take that road
now. When you’re younger, that part doesn’t cross your mind as much. My brother’s
locked up. He’s serving 18 years in prison because of some choices he made. My sisters
have had hard lives, based on some of the choices they have made. You know, whatever
doesn’t kill you can only make you stronger. I truly believe that. But you know then
again I got to tell these kids you have to experience life. Life is not Grand Rapids; life is
not Detroit; life is other opportunities out there might not be in Michigan, don’t limit
yourself.

**Participant F:** Peer sibling and influence that impacted me? That’s a tough question
there. I would say I’m going back to my sister, and I have a younger brother involved
and we were fairly close. And we always wanted … not necessarily to compete against
each other but, there was certain things about us that we just wanted to be the best that we
could be, so I guess whatever we chose to do, we went at it full force. And I think that’s
probably what motivated me and influenced me in that type of sense.

**Participant G:** My sister. She’s the first African American female to be elected queen
at her high school. And, she’s very prominent in the neighborhood, and just things that
she does. She has an education and music background. I really looked up to her, and I
just wanted to make sure that … when it’s time for me to make my legacy, that it was just
as good as hers. And we kind of grew up, and grew off of each other.

**SECTION II: Individual.**

a. What particular variables help motivate your interest in positively facilitating the
lives and experiences of the student population in which you serve?

**Participant A:** Probably growing up in inner city Detroit watching students experience a
lack of role models and good education. Then I was taken out of a public and put into a
Catholic school, which the education experience was totally different. I went from
making all A’s to all C’s because … it told me I wasn’t learning what I should be learn-
ing. So, that variable right there, knowing that the inner city schools, some inner city
schools, not all, don’t provide the proper … the high standards that other schools provide
makes me want to come in and set those standards high at our high schools for our kids.

**Participant B:** I can look at the students and see a lot of myself, a lot of the short-
comings that I faced as it relates to my education. I try to ensure that these students don’t
face the same ones. Coming out of the '60s ... with the racial turmoil that was going on at that particular time, I made a commitment to do what I could do to help Black youngsters.

**Participant C:** Self-esteem ... It all goes back ... for me, to self-esteem. There was ... I often tell people that if you want to ... try to ... damage me, downgrade me, belittle me or what not, you missed your opportunity. You could have tried that maybe when I was like two years old, because my parents instilled a firm, a sound sense of self-esteem and for me it is definitely how I make decisions and how I feel about myself. When that is in place then I make good decisions for myself, when it is not in place like it should be the decisions that I make for myself are not as good. So, that is one of the crucial experiences that I try to pass on to students. Therefore, students who might not have a strong family structure, they wrestle with those self-intervening forces that could cause them to make decisions that would not be beneficial to them. I tend to believe that it is directly related to the self-esteem, and how they feel about themselves. So, getting young people to understand that you need to feel good about yourself, will help you make very good and guided decisions for yourself.

**Participant D:** I would say, going back to the way I was brought up and the lives of those around that I see now, what they go through, and what they need, what they need to be told, what they need to be taught, the way I took care of myself coming up. You always want to jump back and ... that's the most important thing, the right to miss giving back. Before I was going to education, I did supervision work and manufacturing work. It was all about the paycheck. I was a bit younger back then but, baron to the company wasn't me. I could reap the rewards, but it wasn't me. My sisters again have always said, “Do you like what you’re doing?” I saying, “No.” “But, you’re making a lot of money?” “Yeah, but you know, it’s just not me.” So, it has to be something that you have to love in your heart, and you like to do and give back. I'm more than willing to give back. I want to look down the road and say, “I was a part of that right there.” See them walking down the street with four or five behind me, I'm so proud of them.

**Participant E:** The fact that my childhood played a pretty big role in the trying to motivate kids into doing the right thing. I think that what I’ve seen other people go through when I talked about peer siblings I said the choices I made to work with kids, I think I was fortunate enough that I grew up in Detroit. I think I was fortunate enough that I’ve been with the suburbs and saw what that was about. I was fortunate enough to go to a school like Ferris State that was a smaller school, but still very diverse. The biggest variable is, you know, I try to tell these kids everyday is this country is run by a white middle class society rules. And, you don’t have to forget who you are and where you come from, but you’re susceptible in this society. But, you do have to understand what you lack. And, I think when we talk about variables being able to take your experiences, the things that happen in your life that make you able to succeed, that you need to use that to be successful. Because it is, it is you know when you get out there it’s like a game. You know you’re on a football field you’re on the sidelines; you know that’s my favorite job to play the game. That’s different. If you’re going out there to play the
game, you got to show them rules, and all the rules people are playing by. And the rules are different for different people, based on color, money, race, and education.

**Participant F:** Well, I have four children and of the four, I have a son. You know, one out of four, one of them is choosing the wrong type of path to go down. He's a young Black male; in fact he's currently in the system. And I think I use that a lot in trying to get through to young Black males in particular, but just the population that I serve in general. I think that is one of the things ... some of the experiences that I’ve had being a male, you know, a Black male, and I use those as well. I just, I use research and data, and try to point the things, but mostly just real life experiences, because a lot of the things these kids bring to us you know, I’ve seen, you know, over and over again, whether it’s in this educational setting or whether it’s out there in my own family type of structure. So, I use that as a lot of teaching tools.

**Participant G:** What motivates me is making ... is trying to make a difference in these kids’ lives. And, especially for African American males, where they don’t have that male role model that they see and a lot of our students here, like we don’t have any African American male teachers here. And, so it’s important that I carry myself, with pride, with dignity and respect. And, that I approach the students in a matter of instruction and make sure they understand that education is important. But, also that I’m human and that they can see the whole realm of what I’m all about. And it just makes me ... that’s what makes me want to come to work every morning so I can make a difference in their lives, and so they can see that, you don’t have to be a rapper, you don’t have to be a gang banger, you don’t have to be an athlete. You can still come in and be an administrator or a teacher, and make a difference in other students’ lives.

b1. What particular strengths do you feel you have brought to the position as a school administrator that has positively impacted your students?

**Participant A:** I think the students know that I expect high standards. I think that is one of the strengths that I brought. High standards, organization ... I want them to get a quality education. Also, knowledge of higher education than high school for the students and setting, helping them set better goals for themselves. We had a population that was just limited to thinking about high school, not college. Now, we set goals higher.

**Participant B:** I feel I am consistent and honest, and most of my students know that I sincerely care about them.

**Participant C:** I display in front of my students, all the time, a quote, unquote I shall not be defeated attitude and drive. They notice that. They see it in my work ethic. I’m here on the weekends. I’m here at night. When we have a monumental project, current problem, they see me aggressively attack it, and I refuse to be defeated. Even when they see the components around us not come together like they should, they always see me step up
to the plate to make sure that I pull together whatever is going on at the time and I just refuse to be defeated.

Participant D: A vision ... You have to have a vision before you can impact anyone. That vision is to set a goal. Always that person must have trust in you. I think I bring them back to the table also, that vision, trust, love, and caring ... You have to have those to convince anyone to follow you. If you don't have those things you're going find yourself always asking the question, "Why it didn't work?" Again, you have to bring something to the table that is rewarding, with a life situation for that person and they can see it at the end. There's got to be a light at the tunnel. I look at kids today. "Why are you going to school?" "Why are you learning math?" There is a purpose for everything that you do. We try to explain that before we even teach a lesson or talk to them about a lesson, try to find some prior knowledge, some prior experiences for boys and girls to go on.

Participant E: My experiences, my growing up, my experiences in this house, my experiences just working different jobs, my experiences that just did not deal with working with kids. And I think I'm a very good resource, because there's not to many things I haven't seen, heard, or done.

Participant F: Again, back to when I used my family, I used some experiences I went through when I was a student. I alluded to earlier with the speech I made a few weeks ago that's one of the things I share with the students. I certainly try to make sure they see you as you are. That's a huge communicating tool there. Just one of the things that I have done, most of my life, living here, I lived on the southeast side I still live on the southeast side. So kids see me at the barber shop; they see me out walking; they see me in my yard. So, they get to see me as a person, rather than just as an administrator. They see me as a person I think that has helped me a lot in the things that I do.

Participant G: This is my 20th year in education, I taught for 16 years in (name of school withheld). And, I think of all the things that I have done and the places I have been, and what I can bring back to the students, and let them understand that, education is important as well as their family. You don't have to go out and treat the young ladies in a negative way. Respecting them, so they can respect you. And, to the kids, making that relation between the street and school is very important. You don't have to be a thug, but you don't have to be quote "a narrow minded a punk ... or a sell out to be good, to be fruitful in life."

b2. What particular strengths do you feel you have brought to the position as a school administrator that has positively impacted your school?

Participant A: I think in the school, we set higher goals this year, and different expectations. As far as athletically, I expect kids to achieve at a higher level. I expect them to be athletic ready to compete on the athletic field, but also in classroom. So, we have a 2.0 grade point that you must have. My standards are higher than 2.0. Most of my teams, I
want them to average a 3.0. So, it's just setting higher standards for the students, because if they are averaging a 3.0 than they are able to leave high school and go to a higher level of education.

**Participant B:** Knowledge of the community and the students I serve. I do not believe that you can adequately teach or serve as an administrator in a situation in which you don't know about the people you serve. You have to have knowledge. When you work in the urban center, you have to have knowledge of the urban school. If the school is predominantly Black, you got to have knowledge regarding the norms and ways of Black people. The problem is there has been so many times where they bring people in that don't have a clue. What happens is the administrator tries to teach from the book. There are not a lot of good books on how to teach the urban kid. There are not a lot of good training programs that are training teachers how to teach in an urban school district.

**Participant C:** My school ... a sense of community. In an urban school setting, because we serve at-risk or high needs student population, often times what is traditional and conventional is not evident in their everyday lives. So, the school as much as possible tries to be a surrogate for some of those components. So, what I bring to the school is getting staff and the school to understand that kids do well when they have a sense of stability. Usually, stability comes from the family, but when the family is not stable, then where can they experience stability? Well, they can experience it in the school environment. For a lot of kids, this is the most consistent environment that they experience. Every time they leave here things are uncertain. I'm not sure if Mom's at home. I don't know where Dad is. I don't know if the lights are going to be on this month. I don't know if there is food in the refrigerator. Every day that they are here it's guaranteed that we'll be here, we'll be waiting for them, we'll have a lunch for them, it's very consistent for them. So, getting staff and a student to understand that there is a sense of community and family in this particular type of setting is beneficial, and I think I bring a lot of that to the school building.

**Participant D:** Love for the kids, teacher to know how to love, how to give, how to talk to parents, how to be sympathetic, how to go out to homes and teach parents things that they need to do as parents from back into the school and show them some things that they need to do as teachers. We're working together. It might need to start at home, but this is a safe haven for our boys and girls here at school. I've looked over the number of years that I've been here, and teachers understand that you have to show love, give love, to receive love. You might have a mischievous child, a child that other people could not bear with, but if you put a little time in, or put your hour during your lunch time maybe, for their recess time maybe, or just on a weekend, do a drive by. I do a drive by, and that might be just a conversation in how he was doing at school, what you plan to do, can we go fishing with Garrick, can we go read a book to Garrick, meet at the library together one day. Once the kids feel that you are a part of their life, you can get that kid to open up to you to find all of the lovely things that that child can do, and want to do. So, those things sometimes have to be taught at your school to teachers, to the custodian, maybe to crew, to your librarian, to your parapros. So, you are constantly trying to find ways to
open up doors for boys and girls, so they can have avenues to go to and ask why? Teachers, custodians, parapros … all those avenues open up, cause once they leave home you’re the only one there that can make them feel safe.

Participant E: Oh, we could read all year. Strong minority that has a background, a very wide background of different things related to different situations people go through. I can say a little about Caucasian people and relate, I can say a little about Black people and relate, I can say a little about Chinese people and relate. You know, it’s just what I’m saying, that’s a good tool to have because you never know, in these days, especially in our city what kind of student you’re going to have walk in your door. You’re going to have to have a Special Ed background. You don’t know. And I think that’s a scare for the school.

Participant F: Well I think my almost thirty years of experience would be one thing that I have worked in various capacities before this particular job. I was a coach. I was in basketball, a couple of different sports. I delivered it three summers, worked out at Saint Johns home. You become more attuned with those kids. So, I have a master’s degree, I have very strong people skills, and I am extremely good with the staff. And that’s a combination of all those types of things you bring to the table. Twenty-four years of classroom teaching, so there’s a lot I’ve done, I’ve done everything in the schools that you could possibly do. Another thing is that I am a product of this public school. I went to (name of school withheld) since the seventh grade. I even worked as a custodian for a while. So I did a lot of different things to bring me to where I’m at right now.

Participant G: Right now I think that I’m mostly in charge of assessment testing. And so, I think it’s important that the students understand how to take assessment tests. And the data, because we don’t give a lot of feedback to our students, we make you take the test, but you don’t know why you messed up, or how you messed up. And what you can do to better yourself. And so what we do with the data that we’re giving back, we’re making sure students see their individual scores on tests, and I make sure that our teachers are in a position to be able to independently get the students to be able to move from one step to the other. So when that assessment test comes back they are able to improve, and see that improvement.

b3. What particular strengths do you feel you have brought to the position as a school administrator that has positively impacted your community?

Participant A: The community feels and the feedback that I hear … they feel that the children have a chance now for scholarships and other opportunities beyond education. The other feedback is that they have a chance to learn how to compete in sports, and that the children who don’t want to learn … there is more discipline within the building.

Participant B: Longevity for one, I’ve been in this school district since 1965. Most of the kids I deal with, I had their parents in school also. I think that longevity, you get used
to seeing that person, so you develop a level of respect. I live in the district. By living in the community, I shop at certain places my students shop. I go to the same Meijer's they go to. I'm not that person riding in from some other location before eight, and riding out immediately after school is done. Parents see me as apart of the community. We have a good relationship with the Ministerial Alliance. That's just because I've been around so long and that helps.

**Participant C:** Getting community to get involved with the school building, with the school programs, getting community to understand why achievement is important, getting community to understand their role in helping, or fostering, or supporting student achievement. Getting them ... and I do that through a lot of communication. I often use the example, when I talk to community groups, or even school groups of, "why is it that I can question in a room of a hundred people, 'How many of you have attended Harvard University, Yale University, um ... a prestigious or Ivy League school?' No one hand goes up, but I ask them, 'How many know the requirements for getting in?' and the hands go up." Why is that? Those institutions are communicating their expectations. You know what it takes to get in there, or get part of that community long before you have an application. You don't even touch an application in person unless you have your business in order. So, I like to communicate with the community what the expectations are, and why it is so important at the school level. So, it is just common knowledge these things that we talk about in just every day discussion, and it should be a part of every day discussion ... student achievement.

**Participant D:** Parents in my community ... we do a lot of things with our boys and girls ... scholarships, we do fundraisers, we go and visit, we do talks at the different schools, get involved in churches, we sing in choirs, we bring boys and girls to churches, we do family outings. Some of us are Big Brothers. Some of us are mentors to a number of kids. We volunteer our time. We volunteer our lives. We volunteer our families for many things. So, we bring ... mostly what God has given us, and that is the insight that it takes more than Mom and Dad to raise a child today, and we want them to know that there is other people out there that's willing to give back. On the other end, we let the kids know that they can also be a part of someone else's life too. It might be a brother/sister, it might be a neighbor, it might be a second or third grader, coming and reading to them. We do buddies. We do cross grade readings. So, we have to show them that it's not always receiving, we have to give back to what you have in your community. What you have seen happen to you, so you have to do the same thing. That is a lot of pride and joy from everyone, and you must be a part of that.

**Participant E:** Again, a strong role model. Let's talk about role model. Saying that you know the parents that come in here are aware of the situation they live in and once in a while they appreciate sitting down and talking to me and having me work with their kids. And they do appreciate, and I do get involved in a few of the churches and the groups out in the community. And be visible. And work at the movie theatre, you know I use whatever I can to help kids. I mean, in this position, I had a lot of problems that students relate with. That's a good job up there. That changed. Kids near me respect the position
I held here in the building. So, when they’re out there it’s not a problem. Whatever I can do to help kids or help families. Because this is a lifetime, this is a turning point, between ages 12 and 17 is where it’s at. You either make it or you don’t. And you got some borderline kids that kind of have some problems, but kind of do what they need to do outside of 21. But you know, if you don’t know what’s going on by the time they’re 18, 19, you probably won’t. A lot of different things are going on, you get to far behind, you’re just behind.

Participant F: Hopefully, I have a reputation. I develop a reputation, to being a well-rounded person, being in it this long we’ve built up a lot of connections and a lot of ... I could say a lot of experiences. I have been a member of the (name of church withheld) since I was 10 or 11 years old. Maybe ... sometimes I think I, I think about not knowing about different things, I don’t really know why, I don’t know but I just say due to the fact that I’ve been around for a while, just been a stable part of the community. Not just like a lot of people, I could have gone out to other places like that, but I just chose to stay in this area, where I am, and just being there ...

Participant G: Right now, I think, making sure that my students are going ... leaving school, and going out into the community and not disrespecting the community. You know, we haven’t done what I really, really need is start taking groups, and getting them involved in the community. But right now I think it’s important that we teach our students here how to go into the community. Is it OK to kick the trash over? Is it OK to, you know, go in and steal? Or is it better to go help a parent, elderly parent put trash away. Just being more involved in the community, keeping the community clean, and respecting the community.

b4. What particular strengths do you feel you have brought to the position as a school administrator that has positively impacted your district?

Participant A: I think the district realizes now that we can achieve. They knew it before, but now they see it. We can achieve very high at this building, and that it takes more hard working people to work hard because we have to work through our differences with our kids and not understanding.

Participant B: I haven’t always been a principal, and then I worked administration, and then I left the district, and I come back and I’m back in school administration. I think that I think when I was working in central administration I was a part of proposals that generated funds for pilot projects and pilot programs and many of which are still operative in some way shape or form in the district. Do remember the JTTA program, the success of that program, in the forty year period. It went from single to JTTA instead of that nine program. Major contributions were the student work programs ... I wrote a lot of proposals and implemented a lot of programs for student employment.
Participant C: In terms of district ... district ... I think I'm trying to get our district to understand ... One of the major things we wrestle is always budget, and finance. There are some intricate parts to finance and budgeting in the public school district. I try to get our district to understand that we need to have programs and buildings that are conducive and attractive for students. We need to move away from being reactive in our approach in terms of addressing budget issues. For example, we like to look at how many ... our district is funded primarily off of foundation grants from the state, student head counts ... how many students attend your building, or your district, the state will give you money for that. My experience has been that we like to wait until students leave in droves, by the hundreds to find out what our foundation allowance will be, and then try to structure programs off of that, verses trying to shape and mold programs that will be conducive and inviting for people to come into here, which will make our money go up. We could better serve students. So, getting our district to understand that we need to challenge, re-invent, and re-evaluate the form of public school funding.

Participant D: Just say this, I have created a love for diversity, I believe in my area, where my boys and girls and my families feel real good about the school, they believe school is going up. I would say that my parents come in and read with their boys and girls in the morning. They have a program that the teachers helped create, "Read for Rent." They do "Walk for Warmth," which is another program we started for the district. We have senior citizens that have gas bills that they can't pay, or have problems paying. We do Walk for Warmth and we have different companies to match the money that we raise. So no senior citizens go without heat for the winter. Our boys and girls call that service learning. So, they learn how to give back. Our parents are also involved. Our parents are also coming to the school to learn to read. Our parents are coming to the school also to learn English. In the mean time, I'm learning Spanish, because they're teaching us Spanish. So again, diversity and the love to respect each other's cultures, I think I have really done a great job with that. Everyone respect each other's culture. Right now I'm getting some Somalians into my area, and I'm enjoying that and I'm learning something too. The kids have fallen in love with the Somalians, and they're teaching them some Spanish. It's just great to see that the world can be loved, and the kids don't have any call it barriers. You're just a kid, and I want it to be like that. I think my parents see that too. If my kids can get along, why can't we get along?

Participant E: Well, I think being a young Black male, I mean, this is you go to these high school meetings you go to the high schools they got 30. I mean this district's really going to change within the next 3 to 5 years, when people retire. We need to look for new leadership, we need to look for new broad people to come out with good ideas, and come with some energy, and take turns and strive for the future. This school does have good school energy, does have some games that we could take place in the few years and get these kids where they need to be. You know we are behind on the last plan, the suburbs are killing us. When it comes to recruiting kids and getting them where they need to be and having them be quality people. I mean think about it, right now, a quality teacher, a quality administrator, chances are they might leave the district. You lose quality people like that, and that hurts. That hurts the students, the school and the
community. So, I think between Keith and myself, like other administrators in the district that’s just going to build a post in the future.

Participant F: I’ll fall back on my experiences again and I have brought longevity to the district for staying around for so long, especially with the opportunities that I’ve had to leave. I’ve not taken those opportunities. I think I’ve contributed particularly well in this position that I’m in, even though it’s been less than five years that I’ve been in it. However, I’ve been pretty well in terms of that.

Participant G: Well right now we have, what we brought ... what we need all the time is administrators. And we talk about what kind of change we want in, as far as Michigan School District. You know, I’ve come up with a new instructional model, which is going to help our students read and write at a higher level. You know we’ve brought in our character-model, which is changing the culture of schools. A lot of students come to school and it is a school for them. And how the different students learn, and then we have to let the teachers know, that you just can’t have the same old sit down and I’m going to lecture to you and you’re going to learn. Different students learn in different ways. And few of them learn with auditorial skills, some learn where maybe art is a lot better, so music has to be involved, some have better writing skills, some have better reading skills. So, I think the district has to understand that some of these minorities, learn in different paces and different levels, and we just can’t be set to just one style of teaching. And so I think as a district we’re coming onboard. And we’re learning different ways of teaching to our students.

c. List any awards or recognition that you have received as a school administrator for your work as a school administrator?

Participant A: This year I received recognition from the Superintendent and the Principal, and the City Athletic Director on the amount of scholarships that we have brought in athletically.

Participant B: Working for public schools ... Ten-Year Service Award, Twenty-Year Service Award. I received Director of the Year for Job Corps. And several other awards through Title I, Title II.

Participant C: Gosh ... I guess maybe the one I like the most ... the one I got from attending a leadership academy at Yale ... New England ... Connecticut for School Reform is the one I am most proud of and the one I like most out of the ten or so others.

Participant D: I think I have two. I can’t think of the rest of them. As an administrator, I got numerous when I was a teacher. I want to say none as a principal. I’m not principal of the year yet? Have I received any awards as a principal? I know I have several plaques, but not as a district, as a whole district, but just individual at schools you know, for doing this or doing that.
Participant E: None as administrator, this is my first year. I was a supervisor at Job Corps and I did receive recognition for outstanding achievement, for the health of students. But here nah, there’s nothing yet.

Participant F: I haven’t received any.

Participant G: Unfortunately, I’m still new at this. This is only my 4th year in administration. So me getting awards and accolades, even though it’s not really a concern of mine, I have yet to receive any awards or recognition for my work as an administrator. But I’m still new at it. I’m still young at it. So I still have a ways to go.

d. List any challenges you have encountered as a result of your work as a school administrator?

Participant A: I think one of the major challenges people have is with change. Change is hard for a lot of people. For some reason setting low expectations for our kids, people believing that inner city kids cannot do certain things, they are stuck in these ways. That is a major challenge. If they graduate high school that is good enough ... just not setting goals for these kids. I think we have to instill the dream in them sometimes if they don’t come from a well-educated family or a place where they have no goals set. So, sometimes you can set a goal for a kid and they can make it.

Participant B: The primary challenge is trying to change ... being an agent of change in an urban school district. It is very challenging to maintain the strength and perseverance to do that, because you take one step forward. Everywhere you go, the further behind you get kind of thing. It is very, very difficult in this day and age with the charter schools, and with the school of choice and those types of things, urban schools are continuing to lose money because of their loss of students. When you lose students you lose money. Deep in my heart I believe ... I wouldn’t work in another setting. I guess, you know ... but it is very, very difficult now. Particularly with “No Child Left Behind,” children are being left behind. I know it’s just something. It’s just a catchy phrase, “No Child Left Behind.” I know there is no meaning to it, because I look around and I see children left behind from the elementary right through high school.

Participant C: Challenges ... this is my eleventh year, and so I came into the district as an administrator eleven years ago. So, a lot of my colleagues, or the staff I was responsible for were a lot older than me. So, having direction, knowledge and expertise was a major challenge in terms of getting started. You have older staff in place for twenty, thirty years, who would challenge your competency. They would question your expertise. Then, what goes along with that a lot of times is ethnicity. Sometimes the African American is not viewed as being as knowledgeable, as skillful, and as efficient as school administrators, or quote unquote “questionable leadership.” So, those were some of the hurdles that I have embarked. How I addressed those challenges were demonstrated in
my outcomes. I worked hard and that seemed to help me, because I begin to progress in time.

**Participant D:** I'll say this, not as a challenge ... Challenge is going into the schools and doing your job. Challenges that I've had going into the schools is just doing the things that the state department, or the school district, the curriculum requires us to do, and getting the parents of the students to do it. As far as jobs in the elementary department for males, I've never had a problem. My job is to educate. That is the only problem I had to make sure that the boys and girls exceed the standards, or meet the standards, or at base. We always want them to exceed, and that's been our challenge, to make sure our boys and girls meet or exceed the expectations for reading, writing, math, science, social studies, and so forth.

**Participant E:** Well, there is quite a few, staff is one. I say staff because I'm not saying this district has a bunch of racist teachers I'm not saying it. I will say that we do have people in this district that are not familiar with the kids that they service. OK, their background, from which everybody comes, is not familiar with the cultures in which they service. They didn't grow up with Black people, they don't know the traditions, they don't know the language, nor how we communicate with each other. You know we speak English, the way they do things are a little different, and how we use our language in our culture is different. I'm not saying that none of the teachers don't come here and try, and make efforts. You know the biggest thing you need to do is understand us first. That you have a lot of other earned privileges just by the color of your skin. And if they can grasp that they can be someone who can possibly have success as a teacher in this district. But then you got people that can't grasp that concept. And you know what that means, and that's challenging. You see some people don't understand where they are. The other thing is you tell them some of my parents are this. And as a parent, I have a young daughter and maybe I should do things a little differently now. Based on some things I've done, that I see her doing now. But I think some parents don't grasp that and they try and defend the situation they are in. They're trying to say something that you know is wrong. I'm not saying that kids get opportunities to make mistakes, and learn from mistakes, but then again you don't support the mistakes. I'm not here to put Black guys in prison. I'm not here to put them out of the building. I'm here to educate kids that want to be educated. And that's challenging sometimes, because some kids don't want to be educated, sometimes don't listen or agree with the way you do things. And that's fine to disagree, but don't knock down what we're doing either. That's challenging. And then the third, the unstable ability of the district sometime, it seems like they change their mind about where they're going with things at times. And that can make it kind of hard. We need structure, the district needs structure, community needs to know what's going on at all times. I think the district is doing their best to do that. It seems like every time we get something going you know, like the superintendent right now, I like him, I actually like him, and I think he has a good vision, I think he has some experience, everyone has his flaws. But you know, finally, I think everybody's hitting on the same page and now he's leaving here. There you go, now you got something else that now we got to
Participant F: One of the things that I find of difficult, I have kind of a soft spot in my heart for these, a lot of biracial kids, we have all the issues with a, because that is one of the things that we have all of the issues with I would say Black males, there's an element out there, I don't want to say overlooked, but not being paid really to much attention to and then actually they would be minorities second to them I guess. I was at another high school before I came here, I had trouble with this, with this biracial kid, not necessarily trouble, but he was always in my office for this and various things. Anyway his mother and I built some type of bond, some type of relationship and a, about a year or so ago in fact he ended up being placed in this program in Battle Creek, and he was almost in some real big trouble. Anyway, he got, himself turned around. And he and his mother thanked me for working with him and stuff. And he wanted me to try to ... If there were other kids around that he could help he would do that. And when he came over here, you see that group of biracial kids were expanding, and there were a lot in the public schools. And that's kind of a challenge or something that interests me I left the idea up to the person who was my supervisor at the time, about trying to organize some type of group or some type of or a. you know some type of setting where they could come and talk about the issues and that type of thing. But she thought it would be going out on a limb, that lady at that point. But I probably should have pursued it, and probably will pursue it. There are a lot of kids that maybe want to see something like that. So that might be a big type of challenge I might see, I might pursue.

Participant G: I think the biggest challenge is getting the teachers onboard. And getting them to understand you can't just sit at the computer and do other things, while your students are being involved in other unrelated activities. And this is something we have to understand as a part of our culture. We have to make sure our students are on task and getting as much information, instruct wise from my teachers as they can. I think the biggest barrier is making teachers really care about these kids, and care that every kid that walks out of their classroom, you know, how to read a small paragraph, or whether it's learning to write a book, that they're learning something. And not just sitting there buying time. I think that is the largest obstacle.

e. What support have you received from personnel within the context of your school environment that has facilitated your work as a school administrator?

Participant A: I've received major support from the building principal when I have had to correct the staff in situations and do administrative actions with staff. I've also received support from the superintendent and the city administrators. They have been very supportive in what I have to do with change.

Participant B: I read the ledger, or the benefit so to speak of working for some very good superintendents. Rocco was excellent. Superintendent John Dow was an excellent
superintendent and friend. And Burt Bleke is a good superintendent. A lot of them had one thing in common, that some of the other superintendents I worked for did not have. They had a vision. Whether you agreed with it or not, they had a vision. They were taking a district in a positive direction for kids. And so ... that has been an asset to me. Working for some competent administrators, I learn a lot from them number one, and they were able to give me the support necessary to implement some programs I wanted implemented in my schools.

Participant C: The personnel ... What I have experienced in my time here is that my outcome from my work has garnished my influence. People will listen when I speak. People will respond when I speak. I think it is directly linked to the outcomes that I have been connected with or that I have had a major part in developing. So, I think my work speaks for itself. People see that. People have experienced that, so that when I need assistance, support, I don’t get a whole lot of hesitation about why I need it, or if I need it. So, that has done wonders for me.

Participant D: I receive great support from my coach, chief assistant superintendent, professional development, and trainings. In fact, we’ve done more training in the last two or three years than we have I think in a lifetime not only for administrators, but a big part of administrators are doing just what the teachers are doing, preferring us to know what the teachers know and preparing us to get our teachers in shape for school action plans for learning. So, we’ve had great support, out of town support ... I just finished a course last weekend in preparation to get a mind set to do things. So, there is great support in the system right now.

Participant E: My support? Personnel, my teachers, and I mean, I feel like I have support I think my principal that I work with is very supportive. I think he believed in me, gave me the opportunity to work for commercial things. I think the teachers from up there are very supportive. The other assistant principals are very supportive. Um ... I think that there are a lot of parents in this community are supportive, of what we’re trying to do, and I think some are supportive of me also.

Participant F: We have a, what they call a principal academy, it’s not so much a formal type of thing as far as trying to give you instructions, strategies and things. Principals do meet for the purpose of implementing district programs, and everything. Maybe the academy thing the term that they use is kind of misleading. But it’s not necessarily a training type of thing but a meeting whereas ... they are making sure we are implementing what the district wants to be implemented as far as, in terms of literacy strategies, or relationship building, that sort of thing.

Participant G: I think the support is there. We meet our reservations, you know, coming up with instructional models, coming up with you know, our new culture models, making sure that we’re getting our reading strategies set, and our writing strategies set. I think it would be nice even though this district is large, that more of our administration team from downtown, could come to the building, and help in that process even more.
think sometimes we ... we have four high schools here, and I think sometimes we say, we want to be a team, but we don’t act as a team. We all do things differently. Even though I know the culture’s different at each school, there’s got to be cohesiveness to where if Joe Doug, leaves and goes to another school he’s going to get the same thing. It’s got to be consistent across the board. And I think that upper administration needs to be a little more into our schools so they can see that it is a lot different, and a lot of things are going on that are different, that we approach things different, but we have to make sure that it’s the same. That connectiveness, you know.

f. Describe any training you have received that was specifically designed to assist you in your role as a Black school administrator?

Participant A: Well, we receive 5E Training, which is training based on establishing a relationship with students. We received TR Training, which is basically the computer learning system. I received training for scheduling, so I learned how to schedule students very quick. There were some major training sessions during the summer, instructional leadership team; um ... we had quite a few other trainings. Weekly ... monthly, we’re going to principals’ meetings receiving more training.

Participant B: My master’s program was Education for the Disadvantaged. They enlisted Michigan’s Leadership Program. My doctoral work was in uh ... also in the area of Leadership and Management Supervision at University of Michigan. I think that both of those programs gave me a good basis to not only research, but also to have an impact in the urban setting. Both of those programs were directly ... that I was in emphasized the urban setting. That was the only type of setting that I was going to work in.

Participant C: In my formal training, I would say little next to none, almost zero training that I have experienced being an administrator in the urban school district. Being African American some of my training has really come from interpersonal relationships with other African American men in leadership roles, conversations with Chuck Warfield and with people like you. The things that we experience ... there is a unique existence for African American males, not only Michigan, but in society in terms of how we are perceived. So, having some sort of allegiance or alliance with other Black males, and providing information, experiences ... because a lot of it really comes down to human interaction. Who you interact with ... who it affects, is what leadership is really all about. Can you get a group of people to move in a certain direction, and sometimes that’s not always textbooks, and so textbooks did not really prepare me for this role. Human experiences prepared me for this role.

Participant D: Right before I started we had a leadership program, where we met on Saturdays. It was very intense, a matter of fact, all day. We had thick books. We had each about six ... I’d say five to six. We had one facilitator. My facilitator was sharp. Matter of fact, he is one of the assistant superintendents right now. The training was very intense. It got really to the point each and every Saturday, going there with different
situation on how to prepare yourself, what to look for. It’s ongoing now, because now they’re doing a lot of training and the state preparations for superintendents, for Reading First, Four Block Model, Explore the Moment, for not getting that child’s supporting details ... It’s just great to see how much we have come from to where we are right now, because it used to be the time where you were taught writing and nothing specific about it, but now there is so much that the trainings have helped us with. They don’t limit it just for teachers to go to, the principals must be a part of it, and must do the same training. So, the first part is to become a leader, by going to the leadership classes, and then doing the subparts of the curriculum to meet the things that I have always endorsed. We need to know.

Participant E: We have a new instructional model that helps me. That really helped me a lot because my strong point is my discipline, classroom management, you know, academics I was working on, getting a structure, and being able to get there as the transition, and instruct the destruction while we use, I’ve earned a valued role as a structural leader. A critical leader. Alive I feel. Um ... no ... I think I pretty much have the discipline aspect down pat but I think that’s kind of sunk. Me as a person, you know as an athletic man, I’ve been in athletics all my life you know self motivate, self discipline. Get a lot of more educational events a curriculum. That I believe I got in college actually. So that was good. I just was named one of the new.

Participant F: Again there wasn’t anything specifically for that, that’s one of the things that I spoke with the superintendent about and he agreed. And this was about a year or so ago, because when I first got into this, he said, “Just go for it!” There wasn’t any specific change in the program other than again, what you fall back on your own skills after 25, 30 years and that type of stuff. Can they catch a train or stuff like that, but specifically for tech questions there wasn’t anything.

Participant G: The largest training was the last workshop that I just went to on saving the Black male student. I think that was probably profound. I just really got a lot out of that workshop. Not to mention my objective, is to take it another step, to make sure that the information that I got from the workshop, that I can take it to school, without feeling like I am stepping on people’s toes. So, we can make this whole process positive, as far as our Black males are being instructed in a positive way. I’ve done a lot of workshops on our new instructional model as well as workshops on changing the culture for schools. So, we’ve done a lot of individual workshops. I think the main goal and objective now is to make sure that we take the information that we’ve learned and implant it into to school.

g. What particular strategies, processes and procedures have you found that have contributed to your success as a school administrator?

Participant A: I think some of the strategies are ... one of the strategies is having a background of ... I have a social work background, so I learned strategic therapy,
learning different therapy styles, learning different ways to approach kids. I think our 5E training was very helpful with this, approaching the students that we have ... student body. As far as procedures, we’re pretty set in the foundation of what we want to do around here, so the things that are very, very helpful are our handbook which leads the way in what our procedures and rules are within the school population.

**Participant B:** Being very consistent to students and staff, you know? I think um ... people who are about doing things right have to respect those qualities. They might not always agree with what you are doing, but if you stay consistent and honest, it is kind of hard not to respect that. Whereas an urban administrator, part of my responsibilities is to get teachers to perform at a high level, so that students can achieve at a high level. That is when what you do is consistent and honest, and be knowledgeable about what you are attempted to do.

**Participant C:** Strategies ... Process ... Let’s see, strategies ... Strategies um ... they were all ... I guess it’s all connected to a personal plan of development. Me setting goals for myself.... Me seeking out programs, resources, people that could help me develop my skill level, develop experiences that would lead to being able to make the gains and the climbs that I’ve made to this point. So, I think it is a personal quest for what I set myself.

**Participant D:** First thing I think you have to have is discipline. If you have discipline, patience, and love for the job you can do anything. I mean there is no one way I think anyone can do it. You have to set your own tone of what you can do. I can tell you right now, I can sit here and give you a strategy, or give you this and that, because in our jobs, you have to think as you go along. There is nothing I can say in this situation that would probably work in every situation. I just tell you this right here, please just love the job. That’s the main ... you got to love it, and love people. You have to love kids. And, you have to have faith in what you do.

**Participant E:** Oh, stay organized, have energy, be open-minded. Be strong but compassionate. Try to establish relationships. That’s what it’s all about. If you have a good relationship, they will do anything you ask. So that’s the main thing.

**Participant F:** I think one of the things I got out of character training is a lot of relationship building, and that is really important. I think that’s really, really, really, important. One of the things ... our superintendent sent out for parents who were having trouble with kids in the district and he was asking us our opinion on some of those questions. That posed to him in terms of the race issue. And one of my suggestions was that you have some type of ... this is basically for staff I guess, because this is one of the big things that we have 75%–80% Black or minority population. And then we have 88% to 95% staff and you know out of that, you have a huge amount of female staff. And you have a huge amount of people that don’t really understand the background of the person who that faces 30 to 35 kids, and some understand it to various degrees some don’t may not or don’t want to understand it, so you have that huge disconnect there. Staff training
and that kind of stuff has to be something that’s practically ongoing, you know it’s got to be practically long going. Because we’ve run it hit and miss, bringing in experts to weeks later, you know, everybody forgot about it. You need that I think.

Participant G: I think just being open, making sure students know exactly where I’m coming from, when I yell at them about doing something wrong, or I praise them about doing something right. I do things that … I believe strongly in celebrating success, and we don’t do enough of that because … our students believe that success only comes on the basketball, football, or track field. And success doesn’t come into the school. So I think that it’s important that we celebrate those things and, continue to do them.

h. How does your personal belief system influence your role as an administrator?

Participant A: I think it has a heavy influence, because I’m setting high goals for myself, which makes me set high goals for our students. Coming from the same type of background, I think hearing that you can’t do it, or you’re not as smart, or any of those negative innuendos saying that you are just not as good as the next student, motivates me more to do more for these children as an administrator, and myself. They can learn like other students, but there is a belief that they are just struggling, they’re not as smart. But, I think we have to give them the same materials as the outlying schools have, and teach at the same levels and you will get the same results.

Participant B: Personally I believe that ... I sincerely believe that all kids can learn. I don’t believe that all teachers and all administrators can effectively teach in an urban school. I believe that where students fail to learn, we as educators fail to teach. I guess, I look at it from the basis that no excuses ... excuses don’t excuse or really explain. If we’re sending kids out of here not properly prepared or academically fit to ... then the blame is on the educators, not the students. Because, the parents are sending us the best kids they have, and the kids that they send us today are going to be the same ones that they send us tomorrow. It’s our job, our responsibility to find ways to educate these young people, and if we don’t do it, we should get out of the business. There’s no room for (inaudible) failure in the urban school system. Personally, I believe that kids can learn. Kids are better learners than most educators are teachers.

Participant C: It’s probably directly linked to spirituality. When I say that, “All things are possible, nothing is impossible through Christ, who strengthens me.” I leave the house with that every morning, you know. I know there is supposed to be a separation of church and state, but that part of me I can’t separate, because it is what drives and motivates me and helps me get things done. So, spirituality plays a big part in the why I arrived, the way I arrived, how I arrived.

Participant D: Strong beliefs, for God you can do everything. Everything is possible. I try to stress that with my staff. I often say I look different, but they know what I mean, where I come from, because they know how I feel and the way I was brought up. In
faith, I can do anything. I tell my boys and girls, I look at them and I look at myself, and say, "I put my pants on one leg at a time. I was not born like this." I leave that with them. So now, I can hear that from them sometimes, you know like they talk to me, they say "Mr. (Name withheld), this might be off the record right now, can I talk to you?" And I say, "Yes." I think they see exactly what I’m talking about, but it takes a few years for them to see it, because when they were in second grade it didn’t mean anything, third grade it didn’t, fourth grade, yes, now they really know. It’s great to know that boys and girls listen to you, that you can’t stop and say just one time, “You have to have faith in yourself. When you have faith in yourself, other people have faith in you.”

Participant E: I think it’s a belief system that we can all succeed if we want to. It’s … I know some people argue with that, but, you know, there are enough resources out there that if you, and trust me I am a Democrat, but there are certain instances that it is tough for some people, yes. But I think for the most part, if you have will, that there is a way. You know, it might be tougher for Blacks than someone else, but I think if you stick with it you’ll get somewhere. For example, I have a learning disability, I have a hard time reading and writing but I’m an administrator now, so it’s one of those things that you learn how to accommodate yourself. To help you in those areas you’re deficient in. And you move on. You know, if it’s easier to say OK, I can read it if I read it don’t have to read it out loud, or I can read it here, I can’t do that. For me to sit there and do that, I’m not going to get anywhere with that kind of attitude. Because that’s my problem, somebody else might have another problem. See everybody has problems and issues. It’s all about just focusing and getting this thing on task, and getting done what you want to get done.

Participant F: Very much so. In this position you have a lot more contact with the staff, you get to see how it all works. You have to unfold some of your thoughts and some of your beliefs on them. I think one of the main things that I tried as a teacher was to make sure that my students understood my clientele, so one of the things I try and teach my staff is to make sure that they understand those types of things. You don’t have to feel sorry, you don’t have to feel anything else, you just have to understand where they’ve been, where they’re coming from, and the level it takes to make you comfortable to be with them. That’s one of the biggest things that I try to transmit to my staff.

Participant G: I think they go together. I think, you know, for you to be in this job you have to live it, feel it, breathe it, and eat it. And it’s going live with you. So it became personal.

i. How has educational philosophy changed as a result of your work as an administrator?

Participant A: I think educationally, I think all people that have a quality education do not use it to the best of their ability. Meaning that … you have a lot of teachers, a lot of people that graduated with higher degrees, that still don’t understand how to work with
students with those degrees and teach. So, I believe that ... I think that is all I have to say to that.

**Participant B:** I have impacted some of the people who have worked for me and worked with me, because they are fair, consistent and honest. I have seen many other administrators buy into that theory and go on to become very successful. I think educational administrators, particularly Black ... it's kind of like a fraternal order, pass things down. You pull young brothers up. A few years back, I used to attend all the MAPSE conferences, I spent a lot of time networking and dialoging with the other Black administrators from all across the country. It was very rewarding. You learn a lot about programs. You learn a lot about different strategies to use. I know how much of that is going on anymore. I haven't been to a MAPSE conference in about five years. Something to do with, they don't do that as much as they use to do. If there was a network, if we could develop ... re-invent the network where we could share ... Black administrators in particular have a lot of expertise dealing with Black people, cause we are Black. I don't think the colleges and universities tap our knowledge to the degree that they should. When they are in the layoff mode right here, most of the times your new teachers, your younger teachers are your Black teachers, those that just got out of school are the first ones laid off. They kept laying off in the district because of the seniority and so forth, you have to retain older instructors who may be as qualified but a lot less competent dealing with the youngsters that they have to deal with. It works against us.

**Participant C:** I have been able to impress upon teaching staff, which is the main component in a school building, the need, the abilities, the approaches have to be varied to reach to the populations. Because you have a wide audience of learners, and a lot of times formal training doesn't always address that. You don't experience that until all of the sudden you have your first job, you arrive in the classroom, and you've been taught something a certain way ... to deliver a certain way, and you find out through a rude awakening that you are not meeting your outcomes, because you are only delivering instruction in a certain way. I've been able to get staff to understand that in a broad audience of learners, people learn in different types of ways. I try to get them to understand the urban learner ... and the urban learner learns a variety of different ways. So, I think getting staff to understand you have to step out of your comfort zone and seek out the different ways for delivering instruction has been critical for me.

**Participant D:** It hasn't changed a lot. It had to change when our society and a group of boys and girls that we have at this particular time, and it's all positive. You just have to critique, or tweak some of the things that you use to do, saying them a little different, doing a little different. Make sure that you have research based information. You have to go do your homework now, not just saying that you can just filibuster, but you have to go and do your homework. So the internet, or going to the library and get your statistics, okay. So those are the things that I look at now, before we train anything new, I tell my staff, "It's research based." They know when I say it's research based where I can defend. Yes, before we try this we need to make sure that it is research based. A lot of that is true today, and in everything that we do now we have to make sure that it is
research based before we try it. So, that’s how my thought changed. There used to be the time when I thought, “If it worked for me, it must work for everyone else.” That’s not the way it works anymore, okay? It doesn’t work like that anymore. We don’t have those types of people anymore.

**Participant E:** Changes I see now is I’m working with a person now that’s pretty stern with my way or the highway mentality either it’s Black or it’s White. And I think that’s good in some aspects, but obviously you know there are some flaws in that too. Next year I’ll be working with someone that I’ve been working with closely that has more of … there’s a lot of grey. There’s a lot of grey. But there’s some good in that too though. Obviously there’s going to be some problems in that also. So I think that’s going to be a new experience. So, I’ve been working on both sides. Everything’s not Black and White and everything’s grey. So … as my philosophy it kind of changes, based on I guess who I’m working with, now when I get my own building one day, hopefully I can be stern and strict, cause I think that’s what some of our Black young men need, but be fair and consistent. And let them understand why you’re doing what you’re doing. I think that’s the biggest thing. Do what you can so they understand why you’re doing what you’re doing. You know sometimes, people don’t let you let them understand. You know, you don’t have a mom or dad sitting there and they got to talk until they’re blue in the face and not let you get your point across. But you still got to try to get your point across so they understand why you’re doing what you’re doing. So they know you’re trying to be firm and consistent. That’s the biggest thing.

**Participant F:** Mine … is this my philosophy? How has that changed? I don’t think it has changed that much we see … we want the same things, you know, um … you want them to have success as much as they possibly can, you want them to feel safe, you know all those types of things. They want to be treated with dignity, courtesy, and those types of things, so that hasn’t really changed. And I think that one of the things the district and I really, really agree with is this idea of relationship. In conjunction with a lot of other things, once you establish that and you establish, you know, an environment where kids are safe, not just physically safe, but safe for opinions and things like that. I don’t think that has changed much. Those are some things that I would want to bring to the table.

**Participant G:** OK, um … When I first got here, you know, I had one style of beliefs, because I came actually from the elementary, and I jumped into the high school. And I had to forget the beliefs that I had back here, because there’s a whole different culture here, as far as how students learn, why students learn, why students don’t learn, you know, why teachers are kicking kids out of classrooms. So I think the belief that I had, that just had to really change, and try to get into the classroom, and find out why these things are happening. And how can you change what’s happening to make it in a positive way. I think I answered that question OK.

**j.** Was the academic track of your secondary school experience an important factor in your role as an administrator?
Participant A: It was very important... very important. I think it prepared me for one... dealing with um... the student population. It prepared me because I was at a university that did not have a lot of experience with minorities. So, I was one of the only minorities in the classroom. What I learned was that I had to be better and get better grades than the average student to graduate and to make it. So, I think that makes me set some high standards for our kids here.

Participant B: Not really, other than the fact that it did prepare me to matriculate through the program of Western Michigan. It wasn't a great program. It wasn't... it wasn't that good. I think my personal motivation and my stick to it philosophy. Learning did not come easy to me. Some kids could read it once and have it, I would have to read it three, four, five, sometimes six times to get the same end, you know? So, I don't think it was my preparation in high school. In high school, I was interested in sports and those types of things. Sports made me want to go to school, because my parents didn't have the money to send me to school. But, my academic preparation in high school didn't have a lot to do with it.

Participant C: Academic track um... it was important... The role of the school principal has evolved. Once upon a time school principals' major focus... job was to supervise the delivery of instruction. Along the way, school population has changed, that has caused the role of the principal to change. You know, a lot of behavior things, a lot of social things, a lot of budgetary things and what not, and so the academic track focused a lot on the curriculum, not much focus on... like I said, you know, in an urban school the challenge is to get a group of people to move in the same direction. That's all about human interaction, persuasion, convincing, communication, not always about curriculum at all. So, the academic track that I took, prepared me for some curricular things, some systematic things, but it didn't do a whole lot for... entire lot for what I felt is needed in terms of moving people for a common cause. That seemed to be a different track that I had to pursue individually.

Participant D: I'd just say yes to that.

Participant E: Yeah, I think it is. I mean I'm not quite finished; I'm just finishing my master's at Grand Valley. Grand Valley has their issues, but for the most part I've appreciated the professors I've had, and the knowledge that they gave me. So yeah, I think I have grown. But then again, you go in these classrooms, there's thirty some people in there and two, three minorities, now that's disturbing. When a school district in Michigan is in the second largest city in the state and the population in that district is the second largest in the state, so you like to see more people get graduate degrees and get doctorates. You know, you'd like to see that. So hopefully we get there one day.

Participant F: I really wasn't, um.... My academic track and my secondary experience brought me where I am right now... I would say it was in a sense, but in high school, really wasn't the best of students, I really wasn't a bad student, but I wasn't one of the greater ones. I probably had a confidence problem, there are certain things, courses that I
should've taken and didn't take because I was afraid to take. You know, like some of the math classes, things I saw. But I really came to focus in college everything came together and made a lot more sense and I realized what I needed to do. I think more so my college experience influenced me. Academic experience was much more comparable to where I am right now as as opposed to my high school.

**Participated G:** Yes. I graduated from this school. I did not get what I needed to get out of this school. When I first came here, as a sophomore back in 19..... We were given a test, and this test was to say whether you were college bound student, or whether you were a student that was going to go into the work force. And my test indicated that I was a student that was going to go into the work force. And so, my, let's see ... Whichever way they were guiding me to take classes, were not college bound classes. They were guiding me to go up to the skills center and do, you know, all these other things. And I refused to do it. So, they didn't like that very well. And I just wanted to make sure that when I came back, it was my goal to come back here to become an administrator, that when I came back that I wanted to make sure that our students got as much, or a big of an opportunity as far as a window why as to do whatever they wanted to do. And the only way that that could happen was for me to come back into the building and make sure that I try to get involved with the counseling department, with the teachers, and making sure that these students, if they desire to go to college, they have an opportunity to do that.

**SECTION III. Institutional.**

a. What do you think are the factors and dynamics that explain the shortage of Black male leaders in the school district in which you currently work?

**Participant A:** One of the major dynamics is we do not cater to our population. We have a large amount of Black males in the prison system. We have the numbers reduce drastically when they graduate. So, we’re not working with those kids and trying to get them to a higher educational level. We’re just giving up too early. We’re allowing them to drop out. We’re allowing them to make excuses and not graduate. I think we need more programs besides sports programs, learning programs, early learning programs. Also, the educational system is known for putting them in special education, putting them in places that they do not belong. Now, you have a limited amount of Black males who are ready and set to go to college. I think we have like possibly 60% of our population, males, without a father in the home, which is a big, big factor in guidance and which way to go in their lives.

**Participant B:** Number one is that when the industries ... the manufacturing industries were booming, a lot of young Black potential educational administrators went into other areas, because it was more money you wouldn’t have to wait as long to see growth, professional growth. From that period, now you don't have a lot of Black males going into education period. It is difficult to fill the void. They're not available because industry offers them more money, and particularly in the math and science areas you're not going
to find a person in math and science unless they really, really, really want to just teach
school coming into education when they can go into industry and make a lot more
money. Money is important.

Participant C: I think that outside of my regular job in terms of travel and communici-
ting with other educators in the community. I know that there are qualified individuals
out there. They don’t know we exist, unless we let them know, we exist. They don’t
even know that they’re wanted unless we let them know they are wanted.

Participant D: Well I kind of saw this as we were coming up. After I finished high
school, and saw the number of teachers we had in that area, and most of them were
women. There weren’t men. I saw a lot of our boys asking a lot of questions. They
couldn’t answer some of the boys. They were like, “Well...” That means that we need
more Black males and more males in the school system. Now, where I came from we
had males in the school system, because we were segregated up until the tenth grade.
But, as I grew up and visited other districts, and the one I’m in right now, I see there is
only a limited amount, or I should say, I think a handful of males. I see that our boys and
girls, especially my boys, they are crying to get to talk to another male about any conver-
sation, something that they don’t understand or that there is not a dad in the home, or a
father in the home, or an uncle in the home. Because, on my door on my office right,
cause I leave them up, just in case they ask me if I put them up, could you be my grand-
father, could you be my dad? That bothered me, and I still have them up. So, it just
didn’t start today, or yesterday, this has been going on for a while. So, right now the
recruitment for Black males in the inner city is high on needs. The recruitment... I don’t
see people recruiting anymore like they used to. I remember years ago, northern people
would come down to the Black colleges where I went to school, and they would recruit.
Well, we knew why they were recruiting, because we saw some of that as we came up.
We didn’t see it in our schools but they would tell us that this was happening, and we
couldn’t believe it because we didn’t see that. We had Mr. Green, Mr. Davis, Mr.
Johnson, and Mr. Caine. We had those guys in our schools, but other kids didn’t have
those guys in their schools.

Participant E: Well they make you jump through some hoops, and I know you know
this. You know that most black males and black females got to do things better than an
average person you know. And... it just happens, and you know things are said and
done when those doors close that are not there, to some people. But you know you’ve
got to overcome and you can’t let that hold you down. But, some people don’t really
work that hard, it’s just that. Some people get turned out to work that hard. You know
you got kids raising kids in some situations, they don’t have the tools, you got kids
getting raised by their grandparents, their aunts, and they’re not getting everything they
might need when it comes to the tools, you got to be tough, you’ve got to be compassion-
ate, open-minded, and there’s things that bother you. But you kind of got to be a tough
guy, you got to take things, don’t be afraid to be knocked out pick yourself back up and
move on. You’ve got to get that as a minority in this state. There are some people with
different experiences. A lot of black students don’t like school. Didn’t like school or
didn’t like the experience they had in school. And you know what they say, teachers teach kids to be teachers, usually. Most students that have good solid educational experiences are prone to go back and be teachers, administrators, or something to do with education in their life. But, right now in some of the inner city schools that’s not happening. Not saying that those kids aren’t being successful in some other avenues. But, they are not coming back to the education field. And in the hoops, I mean the idea you’re graduates, you’re masters, you’ve got to know somebody. You got to take the effect of criticism, you’ve got to have people that know nothing about you tell you about you. That’s the biggest thing. I have people sit here tell me right to my face they know me. They don’t know me. Don’t talk behind my back. You don’t know what I put out there, because you don’t know me. You’ve got to be able to do that stuff. It is tough. That goes for you know, police officers, firemen, and all that stuff I see. I mean how many black police officers are in this city? Not more than a handful. I just saw the first black fireman in this city this last week. The first one I’ve ever seen. I don’t know why people aren’t drawn to that. We have a lot of good people in this city that could be police officers that are minorities. There are a lot of good people in this city that could be firemen that are minorities. The question is why aren’t they drawn to those fields. Those fields are dominantly controlled by the majority culture right now. Education is that too. Because I need Black administrators, we need Black superintendents you know in the state of Michigan as well as Deputy Superintendents and Chief Executive Officers. How many human resource departments in Michigan go down to the southern states to recruit black teachers, recruit educators? The state of Michigan had to recruit minorities to become teachers some but not a lot. I mean how many people go to Detroit or even Grand Rapids to talk to high schools about education and becoming a teacher or an administrator, and becoming involved in that field, not a lot.

Participant F: Well, first of all you don’t have a lot of Black male teachers, to choose from. And I think those that you have now are a bit older, so it’s good to see some of the younger ones becoming involved at an earlier age. As far as administration is concerned, I’m glad to see that, but just Black teachers in general the shortage of those all the way around, and people like myself might be currently getting into it. Others have gotten into it and gotten out of it, went back to the classrooms for various reasons. We’ve got to make numbers. We’ve got to make numbers more interesting, more equal.

Participant G: I think that number one is money. The more intelligent African American males that have strong backgrounds, they’re going to go to the companies that are going to pay them $20,000 to $30,000 more than public schools can offer them. So right there is the intent for them not to come into the public schools. Also, we don’t have a strong base in the elementary, so they can see that Black males are in the elementary, middle school, and high school. So there’s no attraction there. Most kids will not see their first African American male until junior high or high school, not in elementary. So, I think we have to set this process, if we want more African American males in here. We are going to have to get the process started early and be consistent.
b. How many Black male teachers have applied for teaching positions at your school within the past academic year and how many have you hired?

Participant A: I know of two that have applied. I have not hired any, but I know those two were hired.

Participant B: One that I hired. That person had to get in on a special. So, if the person goes back to working on his special ed. certification, other than that we couldn’t even hire them. A lot of white females and some white males, every time we post for a position we need them now. I’m going to interview two people Monday, and fill a position for Friday. Both are fresh out of college.

Participant C: I’m not sure overall how many have applied to my building, but when I came aboard, I was instrumental in getting two in my particular program. That happened in a very short time period, over the summer. I came to take over the Academy in July of 2004, and there were two open positions and I specifically wanted African American males to occupy those positions. So, I was very influential in getting them into the building and into our program.

Participant D: I have one Black teacher in my school. She is my reading attendant. I have no Black male teachers. I have no Black female classroom teachers.

Participant E: I don’t think this one has any new Black male teachers. There’s some that have transferred from other buildings. How many new Black male teachers in the district? Not that many from my understanding. You know, minority ... As a matter fact I had a friend the other day, this guy is a minority, he said he applied and never even got an interview. For example, I applied for four different positions and never even got a call, I went in there, walked into the central office and walked up to the secretary, and I said, “I know you’ve seen me in here. Because I’ve come in and gotten postings and turned in my application and resume.” She’s replied, “You know what, wait right here.” She returned with the athletic director of the district, and introduced me to him. We talked, and he introduced me to his wife. She’s head of Human Resources. That’s how I got my position. But, if I hadn’t done that, I probably wouldn’t be working here.

Participant F: I can’t answer that about the district in terms of numbers, but I know that on the staff here at this particular high school there’s only one Black male teacher, I believe. We have one that I know of in my academy here. And we have one that splits time between education specialist and a classroom. And that’s as far a full time basis. We have quite a few subs that are Black male, but that’s just in this building.

Participant G: We wouldn’t turn any of them down. And that means in the four years that I’ve been here we’ve had ... one African American male teacher and we turned him into an administrator.
c. What advice would you share with other Black males interested in becoming a school administrator?

**Participant A:** I would say one thing is they have to be well seasoned in what our children need. They have to be a positive role model who is consistent, stable, who knows what they’re doing, so their students will know there is brighter side of life. There is a positive way to go other than all the negative things they see on TV, or in the media, or those things.

**Participant B:** Learn that you need to be fair, consistent and honest. And if you are consistent and honest, you are fair. If you are honest with families, honest with kids, and honest with yourself … if you don’t want to do this, be honest with yourself. A lot of people are in this and they are not honest with themselves. If you would rather be doing something else, don’t do this because the people … the pallet here that you screw up has a major lifetime impact on the whole Black community. You can work for General Motors and you can screw up a car … and they just put another part on it. But, if you screw up when the life of one of these kids, it’s the graveyard. Be honest with yourself, do I really, really want to do this? Am I able to work my butt off and not see the success they want to see immediately? Because a lot of rewards for this kind of work will not be there the next day, sometimes the rewards don’t come until after the kid comes out of the penitentiary. So, you got to find out if you really want to do this. If you really want to do it, go for it, and don’t let anything get in your way. Feel internally that you can make a difference in these kids’ lives. Not that you are on the fire all by yourself, but help them. Then go for it and don’t let anything stand in your way.

**Participant C:** I’d say develop really good people skills, very excellent communication skills, and express an interest in knowing. That’s what I would do. Also, let your work speak for itself. Show that you can do something.

**Participant D:** Continue to take classes, leadership classes, talk as much as you can to administrators or leaders in the school, find out what you can do. You can start off just volunteering in the community, at your church. If you belong to a fraternity, or you belong to a social club, get involved in the neighborhood, and in the community. Be a voice, be a model and go from there.

**Participant E:** Be aggressive. Make it known what you want. Do what you need to get there. Make someone high up tell you exactly what you need to do to become an administrator. And then once you do that, make them stick to that. And you say that’s just what you’ve told me and I’ve done it. That’s what you need to do.

**Participant F:** Well, get into it as early as you can. The last few years of my teaching career, I had three student teachers I supervised, and 2 of them were Black males. And I told both of them to get into administration as quickly as they can. Maybe not so much get into it, but make sure they had ambitions of doing this and making sure they had the credentials as early as they can. Even if they wanted to teach for a number of years,
make sure you have that. You know, that particular opportunity will be there for them. And so far one of them I know is in the program at Michigan State. But that would be the biggest thing, to get those credentials as quickly as you can. And make sure that you really, really have a desire to do it, you know it as well, because it's not an easy job.

Participant G: It is a very difficult work, very hard work. The rewards are very small, but it is rewarding. And I take it like this, if I can walk out everyday with just one thing that I can sit back and smile about, then I had a successful day. And I think that, African American males can be invariably big positive role model, in education. And in the area of administration, but in order to do that, they have to understand they're going to have to balance it. Like we are very much data driven, we are very much into paperwork, and it's very difficult to get into the classrooms, and to really get a chance to meet the kids. And that's something that if you become an administrator you have to find a way to balance it. Because the kids are looking for you to come over there and talk to them, and be with them, and dialogue with them, and if you can't do that, then it's going to be rough for you.

d. What were the greatest obstacles or challenges you encountered while preparing to become a school administrator?

Participant A: The greatest obstacle was listening to people and not really having a voice to administrators and different people who thought they knew about the population they were working with and didn't understand and didn't get training, and just never realized that the students live ... and they have a lack of understanding. Whereas I was trying to explain, but was not allowed to. What I said was not important at that time until everything broke down. And then, “Well, we need your help now.” That was a big obstacle for me because been trying to tell the administrators early that we need this type of program, we need this and we don't get it.

Participant B: Actually, I didn't have any, to be honest with you. I was happy in a classroom. I only taught for three years. All I wanted to do was teach those little kids and coach baseball and coach football. That's all I'd ever do. And then, Superintendent Rocco came to me, and asked me if I'd be interested in going into administration. My answer was not really. And then he started telling me about the difference in money. That made a little difference. And then he said something to me that made all the difference in the world, he said, “Right now you deal with a hundred kids a day, and you influence a hundred kids a day.” He said, “If you were an administrator, you could influence a thousand.” That has always stuck with me. The only reason I didn't move to administration because I liked the idea of being the boss, I moved to administration primarily because I could influence more kids. Other than that I was happy teaching school. The money had something to do with it too. Don't get me wrong. I think I went from my first contract back in 1965 was $5,200.00. Three years later as an administrator, I was making about $18,000. Money had something to do with it, right? But, my primary motivating factor was that I could influence many children.
Participant C: What like paying for college and all that type of stuff? When I got hired in, there was a quality initiative, so you could get all that paid for. But the obstacles would actually be presented with an opportunity. A lot of time the opportunities won’t present themselves. Right now, I know what other school districts, other than this one, who will actually set aside administrative positions for a certain type, a certain ethnic group ... so really having the opportunity is what is important to show that you can be a good school leader.

Participant D: I don’t know whether there was a great challenge or not. Being a teacher I knew I could do it, but I didn’t have a lot of males to talk to here to talk to as a teacher. Mostly, I had women in the lounge before I started to teach. I remember the first job I went to be a teacher, there was about twenty, twenty-five women being interviewed for one job. I was about the eighth guy to go in and talk to the guy. As soon as I walked in, my resume was there, and I just had this feeling that it could go either way, I guess. He looked at me and said, “You are the last customer. You are hired. You just sit down. We’re going to go through for now to see if ... and not being disrespectful to the women, but I have to say a man, a male in a long time to come in for a job.” I couldn’t believe because at the time I was really looking for a job and I didn’t think that it was going to be that easy that day. But, it goes to show you that ... he called me a “rare specimen.” I was like, “What?” That was in the ‘80s I believe, and I was like, “Wow, it hasn’t changed at all.”

Participant E: Like I said, when I was starting I was getting more knowledgeable in curriculum, curriculum development, that kind of thing. The only reason I talk about it matter of fact back when I was talking about my disability, you know, that was pretty much it. I had a lot of other good tools that I built on.

Participant F: The biggest thing for me was trying to understand the attitudes of some of the staff. And, finding out that everybody, especially coming out of the classroom, everybody didn’t have the same viewpoint that I did as far as a teacher and as far as the population I was teaching. That was the biggest eye opener ... seeing the attitudes of the staff, that probably, really didn’t ... were kind of the opposite of what mine in terms of education, in terms of really having a happening type of spirit because of the paths that you’ve chosen.

Participant G: People telling me you can’t do it. That was the biggest thing, you can’t do it ... you are not smart enough to do it. Why do you want to do that, those kids don’t care about you? All the negatives were said.

e. Do you feel as if there are institutional practices that impact Black males in their mission as administrators?

Participant A: Impact them in a positive way, or in a negative way? I think there are institutional practices that can ruin them. There are institutional practices that can help
them. Meaning ... ruin them, because if you feed into the system and you get angry about all the things happening to your own race, you can end up on the negative side of the coin. If you feed into the system and you say, “Okay, I’m going to get more education so I can change things.” Then you turn around and positively helping those students. I think that was my plight, because I was thinking, “I’m going to get my education because someone’s got to want to change things. Things cannot be this bad.” So, I think both ways it could impact you, negative and positive. If you take the negative side now, the negative side does not work. You are perceived as a negative person, a person who doesn’t want to help kids. If you take the side of the child, wanting to help them, then you get more education, you’re trying to get to a place where you can really have some say-so, and impact their lives. So, I think the militant side kind of hurt you, because you speak out, you get angry, and the next thing you know you don’t move through those spaces that you need to move to help children.

**Participant B:** Are there institutional practices ... I don’t think that the teacher training institutions recruit good. I don’t think that they make a concerted effort to go at Black males. I think that basically, whoever applies and whoever comes in fine and since males do not apply, you don’t get many of them in the mix. I think if you’re going to impact that, I think the teacher training institutions have to take the lead and recruit Black males to the program. I was in the Education for the Disadvantaged Program at Western. I was one of four Blacks. I noted those other 12 people in there were not aspiring to be working all Black civics. It was a program that they had just selected. But, for the Black ones, those of us in the program, we were in the program to prepare us to do something that we really wanted to do. I think the schools, universities, colleges, and school districts have to do something. When they see young Black males in the classroom, they’ve got to go up to that young Black male and make that Black male know that we want you in our district, and we want you to get your master’s degree, and when you do, we are going to put you on the fast track. Like I said, I would never have gone to school for school administration unless the superintendent came and visited me personally. I was doing something in the classroom that he liked. I was doing something in my room that my building principal saw positive to make the superintendent come out and visit me and see what I considered doing, and promise me a job that, “if you get your master’s, I’ll make you an administrator next, and you’ll be a big influence, ten times as many kids as you are influencing now.” That’s why I went. I got my masters’ degree in one year, from Western Michigan University, going back and forth every day after school. Because, he had promised me, “If you get this by September, before school started, I’ll make you an administrator.” I was an assistant principal at twenty-three years old. Yeah, I was about twenty-three years old ... principal at twenty-five, because he put me on the fast track. Like I said, he came to me. I think that is what has to happen. When the superintendent goes to the young brother and says, “We need you,” “We want you to do these types of things.” I think that is what motivate ... the same motivation that I had, would be for someone else. But, just to let it happen ... there are just too many things to get in the way.
Participant C: You really want that on tape? To be quite frank, racism is alive and well. It exists east, west, north, and south. Being counted out of opportunities is a concern. So, I think that racial practices have prevented a lot of... or maybe even discouraged a lot of African American males from even heading in this direction. It’s a rewarding position. It could be a rewarding career, because it gives you a chance to shape and mold minds and present them into society. So, to not be offered an opportunity to impact young people, in particular an African American community, because there is such a lack... an absence of the Black male in the household. We try to create situations in the community, organizations, where kids can have a regular interaction with African American males. So, to be denied an opportunity to impact student lives is a great concern.

Participant D: I’m saying to that in this century you know... that depends on the way you looked at it. The way you are brought up. I guess I never had that problem in a sense. I look better on the bright side too. I never got taken.

Participant E: Yeah, I think the biggest is, I mean how can you knock it but... you know when you have a lot of Black males and Black females and they come from the inner city, okay, and obviously you know the education in the inner city is not as good as you might get in the suburbs, based on money. But then again, you give the same standardized tests to the same people form different backgrounds. I could talk until I’m blue in the face about standardized tests but, you know it’s kind of hard that if you don’t give me the same resources that someone else has gotten, but then I have to take the state... same test and requirement as they get to take, but from a different community, it is going to be tougher for me. Just the wording of test questions are tough for minorities based on their background. If you are not familiar with the language, um... and the teachers are that, you know... you kind of shoot yourself in the foot. One minute you say, “Well, one minute we got to establish relationships with these kids.” And yeah, but a lot of teachers in this building that takes stuff down and then bring it back up. So now, you have teachers that you know, using different grammar, so kids can understand and hopefully before the kids leave, using the proper grammar. You know, not saying crib for house. Um... because if you don’t get there, like I said you got test questions that people don’t understand what the question is because they don’t understand the grammar. So, I think the requirements to become an administrator or become a teacher are tough for Black males, Black females, and for people of color period. Especially Hispanics.

Participant F: There probably are, you know, it might be... some people might be looked over inadvertently, but some might be looked over intentionally for whatever reason. But I think that just goes on in any particular institution where you have “race quote unquote really is an issue.” Yeah, can I point to any specifically, probably not, if I look them up hard enough you know I probably could, but right now I’m not aware of any that I can see here.

Participant G: Yes I do. I believe that colleges and universities will only graduate a certain amount of kids, a certain amount of African American kids. I do know that a lot
of the students that go into Black colleges ... I mean go into colleges do not go in as freshman, they go in under a freshman, meaning they’ll take the 001 and 002, the developmental skill classes. And most of the time, if not 90% of time, they don’t make it out of those classes, and they get put out, over the academic, their grade point average being too low, academic probation. I think it’s a way that colleges, they make money, they make money, they ship some off and then bring some of the new ones in, I’ve seen colleges do it.

f. Does the school district in which you are employed provide leadership training? If so, how has it impacted your role as a school administrator?

Participant A: This year it provided a lot of leadership training. We still receive training every month. This Friday was like an instructional leadership team, just to become a better administrator. I think more programs have been put in so the administration understands the student body more, which is a great thing. There are very few districts that are working as hard to understand its student body. With the changing population, specifically in this Michigan school district with Latinos and Blacks and other minorities, it is very important that we ... that our leadership team become more knowledgeable of all of those different minorities.

Participant B: Yes, but the leadership training program that they provide hasn’t impacted my role. I think the leadership training program in place came after I was an administrator. I have participated here as a consultant, as a trainer. It didn’t exist when I came.

Participant C: They provide leadership training in the areas of curriculum issues. That causes us to have to go back and have to really deal with human interactions and community relationships ... making connections with kids, making connections with families, making connections with the community. Establishing relationships in the community has to be done, I think first and foremost in an urban school district, because it is absent everywhere else. So, when kids have that feeling, that connectedness with the relationship, then everything else will fall into place. Pushing forward the relationship building the community, creating a surrogate family so to speak from the school environment, constantly pushing for that helps. You need to understand that if you address this issue, these other issues won’t be so monumental. The best laid plan for curriculum development or delivery faces major obstacles or is hindered from being implemented, because you can’t get kids or families to respond to what you need. That goes back to human interaction, relationships, you know? I have very little difficulty getting a kid to sit down and do something curriculum related when I have a relationship with them. When I don’t have a relationship, I have to spend time trying to convince them or use authoritative measures to make them respond. When the relationship and the connection is there, they’ll do it because they know the expectation is there, and they want to live up to the expectation.
Participant D: It has training. Generally, people do talk to me about the training. Should I go? Should I put time in? Should I really invest time in it? I say, “Yes, because you have to understand there’s that ... we multiply, we don’t divide. Our boys and girls need you, because we’re getting older and someone is going to take our place, and so the old principal said, “If the wagon makes a lot of noise ...” I guess I remember hearing him say that. “You have to upgrade.” You know ... my grandmother says that too. I know exactly what she means. So, I was the one who never wanted to make any noise. In a big way it had the big brick surface, so I could be real quiet. I know what those bricks are all about now. Well, we have boys and girls that are really, and I say boys and girls because they talk to us. The training is free. They really know things that they are going to do it. I tell them, “Yes.” Now, if they can’t get in there, they ask me, what can they do to get in? I tell them you know, I know there is not a charge from the district that is providing the training, but if you go back to class and take a leadership class, do that, and uh ... Some of them plan on doing that. I have a child myself that I have asked to do that. If they don’t prepare a place in the district for doing that, then you take some leadership classes because the younger you are, the faster you can get in it, do it. Okay? Because, when I was there, kids see you on their level, they see you are not good enough. Cause I remember when I was a young teacher, and I said to go, and I said now. It was great going now. You can’t be wrong looking at it, you can’t be wrong. It’s the way you do it. So, the training is free. Advice to them and to you, continue to do the best that you can do. Don’t say “no” to a young person that says can I become a leader, because that person is going to become a leader. And that person is going to have an effect on, not thirty kids in a classroom, but maybe five hundred and thirty, maybe a thousand. An old principal told me that once. He wrote to me, “You go to that leadership place, cause right now what you’re doing, you always have to do thirty at a time every year. Now with your kids you just bawl me out, cause I know you can do it.” I was comfortable in my comfort zone, in referring to them. But, you can do it. Kids come in here everyday with you all day long, I don’t know what you do to them. I hear you are out exploring things, and I hear, “(Name withheld) what you all doing?” And, “He in there doing what you (inaudible) in me. He always got stuff going on.” And, I know now that you were.

Participant E: You know ... I think it ... Yeah, I mean, yeah. They provide initial training. They provide different strategies, how to get people on board with doing things and move in the right directions. But, no I tell you got to have something in you to be a good leader. There needs to be something that you’re going with, or naturally that comes to you. Not saying that you’re not going to have some thoughts that you can improve on as a leader, but not everyone could be an administrator. Not every teacher that walks in that door and teach, could be an administrator. Not every CEO of major companies can just come in and run the school district. It just can’t happen. It’s just ... it’s different. So, you just have to have a little something in you that make it easier for you to do the job.

Participant F: OK, it does but I don’t think as forceful, I don’t know it might be the word that I can sum it up with. Because they kind of encourage you to do this, but they don’t necessarily say you have to do this and you have to do that. You know, most of the
things, extra courses or extra workshops and stuff that I've gone to, were something I found of interest. And would go, and a, you know might be a one day workshop, might be ya know, a weekend or something like that, but it's ... there isn't any ... You get your magazines, you look up on the internet, you get all that kind of data stuff, but there's not a lot of specific training that they really issue out. OK, I can say those that I choose to go to, you know, I try to impact, I try to use it in some type of way. And most of mine has to do with dealing with staff, getting staff onboard, and ways to approach them, and try to get them to influence them to do what you want them to do, that type of thing. I use it like that. You know lately I read a lot of articles more so than take classes and stuff like that and workshops like that. And I just try to use that data where I see fit. Whether it's with a child or whether it's with a coworker or co-administrator, or whether it's with my teaching staff or whatever, just got to use it in specific situations.

Participant G: They don't provide leadership training anymore, they used to, but they don't. I think that has hurt me. At my school, we had two head principals in the four years that I've been here, and next year we're going to have another new head principal. And so the inconsistent, the consistent turnover is just ... doesn't help anyone build. The elementary that I was at I was there for two years, and they went through two principals. So for me to develop a style and to develop as an administrator the role, the turnover is really bad. And so I can't grow, it's hard for me to grow, by watching a mentor, principal, doing as good a job, so I think that they need a leadership program to make sure that you're training your assistant principals to someday become a principal. And if you don't have that training, then you're relying on the principal to do it, and the principal has too much to do, and then if you have a school that the turnovers are getting a lot then you're really hurting your assistant principal.

g. Does the school district in which your work, provide opportunities for teachers to advance into administration?

Participant A: Yes it does. There are ways ... I think there is tuition reimbursement, if you get higher education.

Participant B: Advancement into administration is dependent upon the need. You know ... what they've got open. They've got some programs that where I think they meet a couple times a month and they talk over different problems, problems in the school district, deal with finance, they deal with a little behavior modification, they do a few things with community involvement, and parental involvement. They have different speakers come in and talk to us. If you go through that program, you get on a list of potential ... there are no guarantees or anything. I think what it does more than anything else is serves as a process to weed out. When you get in there and you can find out how it is different when you see the other side of it. You can say, "Well no, I don't want to do that."
Participant C: They provide their own system of promotion from the rank of a teacher to administration. From what I have observed, and what I have experienced, it’s not what’s really needed. We need administrators that are a good fit, that are good for particular buildings. The route to principal-ship used to be because the teacher knew, or had the keys to everything, or knew the building well, inherited the title of principal, just because you knew where the custodian’s closet was, and you knew everything in the building. That’s not what’s needed. What’s needed is someone who can rally the troops so to speak for a common cause. That means you’ve got to be able to work inside the building and outside the building, and be effective there. When that’s not in place ... I’ve tried to tell them, I’ve seen where we will choose leaders for buildings who weren’t good fits only because they have seniority in the building, or maybe a favor from someone from a higher rank was called in, with not a good picture of the building. There is no connectivity with the students, the families, or community. School leaders now, public school leaders have to be connected to the students, family, community, to get anything done.

Participant D: Yes, they do. Probably not with the force that we would like or at the magnitude or the quality we would like. Right now, the quantity cannot bond to the quality.

Participant E: I think the superintendent right now is doing some things that will kind of promote people ... to identify that they might want to be administrator one day, and they’re giving them opportunities to get some training or at least some knowledge of how this works. But, not just necessarily the way we should. I think we should foster people. I think we should identify people that are strong in ability and say, “You know what, John? I’ve been watching for a year and I think you’re somebody who should look at administration down the road. These are some things you need to do if that’s something you might be interested in. You know, this is your two-year, three-year track that could put you in a situation to get administrator job, if you want one.” I think those kind of things should happen more. But, then again time is money, and some people don’t have enough time to do that kind of stuff. But, I would like to see that. You know, that’s something that will always be in the back of my head, so if I ever become a superintendent, hopefully you see that kind of stuff taking place. Because you got to build on people’s qualities, their strengths, you know that is what it’s all about. Yeah, you can create some things at times, but it is better to foster some things.

Participant F: Oh yes it does. That’s kind of how I got into it, being in the classroom for like I said about 24 years, and a lot of times they can, you know they identify people at various stages in their career. Like I said earlier it’s good to see a lot of young Black males coming into this particular capacity, because years ago it just wasn’t that way. You had your speaking only in my experience here, almost 30 years you have maybe people like Mr. Sturdivant, Mr. Randy, and Mr. Bailey, were stewards in their period of time. Periodically over the years you have 1 or 2 coming in here or there. I’m only speaking for the high school, because that’s all I’ve been in secondary so all I know what
it's been like. But just recently you start seeing somebody younger, young bloods coming in I should say.

**Participant G:** Yes, they do that. They do have workshops, leadership classes, that they can take and they really push and to pursue if you see any teachers in your building that you think would be able to become administrators. You know, please put their name down and we need to put them into leadership classes.

**SECTION IV. Community.**

a. What factors in the community facilitated your becoming a school administrator?

**Participant A:** One thing, I've always wanted to work in an inner city school. So, that impacted me to come from the suburbs back to the inner city. It seems like no one wants to work in this community, because there's fear. There is no fear for me because this is the community I grew up in. So, how can you be afraid of what you are? For me the community has facilitated me coming back, because there are many people in the community who urged me to work here, it is a good place. The kids really need your help, and you really could be good there. So, I think those were the community voices talking and wanting more positive Black male role models within the school system.

**Participant B:** We were coming out of the riots. We had major riots in the city following the ones in California and Detroit, major riots in the city. I was teaching school at the time. We had kids running around they (inaudible) some people too. They wanted to get people these kids would listen to. At least, if we could get them off the street into a positive situation. Kids ... tension was very, very, very high. Our teachers had a very, very hard time controlling Black kids. It was a situation, like I said, where the superintendent was looking for Blacks that he thought would be able to assist in bringing a calm back to our district. There were two ... there was a major riot ... two major riots at schools in the city. We had just gone into bussing, bussing Black kids over on the west side, closed down one high school, which was the Black school and bussed all the kids out to other schools. So, racial tension was very, very high. Other schools were bussing Black kids to schools where there were no Black teachers, and certainly no Black administrators. I think what the superintendent knew was they needed to identify young Black men, that they felt could help bring calm back to this district. That's where I picked up, and probably ten, twelve other guys got picked up.

**Participant C:** There weren't a whole lot of African American administrators when I was in school, or even in college. But, the one that I did encounter, I could run into, or have interaction with in the community ... to see a principal I could watch in the park in a basketball game ... to see a principal sit next to me, or a few rows from me in church, to run into a principal at the grocery store and have conversation with him, to strike up a conversation at the gas station, so having that interaction and understanding that each
person in his leadership role can have an impact when they’re connected to the community or the everyday lives of the individuals of the community.

**Participant D:** That’s really not... I can say this, the church.

**Participant E:** In the community? When I first started out I was in a different district, I mean... If you care about your race, and you care about kids, especially kids that share the same color skin that you have, then all you do is drive around (Neighborhood name withheld) and that should make you want to do something, I think. You know, everyday you see something you shouldn’t see. Drive around at eleven in the morning, you see kids that should be in school walking the streets. I worked at the movie theater, we had movies... we had kids at one in the morning, eight years old, waiting on a ride. Twelve year olds are out, one, two in the morning. You know, that shows you that there needs to be some more guidance... some people out there helping people do something, you know. I think I’m not afraid to sit in front of some parents and say, “You know what? You might want to think how you doing things... a little bit, cause uh... how is that helping him stay out of trouble.” I had a family here the other day. His son leaves here at 2:15 everyday, don’t show up every night until 9:30, 10:00. And, he don’t know where he’s at, every night. And, I told him that when I saw him walking away and I say, “You know, you’re not making it better, you know? Cause if you’re not putting your foot down, and he continues to do it, all you’re doing is opening the door for other things to go on.” What do you think a twelve-year-old is doing at 9:30 at night, hasn’t been home all day. What do you think he’s doing? You know, I talked to the kid... “ah, I’m at my girlfriend’s.” Okay... you know how that can end up. Yeah, that kind of stuff right there gets me wanting to be involved.

**Participant F:** I’ve seen a point to any one or two particular things, especially in the way that I described how I got into it. I just basically looking for a challenge and I just happened to open my mouth in the right place. It really wasn’t anything I was really going to look for, wholeheartedly, but I’m glad I did, because I’m seeing a lot of different ways that I can impact more people or more students or what have you. Community needs to see leader, you know they need to see leaders in various types of capacities, you know, not those that are out there on the front page or on the radio and stuff like that, they’re not a leader just yet they’re in the background, and I think whatever way I could do that, you know, that is fine, but I just try to, you know, present yourself in a positive way to the community, and I... being involved and visible, you know, being available when they need me. Those types of things, that I mentioned a little earlier their people need to see, people have somewhat of an influence on a regular type of a basis and I think I try to do that.

**Participant G:** Just seeing that the schools are not involved in the community. And when we have problems with students in our school, sometimes I think it’s important that the community as well as the churches in that community can come in and help out. And I don’t see that happening. And that is my goal, to try to get a church, next year, if not in the future, to get a church partnership, with this high school.
b. What factors in the community impeded your becoming a school administrator?

Participant A: Well, you have a lot of people who don’t want new blood and change, and that was a big factor that was stopping a lot of things. Change is always tough for anybody. We also have a lot of people that just didn’t believe ... some people are like people ... sometimes people don’t like people ... hard workers, or they just want a mundane ... they just want go through the same channels. So, I guess change is the biggest factor here.

Participant B: I didn’t have any factors that impeded me. I am from here. Everybody knows me. Most of the people looked upon my move to administration as something not only positive for me, but positive for them.

Participant C: In my particular community or in an African American community there is ... what we struggle with in terms of jealousy and envy. Some folks will see you on a fast track in a direction, and will try to discourage, sabotage you, and do other things, for what reasons ... I have lot of opinions for the reasons. Sometimes, some people from within your community can impede you, also resources, opportunities. Sometimes the opportunities that are presented to other folks never reach your community, although they are out there. I’d like to think that religious leaders should take a more active role in terms of what happens in communities and in public schools. For a lot of African Americans, the church used to be the pillar institution in terms of what we were receiving in this nation about change, movement, and what’s necessary in terms of establishing or supporting, or getting behind a cause. So, when the opportunity or information is not as readily available in the community that can impede some of your progress or even set the pace or slow it down.

Participant D: Basic changing, everyone being knowledgeable, wanting everyone to be knowledgeable, not leaving anyone behind, not seeing a child left behind. Just that constant, you see that, look at my mom and dad, and you are so grateful that they were able to make them proud of us, teach them how to read and write just well as we could. It was just amazing, and it’s still amazing to see that. We still have a lot of people in our communities that cannot read and write because they had to work, but I have boys and girls in my school whose parents are illiterate. They come to school everyday, careful not to be ashamed of them, because I’ve been there. Guess what we are going to do it for them. We are going to make them proud of themselves, because you are going to do not only that now, because some of them cannot speak the language. We have to teach them English, and we have to teach them how to read and write. So, your job is really cut out for you. I only had to teach them how to read and write better, and you have to teach them how to speak the language and read and write. Parents will depend upon them to do that.

Participant E: I’m assuming you mean negative. Well, it’s the lack of support, I think, from the community. I don’t know, they don’t trust school ... I tell you what the toughest thing is we have a female administrator, Black female, strong Black woman. I love her to death, but she gets so much from some of these Black mothers. I think because
she's a Black woman. I think this community is so used to taking orders from the majority, that sometimes when they sit in front of a Black female or male, that they can’t do it. They feel like, “Well, you know better than me, so why can’t …?” You know? And, I see it. I see a white administrator here, he deals with a parent, “Okay, I take my ten day suspension right here, and walk out the door.” When you see a parent go in to the Black female, or even myself and all hell breaks out. You know, it’s just like … And it’s not even related to what’s going on. It’s a personal thing. “Well, you don’t like my son” and you know … How does a person discipline what a person did? That’s it, but I don’t know what that is. I don’t know if it’s inner-race … racism, you know, bias? You know, I come off a little differently because I am from Detroit, and I am not from around here. So, I don’t know a lot of people like some other people in this building might know people.

Participant F: I don’t think there was anything. It’s a lot, what you really, really want to do, you know. And I don’t think there’s anything out there that’s really stopped me, from doing anything, whether it was an administrator, or a teacher, or the coach, whatever, you know, I don’t believe that anything off of that impeded me.

Participant G: None at all.

SECTION V. Comprehensive

a. Please list three most important factors that facilitated your becoming a school administrator.

Participant A: Um … two was my educational background … Did I have the specific knowledge to be an administrator, or could I get more training? So, being ready, assure the student body that I can adapt and work with and help those students making sure I have the proper educational background and to get more training. Three, I would say my family, making sure that my family could deal with me becoming an administrator at the time. So, family and time, cause it takes a lot of time of your life. It requires a lot of time.

Participant B: Number one, I was promised a job. Number two, would be money. Number three, I could influence more people.

Participant C: One … I wanted to impact the field of education by getting people to understand that education is a human service. It’s here to provide an opportunity for learning, growing, and developing, and to shape and mold lives, so they can be productive people in society. To impact the people in my community as well as the families I grew up with. Now, I am in the position where I am responsible for the education of my friends and my relatives and neighbors. The third one … would be … I’ve been taught from my father to be … when you are somewhere, people should know that you were there long after you are gone, so to leave a mark in the field of education, in terms
of establishing something that was beneficial a group of people, or at least one individual. So, he would always tell me, “After you stand up, or sit down, people should know that you were there. If you’ve been in the building, people should know that you were there long after you have left.” So, to make a mark in education, to understand that it is a human service, to make sure you provide opportunities for kids to learn, grow and develop and be productive citizens in this world.

**Participant D:** Number one ... one of the main factors of becoming an educator or an administrator ... when I saw my parents do when I came, if you did not have a good education, you were going to be limited on what you can do, and what you can have, no matter, what you could do, or how you could do it, your skin was dark. Okay? That’s number one. And with that number one, if you had an education, no one could take that away from you. I mean, I play the piano, and my mom said, “They’ll never be able to take that away from you.” With an education you can work, you can go places and you can do things, but you have to have God with you to do those things, okay? So, those are ... that’s number one. Number two is getting back to what I was raised against, and what I was raised to say, never to share that. No one else had to go through what my family and my parents had to work through. I do it now, because I love them. And if you love them, you know people are always going to come back and say, “If it weren’t for you, I wouldn’t have made it.” I say, “if it wasn’t for you, I wouldn’t have made it.” Cause I love them. I just love them to death.

**Participant E:** Help. I better get this out. I want to help kids of my race be involved in making this a better place for my daughter. You know, providing for my family, you know? This is a very secure field. And yeah, you can make pretty good money, and that’s a factor. I want to give back. So, if we don’t have enough people out there giving back it’s not going to get better. Hopefully, the ideas I have up here are something that is going to make some changes in the future for the better.

**Participant F:** Wanting to make a difference would be one. Making a difference and having some type of an impact on a larger scale than just in the classroom. Another thing, would be just accepting the challenges within myself.

**Participant G:** Students, my family, and my principal in tenth grade.

b. Please list three most important factors that negatively impacted you becoming a school administrator.

**Participant A:** I say the first one would be time, because you worry about when you are going to see your family. Being an administrator takes a toll of time, so instantly I was worried about the time that I could spend at home with my child. I think another thing that impeded me becoming an administrator possibly would have been no one wanted change. They wanted things to stay the same. Things had to change. The last one, I
think we had a lot of negativity in some staff and some community members about certain people coming from outside. Outsiders coming in, not going up within the community had a big part of ... it impeded anything, cause nobody wants to see somebody from the outside come in.

**Participant B:** I don’t have any factors. Once I was convinced I could make more money and have a major impact on more kids, there was nothing negative there. I’ve been doing it ever since. I could have retired. I’ve been here since ‘65, that’s forty years ago. I could have retired a long time ago, but I enjoy what I do. I’m effective at what I do. That’s why I ... Seeing young men like (Named individual), and coming up and being able to work with them a little bit. I deal with the grandkids of kids I taught. That makes it real easy for me too. I can go to a kid where a lot of others can’t. I can call up a parent and say he’s acting just like you. Somebody else would call up and try and tell them that and the parent may feel that they have a real attitude problem. So, that and being here a long time has its pluses. I feel I want to do something ... the community has been really good to me, and if I can give some things back, that’s it.

**Participant C:** Negatively impacted ... Um ... perception of others, people who didn’t think I was ready for it. I think that was directly related to race. A young African American male should not be in a supervisory position of older Caucasian males, or Caucasian females. I think race was a significant factoring impeding. The system by which administrators are promoted that is kind of in place affects whether you get in or stay out of administration. Those two things are significant things. The third thing would be opportunities. Let’s go back to opportunities. As you know, opportunities could be available, but not presented to you. They are presented to other people, you know? You ask the question, well ... I have the same degree. Why wouldn’t the opportunity like that be presented to me? Those are the three for things for me.

**Participant D:** I can’t think of anything negative. My parents would not let us think of the negative things that would impact us. So, the negative voice would not have an impact on us, because my parents heard nothing that you said. I didn’t know it was true then. I know it was true but they wouldn’t let you say it.

**Participant E:** Negative. I wanted to do this job. So, there’s nothing that makes me want to leave. This is where I am right now. Hopefully you will see me one day, and you say, “Yeah, I remember that guy.” You know? Sometimes the parent involvement makes it harder for me to do my job. Sometimes inconsistency of the district, and the buildings ... it just seems like we should all be on the same page, because it seems like communities will take communities. You know? And that makes it tough because you have a lot of kids that do transfer back and forth throughout the year in this building. I think we lose a lot that way. That makes it tough. That’s the area, some of those educational requirements to me, made it tough for me to get here. Sometimes, I just wish I didn’t have some of the issues that I have when it comes to learning. That’s the biggest deterrent right there. But, I overcame it and hopefully things still work out the way I want them to.
Participant F: Oh, well some of the resistance that you get from staff would be one that was kind of negative for me. Being a little apprehensive at first might have been one. Not knowing if I made the right decision on this, that, and the other. And I guess the other thing is ... the last thing would be job security. You know, because they can put you out the door if and when they want to. So, that might have been something. So far I've been on a roll with it.

Participant G: I don't have any of those factors.
Appendix B

Letter to Participants
Doctoral Student in Educational Leadership  
Grand Valley State University  
Office of Multicultural Affairs  
130 Commons  
Allendale, MI 49401  

I agree to participate in a research study conducted by Oliver Wilson, a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership Program at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan. The purpose of this study is understand what are the facilitating and negating factors that have enabled Black male school administrators to achieve success. The outcome of my study will be to assist the district superintendent and the administrative team to effectively recruit and retain Black male school leaders.

I am a participant in this study because I meet the following criteria which were used in the selection process:

1. I am a Black male.
2. I currently hold or have held a leadership position as assistant principal or principal in the Michigan school district.
3. I am willing to be interviewed so that my experiences shared might assist the district superintendent and the administrative team effectively recruit and retain Black male school leaders.

There will be no personal benefits given to me for participating in this research and I will not receive any financial compensation for my participation. My participation is solely on a voluntary basis. As a study participant I am free to skip any question I do not want to answer. Also, I may withdraw from this study at any point without penalty. I can do this by informing the interviewer of my desire to withdraw. Any information given to the researcher prior to my withdrawal will be removed.

My identity as well as any one named during the interview process will be held in strict confidence. Confidentiality will be maintained through the use of pseudonyms. I will eliminate any identifying contextual information by not using information that will identify the participants.
The interview will consist of open-ended questions asked during a taped session. The interview will last no longer than 4 hours. Difficult situations or challenges may arise during the interview. Should my discomfort continue, the researcher will assist me with contacting a district employee counselor.

I will receive a copy of the summary of findings pertaining to this study and I am able to provide feedback and ask questions of the researcher about the study at any time.

This study will be used for publication in Oliver Wilson’s doctoral dissertation.

I may contact the student researcher or the faculty advisor with any questions I have (Oliver Wilson, doctoral candidate, 616-554-9344; Dr. Van Cooley, 269-387-3822). I can also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at 269-387-8298 if problems arise during the course of the study.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the date is older than one year.

I have read and I agree to participate in the interview for this study. I will sign one copy of the informed consent and return it to the researcher. I will keep the second copy for my own personal record.

Name of Participant (please print)

Signature of Participant  Date
Appendix C

Interview Guidesheet
Interview Guidesheet

I. Family

a. What or who motivated you to become a school administrator?
b. Were your parents involved in your education? How?
c. In elementary school did your parents assist you with your homework? If not, what was the reason you think your parents did not assist you?
d. Who among the family members were/are role models that lead you to become a school principal?
e. What family economic or structural plight did you experience as a child? How did that family experience relate to your career choice?
f. Were parental expectations a significant factor for you?
g. How has sibling(s) influence impacted you as an administrator?

II. Individual

a. What particular variables help motivate your interest in positively facilitating the lives and experiences of the student population in which you serve?
b. What particular strengths do you feel you have brought to the position as a school administrator that have positively impacted your
   1. students
   2. school
   3. community
   4. district
c. List any awards or recognition that you have received as a school administrator for your work as a school administrator?
d. List any challenges you have encountered as a result of your work as a school administrator?
e. What support have you received from personnel within the context of your school environment that has facilitated your work as a school administrator?
f. Describe any training you have received that was specifically designed to assist you in your role as a Black school administrator?
g. What particular strategies, processes and procedures have you found that have contributed to your success as a school administrator?
h. How does your personal belief system influence your role as an administrator?
i. How has educational philosophy changed as a result of your work as an administrator?
j. Was the academic track of your secondary school experience an important factor in your role as an administrator?

III. Institutional

a. What do you think are the factors and dynamics that explain the shortage of Black male leaders in the school district in which you currently work?

b. How many Black male teachers have applied for teaching positions at your school within the past academic year and how many have you hired?

c. What advice would you share with other Black males interested in becoming a school administrator?

d. What were the greatest obstacles or challenges you encountered while preparing to become a school administrator?

e. Do you feel as if there are institutional practices that impact Black males in their mission as administrators?

f. Does the school district in which you are employed provide leadership training? If so, how has it impacted your role as a school administrator?

g. Does the school district in which you work, provide opportunities for teachers to advance into administration?

IV. Community

a. What factors in the community facilitated your becoming a school administrator?

b. What factors in the community impeded your becoming a school administrator?

V. Comprehensive

a. Please list three most important factors that facilitated your becoming a school administrator.

b. Please list three most important factors that negatively impacted your becoming a school administrator.
Appendix D

Approval Letter From the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board
Date: March 23, 2005

To: Van Cooley, Principal Investigator
    Oliver Wilson, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Mary Lagerwey, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 04-12-11

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled "Perceptions and Attitudes of African American Male School Administrators in West Michigan" has been approved under the expedited category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: March 23, 2006


