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EFFECT OF RACIAL SOCIALIZATION AND RACIAL IDENTITY IN
ADOLESCENT AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

By

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A THESIS

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Under the Supervision of Professor Rochelle L. Dalla

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EFFECT OF RACIAL SOCIALIZATION AND RACIAL IDENTITY IN
ADOLESCENT AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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University of Nebraska, 2013

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This study examined possible influences of racial socialization and racial identity in minority's academic achievement. Qualitative data sources (in-depth, personal interviews, focus groups, and a survey) were collected from 10 minority students and 8 administrators. In addition, a quantitative survey was used to supplement qualitative data. The researcher established her own set of questions for the interviews and focus groups. The pre-established measures used were the Does Your School Have High Expectations for All Students survey and the School Climate survey.

Thematic and theoretical analyses procedures were used to identify emerging themes and patterns, with particular attention to what minority male students and school administrators believe promotes and challenges minority student's academic success and racial identity. Content analysis was used in the quantitative procedure to determine the school climate. Most participants reported relationships, expectations, self-motivation, and race as significant influences in academic achievement and identity development.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The United States of America truly values education. The country teaches that if you want to be someone in the world, make a difference, or simply be able to live comfortably then an education will get you there; hence “the American Dream.” This often drives people to believe that they must do well throughout elementary, middle, and high school, so they can continue to college and earn a degree. This mindset molds and shapes Americans’ beliefs that an education leads to success. All children have the right to an education theoretically, however, in practice, questions remain: Are all children receiving attention and effective instruction that leads to academic success? Does a student’s race impact the education he or she receives in public schools? And finally, are there barriers in place, whether consciously or unconsciously, that cause minority students to struggle academically when compared to their Caucasian peers?

In *Brown vs. the Board of Education (US Supreme Court, 1954)* the United States Supreme Court declared that separate public schools for Black and White students were inherently unequal and unconstitutional. This historic court case advised all school boards to end segregation; however, despite this ruling, equality in education may still be elusive. Often the study of race, ethnicity and culture become intertwined and used interchangeably, but in reality, these are all distinct concepts. *Race* includes all human beings belonging to a single species and who share a common origin. They are born equal in dignity and rights and all form an integral part of humanity. All peoples of the world possess equal faculties for attaining the highest level in intellectual, technical, social,

economic, cultural, and political development. The differences between the achievements of the different people are entirely attributable to geographical, historical, political, economical, social, and cultural factors. Such differences can in no case serve as pretext for rank ordered classification of nations or peoples (*Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice*, 1982). In this study, *race* is defined as “a dynamic set of historically derived and institutionalized ideas and practices that (1) sorts people into ethnic groups according to perceived physical and behavioral human characteristics; (2) associates differential value, power, and privilege with these characteristics and establishes a social status ranking among the different groups; and (3) emerges (a) when groups are perceived to pose a threat (political, economical, or cultural) to each other’s world view or way of life; and/or (b) to justify the denigration and exploitation (past, current, or future) of, and prejudice toward, other groups” (Moya & Markus, in press). *Racism* is defined as beliefs and enactment of beliefs that one set of characteristics is superior to another set (Singleton, & Linton, 2006). Thus, a *racist* would be anyone whose mannerisms agree to these beliefs and reacts on them intentionally or involuntarily (Singleton, & Linton, 2006). Lastly, *culture* will be used to describe how an individual lives on a daily basis in regards to their language, ancestry, religion, food, dress, musical taste, traditions, values, political and social affiliations, etc (Singleton, & Linton, 2006).

School success and *achievement* will be operationally defined by Tamalo State High School’s standards. The school identifies and measures student success and achievement by graduation rates, failure rates at semester, State Test Scores, National Test Scores (ACT, PSAT, SAT), student involvement and engagement, as well as student

and staff surveys. In addition, a positive racial identity will be explored as part of student success.

The purpose of this study is to acknowledge the impact of race on education achievement, draw attention to barriers, and examine a program implemented based on the *Courageous Conversations about Race Curriculum* in order to provide direction for other schools to bridge the education gap between White and Colored students (Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan, and Hispanic). **This will be done by answering four questions: (1) What do male African American students believe promotes their academic success and racial identity? (2) What do male African American students believe challenges their success and racial identity development? (3) How do the components of MANDATE contribute to school success and racial development for African American male students? and (4) Does the atmosphere of a large metropolitan public school promote success and equality for its students?**

Brief historical context of shaping social identity of colored males

MANDATE stands for Making A Noticeable Difference As The Example. It is a program at Tamalo State High School. Although MANDATE is designed for all males of Color, in this study, focus will be placed on examining the research questions for the targeted population of African American youth because this is the population the researcher is interested in. Therefore, understanding the history of Black men is important. What defines a man? There is a paradigm that proposes that if one is born biologically a boy than as he grows up and reaches a certain age then he becomes a man (Bush, 1999). This becomes more complex for African Americans because, in the United

States, there was a period of time where they were denied the ability to be viewed as a man in society (Bush, 1999). Bush (1999) shared how researchers have noted that historically Black men experienced a stripping of their masculinity due to (1) slavery—not having the opportunity to protect and provide for themselves or their family, (2) a matriarchal system in their communities where fathers are often absent and women are dominant, and (3) a lack of economic opportunities limiting the ability of African American men to provide for their family. Many African American males have a unique, challenging, and often misunderstood journey they embark on from birth to manhood. Some face a variety of challenges that their White counterparts may not, which dramatically impacts their development and understanding of what it is like to be a man. It is imperative to recognize that many African American males are often met with opposing forces and barriers that challenge their success.

In addition, Black men are expected to meet the dominant roles in society such as being successful, aggressive, and competitive; while meeting the cultural expectation of being cooperative, promoting the group, and providing survival tactics for their group (Hunter, & Davis, 1992). In Hunter and Davis's (1992) study, the African American males collectively defined manhood in terms of self (self-determination and accountability, pride), family, the human community, and spirituality. This could lead men to base their self-worth and satisfaction of life either positively or negatively due to the circumstances in those domains. There are many internal and external struggles African American men experience that may significantly affect their success—in both life and in school.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2005, the African-American male population of the United States aged between 18 and 24 numbered 1,896,000 (see Louisiana, 2007). According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 106,000 African-Americans in this age group were in federal or state prisons at the end of 2005 (Louisiana, 2007). Louisiana (2007) provides additional statistics of concern, those being: Black males between 15 and 34 are nearly eight times as likely to suffer from AIDS as their White counterparts, Black males ages 15-19 die from homicide at 46 times the rate of White males their age, and that Black male academic achievement begins to decline as early as the fourth grade and by high school Black males are more likely to drop out.

This research is significant because in order to move past simply acknowledging the achievement gap and implementing change we must first understand what is contributing to the gap and have a will for individual and collective action. A number of factors have been linked to the educational and achievement gap of colored students. For example, schools are geared primarily to serve monolingual, White, middle-class students (Singleton, & Linton, 2006), family involvement lacking, socio-cultural causes (Epps, 1995), racism (Aronson, 2004; Epps, 1995; Landsman, 2004), socio-economical causes (Epps, 1995), school environment (Barnes, 2004; Ware, 2006), and even White privileges (Singleton, & Linton, 2006). This research will explore these various domains in order to better assist Black students. In addition, literature has begun to explore how to handle and confront the racism in schooling (Epps, 1995; Landsman, 2004), how to make classes culturally relevant (Ware, 2006) and welcoming to minority students (Aronson, 2004), etc. Will analyses of this topic emphasize the importance of offering a range of

educational programs and options for minority students, fostering clear boundaries while leaving room for autonomy, having good and open lines of racial communication, warmth, acceptance, affirmation, and embracing different values, morals, and expression? Will implementing different programs and classes be beneficial in equipping males of color to handle, talk about, vent, and learn about situations and events they will face due to their background, race, beliefs, and gender to better aid them in their educational journey? How does MANDATE assist in answering those questions?

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Adolescent development

Adolescence is defined as the time frame in a person's life between the onset of puberty what is considered "adult" typically it is the 2nd decade of life; when young people are preparing to step into roles and responsibilities of adulthood in their culture (Arnett, 2007). There are various aspects of adolescent development and adjustment that occur as one gets older. During this time physical, cognitive and psycho-social changes will affect their emotions and behaviors in some experiences (Harold, Colarossi, & Mercier, 2007) and all members of the family must be ready and willing to adjust and assist in order to promote a smooth transition.

For example, the physical changes include gains in weight and height, their body goes through puberty (hormonal levels vary and they develop secondary sex characteristics), and their brains are still developing (Arnett, 2007). Cognitively, this is when young people begin to think abstractly, problem solve, develop reasoning skills, and begin perspective taking (Harold, Colarossi, & Mercier, 2007). Adolescents are intelligent; however, the section of the brain responsible for higher functions (cerebral cortex) such as critical thinking, problem solving, judgment, organization, etc is not yet fully developed until early adulthood (e.g., ages 24 or 25) ("Adolescent Brain Development," 2002); thus, often resulting in adolescents' poorer decision making and higher risk-taking behaviors. Often they want to see what they are capable of, explore,

and be independent. This is also a time when youth feel invincible. The consequences of their actions or the after affects are not on their mind, despite being knowledgeable of them, because they simply do not think it could happen to them (a concept referred to as the “personal fable” (Harold, Colarossi, & Mercier, 2007).

Many adults do not have a favorable opinion of young people collectively, especially if they view adolescence as a period of “storm and stress.” However, there is much evidence that purpose in life is associated with greater positive affects (King, Hicks, Krull, Del Gaiso, 2006). Therefore, purpose can give youth the ability to transform their environment, education, and the circumstances they face. Youth need support and boundaries from adults as they transition through various stages of development (Harold, Colarossi, & Mercier, 2007). They also need to be provided with opportunities to take responsibility and leadership roles (Harold, Colarossi, & Mercier, 2007). This can help them to develop into productive, confident, committed, and caring adults because they see and understand their value. This, in particular, must be taken into consideration when working and developing youth “at risk” for negative developmental outcomes—including African American boys. Further, developmental outcomes are often dependent on geographical context—the physical environment in which one is raised.

Definition of urban areas and ethnic/racial identity development

Research shows that close to 80% of the US population is urban (Grimm, Grove, Pickett, & Redman, 2000). In the United States, urban areas are typically defined as those consisting of 2,500 or more people, and normally have a population density of 1,000 people per square mile. Research suggests that adolescents growing up in urban areas are

exposed to a variety of risks that can contribute to making poor decisions concerning substance abuse, delinquency, and school failure (Anthony, 2008). This is important to the research because many of the African American males that attend Tamalo State High School come from an urban community.

Racial identity development—a social process

Socialization is a continuing process whereby an individual acquires a personal identity and learns the norms, values, behavior, and social skills appropriate to his or her social position (dictionary.com). In addition, social identity is a person's sense of who they are based on their group membership (McLeod, 2008). Although race and ethnicity share some similarities they are different. McMahon and Watts (2002) explains that racial identity focuses on the social and political impact of an individual's psychological viewpoint that is a part of a group, while ethnicity involves shared worldview, language, and behaviors of a cultural group.

Therefore, racial identity could be defined as an internal struggle concerning how one sees himself versus how others see him. Henri Tajfel (1982) proposed that people belong to groups and those groups shape and mold an individual's pride, self-esteem, and belonging—ultimately shaping their social identity (McLeod, 2008). The social group a person belongs to can either increase or decrease one's self-image depending on how they are categorized because society tends to divide people in groups of "them" and "us" based on a process called social categorization (McLeod, 2008). In the Social Identity Theory (SIT) the "individual personal" identity is the lowest level of categorization (Stets, J, & Burke, P., 2000). Therefore, socialization can heavily influence one's

identity. According to SIT, the perception of intergroup relations provides a crucial outlook concerning the strength/power of in-group identification and strategies to cope with an unfavorable in-group position (Mummendey, Kessler, Klink, & Mielke, 1999). Another area that is affected by in group's identity is discrimination against other groups to enhance how their group looks (Howarth, 2002; Mummendey et al, 1999). McLeod (2008) shared that prejudices between cultures may result in racism. Henri Tajfel (1982) proposed that stereotyping stems from an individual's natural cognitive process of grouping things together; which in turn influences people to overemphasize differences and underestimate similarities (McLeod, 2008). All of this can influence how Black boys view themselves in the larger society.

Tajfel and Turner (1979) proposed three psychological phases that people experience concerning in-groups and out-groups and which relate to self perceptions. The first being categorization (where people tend to categorize objects and people so they can better understand and identify them); second social identification (this occurs when an individual takes on the identity of the group they have been categorized to); and lastly social comparison (where people compare their group to other groups to see whether they are favored or not; where do they stand against other groups) (as stated in McLeod, 2008).

In American there are a variety of "in-groups" and "out-groups," dominant and non-dominant. For example, males vs. female, able body vs. disabled body, heterosexual vs. homosexual, and the list could go on. In these few examples the vocabulary used portrays some form of deficit and sends a message that may or may not be intended.

Since White is the dominant race is there a message being sent? When one is a part of the dominant group he or she may not think about being dominant because he or she fits in easier; however, when one is a part of the minority group—the out-group or non-dominant group—it is much easier to see the differences. Racial identity development and the socialization process is a journey. Seeing where you have or do not have the dominance, how it plays out, and how messages are internalized about one's self and others is also part of the journey. Ralph Ellison wrote: "If you can show me how I can cling to that which is real to me, while teaching me a way into the larger society, then and only then will I drop my defenses and my hostility, and I will sing your praises and help you to make the desert bear fruit." Are African American boys having the chance to "cling to that which is real" to them and help develop and build America so "the desert bears fruit" or are they asked to assimilate?

Identity development [Black & White]

The different developmental stages youth go through shape their identity (knowing who they are), their abilities (the power and control they have for their life), and intimacy (the types of relationships and bonds that are developed) (Harold, Colarossi, & Mercier, 2007). Identity formation is one of the most critical developmental tasks of adolescence (Arnett, 2007). The researcher chose to specifically look at the differences between Black and White identity developments because these two races are currently the most pervasive racial groups in terms of –isms and opportunities due to the conscious and unconscious historical tensions (Bush, 1999). Understanding these two races and their identity process could enlighten individuals on why certain races interact, behave, or

value different things. Table 1.1 compares White and Black racial identity development. These models will help guide and assist the researcher in examining the racial identity of African American and White students.

Table 1.1 White and Black Identity Model

Helm's (1990) White Racial Identity	Cross' (1991) Black racial identity
1. unawareness of Whiteness	1. Passively and actively regard race as having little to no personal or social meaning
2. Awareness of "how I see myself"/"how I see society")	2. Awareness of "How I see myself"/"How society sees me" (chosen/unchosen)
2. awareness of others' experiences with oppression/racism/prejudice/stereotypes	3. Discover and affirm racial/cultural heritage; achieve sense of inner pride
3. awareness of White biases/prejudices	4. Awareness <i>of own and others'</i> experiences with oppression/racism/prejudice/stereotypes
4. "more flexible world view"	5. Confront own biases <i>and overcome others' biases</i>
5. Value and adopt a social and political activist behavior styles	6. Internal negotiation of "choosing" to develop activist stance
	7. Value and adopt a social and political activist behavior styles

Why is self-esteem and ethnic/racial identity important?

Due to stereotypes and social perceptions, many associate the color Black with negativity and possibly even sinister intentions. It is because of this programming that

some African American youth buy into a stereotype perpetuated by the modern day culture. This influences the development of African American males' self esteem and identity (Bush, 1999). Rather than focusing on abilities and characteristics, they are often more concerned with how they fit into the larger society (Hunter, & Davis 1992). Self-esteem and ethnic/racial identity development are key foundational elements for youth (Arnett, 2007). These set the standard for what they will and will not tolerate; the kinds of goals one will or will not set and achieve. In order to be productive citizens African Americans need to begin to embrace and master immersion and internalization—affirming his culture and forming a sense of inner self pride about his Black identity (Cross, 1979; 1982). Many barriers (e.g., inequitable schooling experiences and disparities in education, discriminatory hiring practices, racial profiling, and white privilege) and too few opportunities exist that do not help develop Black boys' talents and strengths.

Self-esteem is important as an individual matures and differentiates from their family. Differentiation from a family takes place when a member tries to separate from the whole and begins to become their own person (Rabstejnek, n.d.). The goal from this process is for adolescents to fully develop a clear understanding of themselves. It is a time where adolescents need opportunities to explore different roles, values, beliefs, spirituality, and ethics (Arnett, 2007). This process helps them to understand what makes them different from everyone else and how they fit into the larger society (Arnett, 2007). While adolescents are searching to “find themselves,” they are also experiencing bodily changes, cognitive development, and psycho-social changes. All of which contribute to how they view themselves and how society responds to them. This can make identity

development difficult and challenging; thus, impacting their self-esteem. Therefore, identity and self-esteem formation can be even more challenging for Black boys who may be viewed as “at risk” or “different.” They have to combine and balance their living situation, past experiences, societal stereotypes, continual personal changes, and parental expectations in order for smooth transitions and formations.

Studies have found that negative aspects of African American’s lives are linked to lower self-esteem (Okeck, & Harrington, 2002). Research also supports the theory that self-esteem may have an impact on how people evaluate and cope with events that occur in their lives (Yakin, & McMahon, 2003). For African American males, living in an environment where they are frequently faced with opposition and disadvantages can heavily impact their self-esteem and their desire to put forth their best effort and apply themselves. Self-esteem serves as a protective factor for adolescents who are constantly exposed to many stressful and chaotic events (Yakin, & McMahon, 2003; Dubow, & Luster, 1990). School success, leadership, helping others, good health, delayed gratification, value of diversity, and the ability to overcome adversity are some of the indicators that young people are thriving—not simply “surviving” (Scales, Benson, Leffert, & Blyth, 2000). These are areas that, if cultivated and matured, can yield to high self-esteem levels for African American males because they begin to value themselves and their contributions to others.

Racial Identity Development and Self-Image. Milliones (1980) created a developmental model of Black consciousness that was influenced by Cross’ (1971) identity development model. The four stages of Black consciousness are: Preconscious stage, Confrontation, Internalization, and Integration Stage (Milliones, 1980). The

preconscious stage is where an individual is not growing on the Black conscious continuum and has accepted the White racist stereotypes as truth; the confrontation stage is when African Americans began to move on the continuum viewing Caucasians as enemies and they become “pro-Black;” the internalization stage is where an individual focuses on the positive attributes of being Black and reduces the negative White stereotypes, they are proud of who they are; the final stage is the integration stage where African Americans focus on liberating themselves and others, they don’t generalize opinions and stereotypes towards Black or White individuals.

These stages acknowledge internal mind battles that African Americans go through; thus highlighting the importance of a positive self image of one’s ethnic/racial background. Research suggests three key components for positive ethnic identity which includes: self-identification, sense of belonging, and pride in one’s group (McMahon, &Watts, 2002). It has been found that a strong sense of ethnic identity for African Americans is associated with higher self-esteem and self-confidence which is why the researcher will be examining the components of MANDATE and how it promotes a positive racial development for African American male students.

What is White privilege?

“I was faced with a reality I had never anticipated. I began to realize that despite my activism, despite my good intentions, despite how “down” I perceived myself to be with the cause of justice, I was still part of the problem. I was actively receiving the perks of Whiteness, and collaborating with the system of White supremacy, whether I liked it or not.”

~Tim Wise (2002, p. 227)

Privilege is typically defined as a right, immunity, or benefit enjoyed only by a person beyond the advantages of most (dictionary.com). However, as it relates to White privilege it will refer to the amount of melanin in a person's skin, hair, and eyes (Singleton, & Linton, 2006). Therefore, the more melanin an individual has, the less privilege or racial advantage he or she receives (Singleton, & Linton, 2006). White privilege refers to advantages incurred simply because of the color of one's skin; it is unearned and, often, largely unrecognized by members of the majority group. Thinking through unacknowledged White privilege as a means of life can be challenging; however, it must be acknowledged if change is to come about. Conversations dealing with race are always a difficult one, but to look at "White as a color, culture, and consciousness is the most challenging aspect of these interactions" (Singleton, & Linton, 2006, p. 181). White defines the dominant race, but also represents the standard that racial awareness, experiences, and perspectives are shaped and judged (Singleton, & Linton, 2006).

McIntosh (1988) describes how things society considers "justice for all," such as certain opportunities and benefits, are actually only fully granted to White people. This can be seen in McIntosh's survey; for example, having the assurance that if you need medical or legal help your race will not work against you, taking a job with an affirmative action employer without having coworkers on the job suspecting that you got the job because of your race, speaking in public places to powerful groups without putting your race on trial, or swearing, dressing in secondhand clothes, not responding to letters without people contributing your decisions to bad morals, poverty, or illiteracy (McIntosh, 1988). McIntosh said, "I did not see myself as racist because I was taught to recognize racism only in individual acts of meanness by members of a group" (McIntosh,

1988, p. 169). This is a powerful statement that may be true for many people; therefore it may be helpful to redefine terms so people can understand that racism is present when someone: carry them self as if they hold more power, if they view others as inferior, or if they treat people as if they do not matter. These are individual acts or forms of racism, below will examine structural forms.

Structural racism refers to any kind of inequality in a system that is based on one's race. The intent of addressing structural racism is not to discredit White people, where they came from, different obstacles they may have encountered, but to recognize and challenge some of the benefits they receive simply because of their color. "Negative stereotyping of people of color can produce an unfounded sense of entitlement and superiority among whites, and an internalized sense of failure or hopelessness among people of color" (Fulbright-Anderson, Lawrence, Sutton, Susi, & Kubisch, 2005, p. 27). In addition, it can shape and reinforce to White youth racial stereotypes. McIntosh (1988) shared that most of White students in the U.S. think racism does not affect them because they are not of color. Are these privileges somehow influencing the education system in regards to staff, parents, and students? Despite the efforts of civil rights leaders to bring about racial equality, sustainable reform will only take place when White people individually and collectively encourage change and become active participants of change (Singleton, & Linton, 2006).

Education and educational disparity

Education is critical for optimal growth and development. Strong English, reading, math, and comprehension skills will open the door for various opportunities and

increase the level of success one obtains. “At the center of the debate on racial equality and discrimination in the U.S. is the issue of educational opportunities afforded to racial minorities” (Parker, n.d.). Farkas (2003) stated that there are at least three preconditions that have to be met if learning is to take place. Those being: an opportunity for learning (whether instructed by a teacher, discovered in a textbook, etc), students putting forth an effort by taking time and concentrating on the material, and students having previous skills and experiences needed beforehand to sufficiently complete and understand tasks assigned; otherwise the learning process will be hindered (Farkas, 2003). At what levels does this combination occur for African Americans?

In 2002, the government responded to racial inequalities and lack of opportunities in education by passing the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) (Parker, n.d.). NCLB encompasses Title I, the federal government's flagship aid program for disadvantaged students in K-12 education (*H.R. 1—107th Congress*, 2001). It also has a number of measures designed to produce gains in student achievement and to hold states and schools more accountable for student progress. Areas that change would take place in were annual testing, academic progress, report cards, teacher qualifications, reading first, and funding changes (*H.R. 1—107th Congress*, 2001). Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress has remained constant to date (NAEP, 1999) showing:

- With regards to school behavior, data shows that boys represent 90% of the discipline referrals and are more than twice as likely to be suspended from school.

- Boys also make up 70% of the students in Special Ed classes and are currently diagnosed with behavioral disorders such as ADD or ADHD at four times the rate of girls.
- Research shows that one in three boys will fail to receive a high school diploma in four years.
- Every 7 seconds of a school day, an African American male student is suspended. Every 49 seconds of a school day, an African American male student drops out.
- By the time [minority students] reach grade 12, if they do so at all, minority students are about four years behind other young people. 17 year-old African American and Latino students have skills in English, mathematics and science similar to those of 13-year-old white students.
- Hispanic and African-American high school students are more likely to drop out of high school in every state. Of the high school graduates, college enrollment rates for African-American and Hispanic high-school students remain below those of white high-school graduates – although they have risen in recent years.
Furthermore, of those students enrolling in college, Hispanic and black young adults are only half as likely to earn a college degree as white students.

The intentions of NCLB are to track academic progress and implement strategies to improve progress, but it does not negate the fact that the amount students learned in previous grade levels affect their future. How does the Act help prevent minority students from dropping out of school? How were those students who were placed in Special Ed classes or diagnosed with ADD helped? Parker (n.d.) stated, “Until the federal

government fully acknowledges its responsibility to protect the fundamental rights of racial minorities and incorporate international human rights norms into the domestic legal system, the U.S. may see more failures similar Katrina, and our nation's minority children, especially those in urban settings, may continue to suffer sub-standard educational conditions, maintaining inequality between the races for generations to come" (p.27). Singleton and Linton (2006) defined educational equity as raising the achievement of all students while narrowing the gap between the highest- and lowest-performing students and eliminating racial predictability and disproportionality of which students occupy the highest and lowest achievement categories (p.46). There is no doubt that strides have been made to establish equality, but has true racial equality in teaching habits, mindsets, and expectations been made to narrow the achievement gap of colored students, specifically African American boys?

What are causes of the achievement gap?

The causes of the achievement gap are complex and multifaceted. There is no one major cause, rather a combination of various sectors that contribute to the gap. Factors that will be looked at in this study are school related, culturally/racially related, and family related. Once again school related terms such as *school success* and *achievement* are operationally defined by graduation rates, failure rates at semester, State Test Scores, National Test Scores (ACT, PSAT, SAT), student involvement and engagement, student surveys as well as staff surveys. In addition, a positive racial identity is a part of student success.

School. Epps (1995) suggested that the education proposals and support programs are based on the assumption that African Americans are unable to learn complex materials. Therefore, programs such as Head Start and Title I were designed to “supplement deficiencies” in African Americans (Epps, 1995). Schools serve as a socializing force for all students to aspire to academic success. Youth spend approximately 6.7 hours at school (*U.S. Department of Education*, 2002). Therefore, schools must be conducive for all students. Landsman (2004) shared testimonies from adults indicating Black boys are impossible to work with because they are hyperactive and uncontrollable. Landsman’s (2004) article also stated that some teachers refused to go to the teacher’s lounge because conversations would be full of negative assumptions based on race. These kinds of behaviors and remarks can lead to Black boys feeling as if they are “the problem,” whether consciously or unconsciously done, potentially encouraging them to act out in ways that get them in trouble. Suspensions, remediation, and retention can negatively impact the academic success of African American males (Epps, 1995). Unquestioned assumptions are a form of discrimination that can influence teacher-student relationships and interactions (Singleton, & Linton, 2006).

A school’s climate is another important area to examine. The climate refers to how teachers interact with students, the expectations and standards they have for students, and the methods being used in the classrooms (Arnett, 2007). Students who have supportive and active teachers, but also teachers that apply discipline when necessary and hold high expectations for student’s conduct and academic performance excel (Arnett, 2007). In addition, students are more likely to be invested in their academics and school when they have positive relationships with their teachers (Phelan,

P., Davidson, A., Locke, H., & Thanh, C., 1992); therefore, teacher-student relationships need to be considered and possibly improved. Changes in learning begin to take affect when teachers interact with, and learn more about their students. The classic assumptions—such as Asian students are very smart, Latino parents are lazy and do not support their students, or advance classes and gifted program are too difficult for Black students—must not be present when working with students. These kinds of assumptions about the attitudes and abilities of students of color and their families are detrimental to the school's climate, teacher-student relationships, teacher's instructional practices, and they reinforce racial inequalities in schools (singleton).

Many educators struggle to take personal and professional responsibility when it comes to meeting the needs of students of color who are not exceeding. Instead, they tend to focus on factors external to the school for explaining students' low achievement rather than examining their own instructional practices (Singleton, & Linton, 2006, p. 38). All students learn differently; however, school plans and agendas need to strategically work together to provide each student with what they need; acknowledging the distinctions while embracing the complementary parts of various styles of learning and teaching methods could bridge the gap. In addition, culturally responsive teaching and diversity must also be present at schools. Culturally responsive teaching entails considering racial background, ethnicity, and gender as well as different learning style in order to help develop strategies and tactics to compensate for differences and capitalize on strengths (Ford, D., & Whiting, G., 2010). African American males need to be informed of the contributions their race has made in America; they need to be shown in a better light.

Culture. Aronson (2004) stated that by the age of six people are aware of various cultural stereotypes. About half of White Americans endorse common stereotypes about Blacks and Latinos (Aronson, 2004). Lippmann, author of *Public Opinion*, discussed how people rely heavily on the images and pictures they form and hold in their heads to tell them about the world (Dorfman & Schiraldi, 2001). So in return people's beliefs, thoughts, and understandings are constructed around those images (Dorfman & Schiraldi, 2001). This could impact perceptions and beliefs about what a successful African American male looks like as well as how one's identity is developed. To serve colored students equitably it will be vital to embrace cultural differences, and challenge institutional racism as well as individual racial prejudices (Singleton, & Linton, 2006). No one enjoys being boxed into a stereotype, especially when it comes with negative connotations. This often leads to people either going to one extreme of the spectrum, trying to be the complete opposite of what is expected, or the other extreme, which is to fully buy into the stereotype and give those around them what they are "expecting." There has been research conducted showing African Americans can be hyperaware of the negative expectations about their race (Aronson, 2004). Therefore, some African Americans tend to have the mindset that they are constantly being evaluated. This can drastically affect how they allow their culture to influence them.

Culture is a variable that should not be overlooked in an analysis of student success. Inclusion of the student's culture is essential in improving and cultivating an atmosphere for African American boys to have greater achievement educationally (Ware, 2006). Culturally there is a miscommunication between races that influence perceptions and beliefs. There are a variety of assumptions and stereotypes made of various races.

Some may be found to be true, but some may not be. Therefore, time must be taken for both students and staff to understand each other in the proper context. Ware (2006) and Siwatu (2011) found that teachers with warm demeanors are teachers who are culturally responsive. Warm demeanors are classified as being authority figures and disciplinarians, caregivers, and pedagogues (Ware, 2006). In these kinds of relationships students believe teachers do not have lower academic standards for them and hold the belief that their teacher took the time to genuinely help them (Ware, 2006). Landsman (2004) suggests that educators need to study, go to conferences, read books, and talk about their concerns and questions about racism and minority cultures. Engaging in dialogue with students and their communities learning, cooperation, collaboration, and achievement can be looked at in a different lens that could generate improvements (Landsman, 2004; Singleton, & Linton, 2006)

Family Structure and Involvement. Lastly, family structure and dynamics may also have an impact on the achievement gap. The role of the family in contributing to racial identity development, cultural connections, and school success are important. Ideally, the family system enables youth to feel a sense of belonging, a source of comfort, support, warmth, security, and protection. Additionally, families help shape beliefs, values, perspectives, and understandings of the world. Within the family unit, are subsystems; for example, the relationships between parents and adolescent, siblings and adolescent, or parent and parent (Arnett, 2007). In these subsystems family members have individual personalities, views, and aspirations, which also affect the whole unit. The family structure is how a family organizes members according to roles, rules, power, and hierarchies. The family process is made up of psychosocial and physiologic

relationships within the family unit. It is important to recognize that families can mean totally different things from one person to the next due to structures and processes. Outside influences, different moral and cultural backgrounds, economic situation, living conditions, and family structure also contribute to developmental outcomes with regard to academic achievement. Therefore, the influence of the family on African American males is an important variable to consider when contemplating the achievement gap. Questions of importance include: Did the child's parents graduate from high school or college? Is education being stressed as an asset and important in the child's family? Is the family concerned, supportive, or involved in the child's school work?

Research indicates that family involvement in schools increases student achievement. Flook and Fuligni (2008) discussed the concept of "spillover" during adolescence. They found that events that happen in one area are likely to impact the child's functioning and experiences in other areas. This is due to adolescents not being stable cognitively and emotionally; however, they also noted that the study indicated directionality not causality (Flook & Fuligni, 2008). In regards to this study, understanding spillover and how it influences school success is a factor that should not be overlooked as it connects with Black boys. This indicates that if parents value school and believes their children can succeed and teachers value school and believe their minority students can succeed—then, in turn, the youth are more likely to value school and believe in their own academic success. In addition, Christenson (2003) discussed how families and schools having a student-focus mindset, a belief in shared responsibility for educating and socializing, striving to collaborate and interact regularly, and brainstorming ways to engage students with preventive methods would assist in

monitoring the type of spillover that occurs in various domains. Therefore, responsibility does not lie solely on a school or family, but together they can work towards African American males being successful. Although parent involvement typically is strongest at the primary level maintaining involvement throughout middle and high school is important. Schools and families must build and sustain a partnership. A partnership approach gives families greater opportunities to determine options for school involvement and activities, to seek roles and responsibilities in school-improvement efforts, continuous exchanges of information and development, agreement on goals and strategies, etc. This would also foster trust and respect.

MANDATE

The MANDATE (Making A Noticeable Difference As The Example) Program started at Tamalo State High School by the assistant principal when she returned from the Beyond Diversity Conference held in California. She was inspired to begin a program for minority males that would assist them educationally, challenge them mentally, and affirm them racially. MANDATE began in the Fall of 2011 and is modeled after a similar program in Lawrence, Kansas at Free State High School. The Beyond Diversity program was implemented in all the high schools there. It has been expanding and causing change for four years. Although the program at Tamalo State High School is fairly new it has already begin to make an impact.

How does one become involved? When MANDATE begin recruitment of the program started simply by handing out flyers to all males of color (i.e. Hispanic, Asian, Latino, African American). Since then, students join through word of mouth or referrals

by teachers. The program goes throughout the entire school year. Currently, there is no summer component; however, the director wishes to change that as the commitment level and resources become available to do so. This is a four year program that allows colored males to be involved while they are in high school. The director eventually would like to develop partnerships with colleges and various work fields to assist in the transition process of the senior males in the program.

The goals and objectives of MANDATE are as follow:

- To encourage and equip male students of color to be positive and effective leaders in their academic and social endeavors
- To respect and embrace theirs and other cultural heritages of the student body
- To respect themselves and the entire student body at Tamalo State High School
- To cultivate positive relationships with school administration and faculty, thereby, creating a harmonious and productive learning environment for ALL.

Statistics show that African Americans and Hispanics male students face hardships in life simply based upon their race. This reality has produced low self worth and a sense of hopelessness in many of the students of color before they even step foot in the classroom. This sense of hopelessness and low self worth has resulted in poor grades, class disruption, increase IS/OSS and teacher/student communication breakdown at

Tamalo State High School. Therefore, MANDATE desires to make a change in those statistics.

Currently, the program has two main components. The first being “Make a Difference Mondays,” which calls for students to dress for success, to arrive to every class on time, and to engage in class discussions or participate in class more than the student normally would in 3-4 of their classes. In this day and age some young people think wearing something nice and presentable is “strange.” They do not realize that their dress appearance affects how people perceive them, affects the way they feel about themselves, or that dressing up can affect their confidence. This component seeks to help them understand that when you look nice, it changes the way you carry yourself and interact with other people. Arriving to class on time and participating more frequently helps reinforce to students how being on time and active is important for academic success. By arriving on time students will not miss important information from the teacher about the day’s activities or lesson or disrupt the class flow by walking in late. It reinforces to students that being present and engaged will allow you to develop necessary skills, enhance your education, and develop habits one needs to get the best grades, go to college, earn scholarships, etc.

The second component is “Real Talk,” which takes place every Tuesday during GPS (Guided Practice Study). These sessions last for about an hour. During this time students share personal stories or experiences in a safe environment, do school or community projects, and/or guest speakers come to talk to the students. At “Real Talk” a variety of topics are addressed to help the students academically, racially, and socially. For example, sessions have included talks on leadership, respect for self and others,

barriers in life and how to overcome them, secrets to success, what is a man versus what it takes to be a man, how to deal with conflict, how to deal with stereotypes, and racial identity curriculum from “Self As A Superhero,” to name a few. Each session has a specific goal in mind in developing wise, productive young men.

The ultimate goal of MANDATE is to eventually affect the whole school. The program is designed to first meet the needs and bridge the gaps of minority male students. The next step is to provide workshops, seminars, and trainings to all staff in the building to recognize, understand, and become the change for the minority students by understanding their challenges, barriers in front of them, their specific needs educationally, the importance of culturally responsive teaching, and acceptance of their different learning styles. Then MANDATE will reach out to include the majority race of White male students. This is designed to help develop strong relationships across races through interaction and conversation. The program will also reach out to parents and establish a community component. The vision behind the family involvement is to create support, build stronger family communication, to align high expectations of students for family and school, and help parents get involved with students academic success. The purpose of the community component is to provide students with a connection to their community so they see their value and usefulness to the community, to empower the students, and to build relationships with other adults so they feel appreciated. From the description and components of MANDATE one can see there are a variety of aspects incorporated that encompasses the 40 Developmental Assets for these students. MANDATE is a critical component of the present investigation, as explained in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER THREE

Methods

As noted earlier, the purpose of the present investigation is to answer four questions: (1) What do male African American students believe promotes their academic success and racial identity? (2) What do male African American students believe challenges their success and racial identity development? (3) How do the components of MANDATE contribute to school success and racial development for African American male students? and (4) Does the atmosphere of a large metropolitan public school promote success and equality for its students? Addressing these questions was accomplished by exploring the MANDATE program at Tamalo State High School. This chapter explains the specific methods by which the data was collected and analyzed in order to achieve the investigative goals.

Participants

According to the 2009 City Data Report, 78.3% of the population in Bellevue, Nebraska identifies as White and 5.6% as Black (City Data, 2009). African Americans make up 12% population of the students at Tamalo State High School. This investigation included four participant groups: (1) The Superintendent of Bellevue Public Schools (2) the MANDATE director (the Assistant Principal) of Tamalo State High School (3) six teachers who have MANDATE students, and (4) MANDATE members (n=10). The Superintendent was a White man. The MANDATE director was an African American woman who is 50 years old. There were 5 White teachers (2 male, 3 female) and 1 Hispanic male. The age range is unknown. From the 10 students 3 were seniors and had

been in the program for 2 years, 2 juniors in which 1 had been in the program for 2 years and the other 1 year, 1 sophomore who has been in the program for 2 years and 4 freshmen who have participated in the program for 1 year. The students' age ranged from 14-18 years old.

Recruitment

First, an email was sent to the Superintendent informing him of the study and role the researcher would like him to have. Second, the researcher directly called the MANDATE director to explain the study in detail, invited her to be an active participant in the study, and gained permission to recruit teachers via email. During this call the researcher was given the names of teachers that have MANDATE students. Third, once permission was granted teachers were emailed, given a brief description of the study, requested their participation, and a date was set to meet the researcher. Lastly, MANDATE members were recruited by flyers passed out in their Tuesday MANDATE meeting; there the researcher briefly explained the purpose and answered any questions they had.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

To address the research questions a variety of methodologies were used, including focus groups, personal (one-on-one) interviews, and self report survey instruments. Table 3.1 (see below) identifies the specific methodology used to address each question as well as the participants included.

Table 3.1

Research Question	How Administered	By Whom
What do male African American students believe promotes their academic success and racial identity?	Focus Groups	MANDATE Students
What do male African American students believe challenges their success and racial identity development?	Focus Groups	MANDATE Students
How do the components of MANDATE contribute to school success and racial development for African American male students?	Individual Interviews	BPS Superintendent & MANDATE Director (Assistant Principal)
Does the atmosphere of a large metropolitan public school promote success and equality for its students?	2 Surveys: “Is Your Climate Inclusive & Inviting?” and “Does Your School Have High Expectations for All Students?”	Teachers

All data were collected at Tamalo State High School after students, staff, and parents received an overview of the purpose of the study, a description of the study, notified about voluntary participation, and consent/assent was given. High school students are a vulnerable population; therefore, maintaining confidentiality of data and using research for its intended purpose is a sensitive issue that was handled appropriately.

The Institutional Review Board at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln approved this study (20121112780EP).

MANDATE Students. There are approximately 35 students in MANDATE. Only 10 students chose to participate. Therefore, the researcher conducted two different focus groups each containing five students. These focus groups were held at Tamalo State High School on Tuesdays after their “Real Talk” session. The purpose of the focus groups was to gain an understanding of student’s perspective concerning their school success, formation of a positive racial identity, challenges they believe affect their success and identity development, their environment, the teaching process in the classroom, sense of belonging, self-confidence, and opinion about MANDATE. Sample questions were: (1) What caused you to get involved in the program? (2) What were your expectations going into the program? Were they met and how? (3) Has your outlook on school changed? Has relationships with staff changed? (4) Have your educational aspirations changed in any way? (5) How do you think your racial identity affects who you are, your experiences, and how you see the world? The remaining focus group protocol can be found in Appendix I.

Each student was given a pseudonym to allow the researcher to identify when someone spoke and to match their response to the correct person, without revealing the identity of the student. The researcher gathered all of the data (i.e., the group’s question guide, audio tapes, and verbatim transcripts) from the two different focus groups.

Superintendent. The Superintendent was interviewed in his office at the central Bellevue Public Schools office. It was recorded and then transcribed by the researcher.

During the interview the superintendent was asked various questions to share his opinions and reasoning about the school, how MANDATE components contribute to school success, and student's racial development success. From this the researcher gained insight concerning his awareness and overall outlook of inclusion and achievement. Sample interview questions included: What do you think is the biggest challenge facing the African American students in public schools right now and do you have a plan to address it? Have you seen any changes in your students since their involvement in MANDATE? How do you think MANDATE contributes to the climate of the school? Have you seen any social/racial differences in your students? Has their involvement of the program caused your expectations of them to change? A comprehensive list of questions can be found in Appendix II.

MANDATE Director. The interview with the director took place at Tamalo State High School. A combination of specific, probing, and reflective questions were used. Through interview questions the researcher was able to acknowledge how MANDATE has positively impacted the school climate, influenced the expectations of African American students, and has contributed to positive racial and social development for Black student participants. Sample interview questions for the director were similar to those to the superintendent with additions. Additional questions were as follow: What motivated you to strictly target colored males at this point in time? Do you see this program expanding, and if so, in what ways? What changes have you seen in your students since their involvement in MANDATE? How do you think MANDATE contributes to the climate of the school? Have you seen any positive social/racial differences in your students? Has their involvement of the program caused your

expectations of them to change? The remaining questions are located in Appendix III.

This interview was also recorded and transcribed for accuracy purposes

Teachers. There were two surveys for teachers: “Is Your Climate Inclusive & Inviting?” and “Does Your School Have High Expectations for All Students?” The purpose of the school climate survey was to assess the atmosphere students are learning in to determine if it meets the physical, social, and emotional needs of students. All climate items from the “Is Your Climate Inclusive & Inviting?” used a 5 point scale from 1= “strongly agree” through 4= “strongly disagree with 5= NA or “I don’t know.” Overall school climate stemmed from statements 1-9. These items were followed by statements 10-12 concerning school safety. For example, “students feel safe at school.” Items concerning equity and respect for diversity were asked in items 13-15. A sample statement from this area was “all students, regardless of ethnicity, are treated with respect at this school.” Lastly, items in the discipline domain were assessed through remaining statements 16-21. “Procedures for correcting problem behaviors are implemented consistently by staff and administration” “effective teaching practices are being used to minimize problem behavior in classrooms” are modeled statements that were used. Appendix IV contains a complete copy of this survey.

Does Your School Have High Standards for All Students? is a questionnaire that will help measure staff expectations for their minority students. This survey contained 14 items. They were assessed by looking at common themes and patterns expressed by participants. Sample questions include, but were not limited to: Does the school challenge anyone making generalizations about racial and ethnic groups? Is evidence of diverse

cultures displayed in hallways, in the library, in classroom examples, and in the racial and cultural backgrounds of adults working in the building? Does the school take students' and parents' discomfort, frustration, or anger seriously? A copy of this survey is located in Appendix V.

Data Analysis

MANDATE Students. All focus group data was transcribed into text, next the researcher read each focus group interview thoroughly to identify themes and patterns as they relate to factors influencing academic success, racial identity development, and behaviors. The coding guide was set up in broad categories and then specific categories as it related to the broader categories. In addition, the researcher created a table to analyzed participants comments as it related to the four thesis questions being explored. Examples of specific categories were perception, support, goals, expectations, stereotypes, etc. These were explored and expanded as the responses from participants were reviewed.

Superintendent. The researcher conducted the interview and transcribed the interview tape verbatim in a Microsoft Word document. She then read through the interview transcripts numerous times to identify themes and other relevant information that answered the research questions. This is a process known as thematic analysis. Steps for thematic analysis include: collecting data, identify data that relates to the patterns and themes being classified, to combine and categorize those patterns into sub-patterns or themes (Aronson, 1994). According to Taylor and Bogdan (1989, p.131) themes are anything that is derived from patterns such as "conversation topics, vocabulary, recurring activities, meanings, feelings, or folk sayings and proverbs" (As stated in Aronson, 1994).

The themes and patterns were also organized in a table format to help clearly identify the themes and patterns.

MANDATE Director. The researcher followed the same procedure and coding strategy used for the Superintendent's interview.

Teachers. "Is Your Climate Inclusive & Inviting?" survey included items asking respondents to rate how strongly they agree or disagree with statements concerning various categories. The researcher organized and analyzed the data by ranking the items by the percent of responses of the participants who said they strongly agreed with an item (or a moderate or disagreed response). She then found the mean of each response category. This was then compiled into a table based on the rankings, which helped determine whether the school climate was meeting the needs of students or was an area needing improvement.

In addition, the researcher processed the Does Your School Have High Expectations for All Students?" survey with a method known as content analysis. Content analysis is a methodology for determining the content of written, recorded, or published communications via a systematic, objective, and quantitative procedure (Texas State Auditor's Office Methodology Manual, 1995). Thus, it is a set of procedures for collecting and organizing information in a standard format that allows analysts to draw inferences about the characteristics and meaning of recorded material (Texas State Auditor's Office Methodology Manual, 1995). The researcher took the content received from this method to examine what patterns or themes were prominent. She then took the

information she gathered and coded the categories to organize them in a table, which also was organized based on the four thesis questions being examined.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

As presented in the previous chapter, the four research questions were: (1) What do male African American students believe promotes their academic success and racial identity? (2) What do male African American students believe challenges their success and racial identity development? (3) How do the components of MANDATE contribute to school success and racial development for African American male students? and (4) Does the atmosphere of a large metropolitan public school promote success and equality for its students? In order to answer these questions it was necessary to find out how students and administration described success and the school.

Research Question 1: What do male African American students believe promotes their academic success and racial identity?

The data from students showed that almost all participants expressed that the major contributions to academic success and racial identity included setting goals, having self-motivation, having good relationships, and awareness and learning about one's race and its contributions. Based on focus group data collection, goals and relationships were the highest ranked entities that the majority of the students ($n=9$) considered promoters. Several students ($n=6$) believed having awareness and learning of one's race is important in success, in both academics and identity. This was followed by self-motivation ($n=4$).

Goals. While reviewing each focus group transcriptions the researcher found various protective factors that helped fight against risk factors. What the young men believe promotes academic success and racial identity were goals, having self-motivation, having good relationships, awareness and learning about one's race and its contributions,

and expectations. The young men had specific goals. For example, seven out of ten (70%) expressed a desire to continue their education by attending college. Of those seven, three had specific majors and career aspirations. One student's major was business; while the career's stated by students were being in the NFL and working commercial airlines. In addition, three students also mentioned the desire to obtain academic and/or sports scholarships. Although three individuals (30%) did not express a desire to attend college they did have other goals; those being to join the air force, the army, and becoming an actor/singer. As one student stated,

The way you treat school and the way you act in school is going to be the same way you act on your job because you got to go to school at a certain time and you have certain tasks you have to complete; it's going to be the same with a job and at your job you can get fired, but at school you can't get fired, but you have other consequences.

Self-Motivation. Beyond goals, overcoming statistics and stereotypes was another driving force for the young men. Literature has expressed that many males of color have more discipline referrals, more behavioral disorders, are more likely to drop out of school, and are more likely to go to jail (NAEP, 1999). Several participants articulated that after having learned the statistics that face men of color they determined that they wanted to make a difference in themselves in order to break the cycle of negative stereotypes and assumptions. One young man stated,

I didn't want to become another statistic and I wanted to be a leader and make a difference on how society views Black people. I mean everyone has something to

bring to the table so I see my race personally as an asset. I never consider myself a liability just cause there are more stereotypes for Black men and Hispanics in general than there are for other races. We still have the ability to try hard, make a difference, and care about what the world thinks of us.

Another individual stated, “When they talk about becoming a statistic or they say like African American males drop out or go to jail or whatever its more than like not becoming a statistic to me, but like people who are the statistic when I make it I want to help them make it too.” A different student shared, “I didn’t want people to just see me and think ‘Oh, he’s trouble right there’ because I’m not trouble. I’m better than that.” Collectively, these individuals have determined to model their life is such a way that shows other minority males that there is an alternative way to live and to prove that minorities are an asset to society and can contribute to its advancement. In doing this, they can help erase the distorted image that some people have about Black males so they can see the value of the true individual.

Relationships/Support. Another prevalent theme was support. Data found that relationship between teachers and students can influence the academic success of students. It was evident through the focus groups that student’s perspectives of their teachers begin to change when their interactions and expectations of one another changed. One young man shared, “I just found out that they’re like mentors to help guide you to go all the way if you’re honest with them. And not someone that’s trying to always say you’re doing bad and looking down on you, no they’re just telling you what you’re doing wrong so you can fix it.” These findings support the literature that, students who

have supportive and active teachers, but also teachers that apply discipline when necessary and hold high expectations for student's conduct and academics excel (Arnett, 2007). In addition, support from one another has been beneficial to the students. They mentioned how encouraging one another and holding one another accountable help them to stay focused.

Research Question 2: What do male African American students believe challenges their success and racial identity development?

Additionally, findings indicated that relationships, negative statistics, stereotypes, different perspectives, lack of understanding, lack of culturally relevant teaching, and expectations were barriers to student's success and racial development. Stereotypes and statistics was the leading cause of challenges stated from the students ($n=8$). This was closely followed by expectations and having different perspectives ($n=7$) both tying as the second leading cause. Half of the students ($n=5$) viewed both poor relationships and a lack of understanding and culturally responsive teaching as a challenge to academic achievement and racial development. It is interesting to see how some of the same areas listed as contributions to success are also listed under barriers. For example, students listed factors such as relationships, negative statistics and stereotypes, lack of understanding and culturally relevant teaching, and expectations as barriers to their academic success and racial development.

Relationships. In regards to relationships being a barrier students felt that different perspectives was a cause of tension for both parties. Students admitted to sometimes viewing teachers as always trying to come down on them and having a problem with how we do things (i.e. how we dress, act, talk). Now that they have gained some knowledge

from MANDATE the young men take initiative to develop healthy relationships with their teachers, they try to be more helpful and respectful in class, and a couple expressed trying to follow directions more because they realize how difficult it can be for teachers to control the classroom. Those students whose teachers acknowledge the student's changes reported having a desire to participate in class and complete assignments.

Results indicated that administrators also saw relationships as a barrier. One administrator stated, "for students of color home life and church life are a lot about relationships and community, where in school that is not really a priority. Improvements in making the school seem more welcoming and trying to build relationships would be beneficial." They expressed teachers cannot really make a difference if they do not understand the students and can relate to them.

Statistics and Stereotypes. Some students expressed fears of statistics and stereotypes determining the course of their lives. Based on how people interact with them and the expectations they hold for them at times prevents them from trying to do their best or standing out. Thus, these findings clearly demonstrate the influence of stereotypes on an individual's mental and emotional health as well as their identity development. At least within this sample, it is evident that race and the experiences these young men have impact their level of motivation to be successful, aspire for greater opportunities, and take healthy risks.

Lack of Understanding/Culturally Relevant Teaching. There have been numerous studies done and research collected informing people of how the influence of one's culture can affect and impact them. A lack of understanding from teachers concerning how a student lives on a daily basis in regards to how they speak, how they dress, their

religion, food, dress, musical taste, traditions, values, and social affiliations can hinder the relationship and expectations of students because of false beliefs or assumptions. Culture cannot be overlooked. One student expressed, “White teachers do not know what it’s like to be Black.” Another student followed up with, “I think they may think they understand it because they’re teachers, but I don’t think they really understand us fully or why we act and say certain things. They’ve never been in our type of situations or have constantly grown up with certain negative stereotypes being said or acted on.” In addition to not understanding the student’s culture, there is a lack of culturally responsive teaching. This type of education is an approach that recognizes, respects, and uses students racial backgrounds to further a student’s learning experience (Ladson-Billings, 1995). One individual shared, “I don’t learn enough about my race besides slavery and civil rights. I know there’s more out there.”

Culturally relevant teaching was also a reoccurring concern by administrators. The data is compelling when looking at achievement disparity between races. Inclusive programming is needed. One administrator expressed, “Not only do students not see people who look like them, but they do not see people who look like them represented in their textbooks, in curriculum material, in the stories told in school.” The results indicate a need to further explore strategies to implement in order to ensure the school is relevant for all students who attend.

Expectations. There were two participants who expressed teachers having high expectations for them all the time because they are in advance and advance placement classes. However, most students discussed how teachers had high expectations for students of color in getting into trouble or doing well in sports, but lower in academics.

The majority of participants also expressed that when they received good grades on an assignment teachers seemed surprised. For example, one student said, “A couple of my friends will get As and Bs on a test and they’re like wow, fantastic job, keep it up, but if a White kid gets an A it’s like a normal thing for them. They’ll be shocked I got an A, but then be like oh he’s suppose to get an A.” The extent to which participants believe teachers have high expectations for their academic achievement can influence a student’s desire and active attempt to continue to make efforts in their education.

From the administrators’ perspective, findings indicated that some teachers overtly have lower expectations of students who come from various different backgrounds, while others unconsciously have internalize these low expectations. Arguably, in order to take steps toward closing the achievement gaps that exists between White and Black students, teachers must confront their low expectations of Black males. As one administrator stated, “Teachers have to understand having lower expectations leads to lower results.”

Research Question 3: How do the components of MANDATE contribute to school success and racial development for African American male students?

The data from students also highlighted several components of MANDATE that contribute to school success and racial development for African American male students. The seven factors that were seen as prominent to the student’s development were structure ($n=5$), academic achievement expectation ($n=5$), support, teaching the importance of self-improvement ($n=7$), cultural development ($n=8$), committed authoritative adults ($n=6$), and leadership opportunities ($n=4$).

The seven factors that were seen as prominent to the student's development were structure, academic achievement expectation, support, teaching the importance of self-improvement, cultural development, committed authoritative adults, and leadership opportunities. In regards to racial development, the majority of students mentioned how MANDATE has taught them various things (i.e. heritage, cultural icons, stereotypes they will face) about their background, statistics and how to overcome them, and what it means to be a man with character. One student shared, "The program is teaching me how to carry myself as a young Black man and how certain things I do can come across differently to people who do not understand our culture." Academically, the program has also seen growth in the students. Most students expressed how the structure and expectations of MANDATE has caused them to attend and participate in class more, take responsibility, complete assignments, and communicate with teachers. A student said, "MANDATE helped me see that I have to own up to my actions and communicate with teachers and from doing that how I view school has changed." A different student shared, "MANDATE helped me understand the importance of talking to my teachers and applying myself." In addition, support from the adults and students towards one another have contributed to the success of student's development both racially and academically. A young man expressed that "the relationships you develop are meaningful and it's nice to know you're not alone in how you feel at times." Additionally, MANDATE has inspired students to be self motivated in their endeavors to succeed in their school work and as a person. It continues to provide various avenues for students to take on leadership roles. MANDATE's goals and objectives are being fulfilled and making a difference and this is evident in the following statement from a student: "MANDATE is a great program

because it keeps minorities out of trouble and it's making us successful in school. It brings good things out of us. If we didn't have MANDATE I could be in a whole different situation. It's brought us minorities together; at least I think it does."

Similarly, the superintendent and director also expressed how the relationships between adults and students within the program are great which allows room for learning, fun, improvement, and identifying and addressing challenges (i.e. stereotypes, racism) they face. As a result, students are more invested in their academics, the school as a whole, and in their identity development. These findings sustain literary assumptions concerning the importance of relationships. Additionally, administration discussed how students have gained a stronger sense of confidence in their ability to academically succeed, self-worth, and racial pride. The participants indicated that MANADATE has given male students of color an avenue to have healthy conversations about their experience and challenges they face, encouragement to make right choices in regards to school work and their behavior, to learn about their heritage and the contributions their forefathers made, and to be shown in a better light, positive attention, within the school as leaders. It is the directors desire to instill in the students a strong sense of racial pride and encourage them to be better and not to follow the negative patterns portrayed on television or in their community. She stated,

They can be wonderful, productive people of color in this country just as their forefathers did to pave a way for them to have opportunities. However, it has been a challenge getting staff to understand why this group needs to be separated. I am trying to help them see that sometimes people have to have certain conversations with people like them in order to help other people see their perspective.

From the data collected by the in-depth interviews by the superintendent and director the key components that contribute to school success and racial development for students of color were relationships, awareness of White privilege and the need for exploring race as a primary factor in the achievement gap by staff members, parents, and students, culturally responsive teaching in curriculum, textbooks, and other resources, and lastly, high expectations for *all* students and staff truly understanding what is meant by *all*. Thus, it appeared that these two individuals acknowledged that race does have an impact on improving and cultivating an environment that will allow students of color to have a greater likelihood of excelling.

Research Question 4: The fourth research question asked, “Does the atmosphere of a large metropolitan public school promote success and equality for its students?” In order to answer this question it was necessary to explore and identify how administration described expectations, success, and the school climate.

In the Does Your School Have High Standards for All Students? questionnaire, participants were asked to consider their expectations for their minority students. Three major themes emerged from the qualitative data; those being safety, expectations, and race. All participants ($n=6$) agreed the school has a safe environment. The majority of participants ($n=5$) stated that teachers have high expectations for all of their students. In contrast, one participant expressed that expectations varied from teacher to teacher. Responses also varied concerning whether students of all ethnicities participated in all academic courses and programs. A couple of participants ($n=2$) said yes; however, some ($n=3$) shared that because there is only a handful of a particular group it is impossible for them to be represented in all courses and programs. In addition, a couple of participants

($n=2$) stated many were ill prepared to take advance and advance placement courses, especially males. There was also a participant ($n=1$) who expressed that they would love to see more ethnicities in higher level classes, but thinks it is more of a national concern, rather than just a Bellevue East one alone. One participant also shared that they have talked about this concern in formal and informal settings. In regards to race, most participants ($n=4$) discussed actively exploring ways to engage all students in lessons.

Safety. In participants descriptions of various locations in the school, all participants commented that there is a safe environment for students to feel free to be themselves, were encouraged to share their feelings about controversial issues, teachers are trained to establish safety for dialogue not debate, and teachers assist in educating students on how to respect different perspectives and ethnic backgrounds. A couple of teacher participants also acknowledged that the hallways and lunchroom is more challenging in ensuring the safety and well being of all students due to a lack of monitoring and supervision in these areas. There was one participant that expressed students having more safety concerns after the recent Sandy Hook Elementary shooting, but the concern did not stem from race. These findings support other scholar's suggestions that a safe environment motivates students to attend school and apply themselves.

Expectations. Another theme that emerged was expectations. The majority of participants all said yes to teachers expecting all students to complete and turn in work, know the answers to various levels of questions, work in class, follow class guidelines, and respond to structure. The reasons given behind this varied from it being required by No Child Left Behind Act to making sure all students have the same opportunity to grow

as a citizen and learner. In contrast, one individual stated that expectations varied from teacher to teacher concerning assignments and holding them accountable due to the fear of being in trouble. Literature suggest, having clear and high expectations can create a nice learning environment, motivate student's to apply themselves and do their best, and ultimately contributes to student success (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Race. In addition, race was a theme from the study. Race was present when teacher participants were asked questions concerning how diversity was woven into curriculum and displayed in the school building, how generalizations about racial and ethnic groups were challenged, how issues were handled, if parents of color felt welcomed at conferences, advisory boards, school events, etc., and the level of participation and inclusion of all ethnicities in academic courses and programs from the surveys. Most participants discussed actively exploring ways to engage all students in lessons. In terms of handling conflict and issues all participants expressed that there is a protocol in place that administration must follow. The display of diversity in the school varied. One participant said yes, a couple mentioned the wall sculpture in the front lobby and the library's monthly displays show diversity, and a few participants expressed the lack of diversity on the staff. In regards to challenging generalizations some participants said yes and of those a couple mentioned how MANDATE specifically has been instrumental in educating students on many areas of racism, black on black racism, and making students of racial groups feel important and that they control their destiny. Also noted was how administration is working to breakdown old stereotypes and make sure all students have the tools, skills, and support needed to be successful. All administrators stated they were willing to counter racist comments and a low tolerance for those types of

behaviors; however, some participants expressed that they were not sure how successful they are in countering racist comments. Lastly, some participants stated they feel they can openly discuss race, class, and gender without feeling defensive or ashamed while other participants said no. Reasons being that it is awkward, “group promises” are broken, people are talking about you behind your back, and some live in a fantasy “white” world where they do not see how race and achievement go hand in hand.

White Privilege. Literature conveys White privilege as advantages incurred simply because of the color of one’s skin; it is unearned and, often, largely unrecognized by members of the majority group (McIntosh, 1989). Some of the participants expressed that thinking through unacknowledged White privilege can be challenging; however, it must be considered in order to bridge the achievement gap between White students and students of color. The participants indicated that defensiveness and assigning blame must be replaced with trust, communication, and acceptance. Additionally, administrators expressed that many teachers come through preparation programs that promote the idea of color blindness, to not look at color; however, by doing that teachers are essentially negating whatever background students bring to school, when they should be acknowledging, celebrating, and recognizing all the different backgrounds. An administrator stated,

It will be hard because there’s some guilt involved. I was taught not to look at color and now you’re telling me I should have been all along, so that means what I’ve been doing is wrong. And to accept what I was doing before as wrong has some ownership or some blame from me to admit and then move forward from that by changing.

Findings show that more research is needed to understand how White privilege affects teaching, the overall standards and guidelines of the school, the academic success of all students, and how it influences expectations.

Additional information for school climate, based on teacher data, was collected through a quantitative instrument. In the school climate survey, participants were asked questions in four major areas. Those being general school climate, school safety, equity and respect for diversity, and discipline. The survey highlighted the degree to which administration agreed and disagreed. All climate items used a 5 point scale from 1= “strongly agree” through 4= “strongly disagree with 5= NA or “I don’t know.” The subcategory that had the greatest mean ($M=3.3$) was staff demonstrating care and concern for students. In contrast, there was more variation in the mean ($M=2.5$) when considering the degree that staff members exhibit trust and acceptance among each other. Of the questions concerning general school climate there was not much variation in regards to the atmosphere being positive, staff and students being proud of the school, staff valuing students’ opinions, and parents and visitors being welcomed. The mean ($M=2.8$) from staff was consistently rated in those areas. Another subcategory that had a high mean ($M=3$) concerned students valuing the opinions of staff at the school. School safety consisted of three categories. School practicing safety procedure (i.e. plans are in place to handle fire, tornado, and other emergencies) had the greatest mean on 3.5. This was followed by students feeling safe at school with the average of 3.2 from respondents. Lastly, there was a bit more variation in regards to students being safe to and from the school with the mean being 2.5. The third category involved questions about equity and respect for diversity. Results showed that all students, regardless of their ethnicity or

gender, are treated with respect at the school. The mean from administration was 3.2. In addition, the results demonstrated a lower mean of 2.8 when asked if diversity is a regular part of day-to-day learning at the school. Discipline was the final category on the school climate survey. The greatest mean ($M=3$) was found in two subcategories. Those being expectations, procedures, and subsequent consequences are clearly defined at the school and effective teaching practices are being used to minimize problem behavior in school. On average ($M=2.8$), administration agreed that a structure exists for organizing resources and personnel for students with chronic problem behavior and, generally, students use appropriate social skills at the school. The two areas that had the least average ($M=2.5$) were procedures for correcting problem behaviors are implemented consistently by administration and consequences are fairly and consistently applied to all students regardless of ethnicity or gender.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

Summary

The research questions asked (1) What do male African American students believe promotes their academic success and racial identity? (2) What do male African American students believe challenges their success and racial identity development? (3) How do the components of MANDATE contribute to school success and racial development for African American male students? and (4) Does the atmosphere of a large metropolitan public school promote success and equality for its students?

The findings indicated that students believe the major contributions to their academic success and racial identity development were setting goals, having self-motivation, having good relationships, awareness and learning about their race and its contributions to society. Additionally, findings indicated that relationships, negative statistics, stereotypes, different perspectives, lack of understanding, lack of culturally relevant teaching, and expectations were barriers to student's success and racial development. Literature suggests that identity formation is one of the most critical developmental tasks of adolescence (Arnett, 2007). This was evident in how participants expressed their desire to grow as an individual and in their racial identity. It also was being nurtured through various components of MANDATE. Participants are now more aware of their identity formation in regards to what can contribute or hinder their success and development. The data from students and administrators also highlighted several components of MANDATE that contribute to school success and racial development for

male students of color. The seven factors that were seen as prominent to the student's development were structure, academic achievement expectation, support, teaching the importance of self-improvement, cultural development, committed authoritative adults, and leadership opportunities. These seven factors support the findings in literature that purpose in life is associated with greater positive affects (King, Hicks, Krull, Del Gaiso, 2006). Four of those factors provide avenues of purpose, which gives students the ability to transform their environment, education, and the circumstances they face. The other three factors provide youth with support and boundaries from adults as they transition through various stages of development which also complies with current literature (Harold, Colarossi, & Mercier, 2007). When examining the school environment findings highlighted safety, expectations, race, equity and respect for diversity, and discipline. The overall climate of the school supports current literature because it provides an opportunity for learning, students putting forth an effort, and students having previous skills and experiences needed beforehand to sufficiently complete and understand tasks assigned (Farkas, 2003). However, as mentioned earlier by administrators, creating a more culturally relevant climate needs to occur. Due to students coming from various backgrounds the school needs to make sure diversity is displayed, provide teachers with textbooks and instructional materials that provide information about how minorities contributed to America, and staff being intentional in learning about various cultures. These findings support literary assumptions that educators need to study, attend conferences, read books, and talk about their concerns and questions about different cultures (Landsman, 2004). The extent in this sample, to which teachers proactively attempted to create a more diverse environment, was not evident.

Limitations

Far from exhaustive or universal, the information here represents one interpretation from a small group of minority males and the administration at one high school. Because the sample was minority males' perspective, the data is more suggestive for that population of students in a predominately White school. In addition, the sample of administration consisted of primarily White middle-class individuals, except the MANDATE director. Therefore, although the goal was to have a diverse population of staff members the views may not reflect all staff members' perspectives. Also, this sample was taken from a conservative state where other states may be more concerned with race and identity being key factors that influence academic achievement. These sampling concerns limit the ability to generalize the findings.

In addition, another limitation to the study was that participants were only interviewed and surveyed at one point in time. It would be interesting to see how a longitudinal study would provide more clarity and insight from both adults and students when looking into racial identity development, culturally relevant teaching, diversity in the building, and the school climate. Although this type of study is more expensive and creates a greater possibility of shrinking the sample size, it allows researchers to look at changes over time.

Another area worth mentioning is the fact that the program began before the Pacific Education Guideline would have recommended. Pacific Education purpose is to transform educational systems into racially conscious and socially just environments that nurture the spirit and infinite potential of all learners, especially black children and their families. Their guidelines largely influence and direct the structure of MANDATE.

Therefore, speculation can be made concerning the low response rate of teachers completing surveys or being engaged with the MANDATE program and the vision it has. In following the Pacific Education guidelines the school would not be interacting with the students yet; the protocol seeks to prepare teachers, administrators, and parents for the sensitive topic of race and achievement in order to assist minority students to excel academically. This study adds to the literature on the new endeavors of exploring how race influences academic success.

Implications and Future Research

Further research is needed to expand knowledge and education to various stakeholders in order to close the achievement gap of minority students. This work has several implications for educators, practitioners, parents, students, and researchers concerned with equality and academic success for *all* students. First, we should capitalize on the resources available that brings awareness of the relationship between race and academic success. If including race as a factor of achievement could help students benefit from their overall schooling and educational experience, then it is imperative to morally and economically figure out a way to do so. Second, we should help educators understand the importance of teaching culturally relevant material and holding high expectations for all students. This change in pedagogy and ideology would encourage students to engage in school more, be self-motivated, and challenge their own beliefs of success. In addition, educators must be aware of cultural and societal factors in the home, school, and community context. This would assist in building relationships; which we know is a huge factor when working with youth.

Schools, parents, students, etc. should continue to build on the need of closing the achievement gap and look at race as well. Policy that impact youth are made both at the local and state levels—particularly policy that impacts curriculum and assessment. Therefore, policies and textbook companies could do a better job meeting the needs of various cultures represented in classrooms. This could be done by making sure materials are inclusive and representative of the contributions various races have made towards the advancement of the society. It may also be beneficial to launch a policy that promotes more events to recognize and value diversity in cultures; possibly once every quarter. In addition, clear policies to improve the educational and social outcomes of all students would be beneficial because it would identify and reduce barriers to various learning styles and cultural differences for students who are typically marginalized whether consciously or unconsciously. Acknowledging that we may hold unexamined racial assumptions could cause change.

This study suggests the need for a number of shifts in research on race and education. In terms of definitions, we need to move away from the traditional practices associated with White middle-class to a wide variety of diverse practices. Conceptually, we must embrace rather than reject the use of race, class, culture, and gender as lenses to examine academic achievement and success for students. Lastly, promoting partnerships with families and being culturally sensitive when teaching, instructing, and interacting will also contribute to more equitable outcomes. Overall the student participants found the MANDATE program to be beneficial. Therefore, similar programs (with the noted recommendations for improvement) should be available to African American males in

order to continue to help them develop a positive racial identity and aspire for academic success.

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Appendix A

MANDATE member Questions

1. What caused you to get involved in the program?
2. What were your expectations going into the program? Were they met and how?
3. Has your outlook on school changed? Has relationships with staff changed?
4. Have your educational aspirations changed in any way?
5. How has your personal views and respect for other cultures or ethnic backgrounds changed?
6. As a male student of color has there ever been times when you felt like the expectations your teachers had for you were different then other students that were not minority?
7. Have you ever felt like you didn't belong at the school or in an honors class?
8. Do you feel like the education you receive is different or similar to White students?
9. Do feel like your educational accomplishments are related to where you go in life (i.e. college, career, etc.)?
10. Do you see your race as an asset or liability? Please explain.
11. How do you think your different racial identity affect who you are, your experiences, and how you see the world?
12. What do you like about or gain from particular racial identities? What do you wish people understood about racial identity?

Appendix B

Superintendent Interview Questionnaire

1. What do you think is the biggest challenge facing the African American students in public schools right now and do you have a plan to address it?
2. Have you seen any changes in your students since their involvement in MANDATE? How do you think MANDATE contributes to the climate of the school? Have you seen any social/racial differences in your students? Has their involvement of the program caused your expectations of them to change?
3. How are BPSs planning to ensure that African American students graduate with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in college and/or work?
4. In what areas has the MANDATE program at Bellevue East shown improvement? In what areas do you think the program could strengthen?
5. Is the program one you would implement in other Bellevue Public Schools?
6. What qualities and characteristics are exhibited by school leaders who are engaging in equity for all students?
7. What is it that educators should know and be able to do to narrow the racial achievement gap? Are there professional development opportunities for staff concerning the education gap?
8. Is there a long-term plan to get and keep the program improving and meeting the needs of the students it is serving?

Appendix C

MANDATE Director Questionnaire

1. What motivated you to strictly target colored males at this point in time?
2. Do you see this program expanding, and if so, in what ways?
3. What do you think is the biggest challenge facing the African American students in public schools right now and do you have a plan to address it?
4. Have you seen any changes in your students since their involvement in MANDATE? How do you think MANDATE contributes to the climate of the school? Have you seen any social/racial differences in your students? Has their involvement of the program caused your expectations of them to change?
5. How are BPSs planning to ensure that African American students graduate with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in college and/or work?
6. In what areas has the MANDATE program at Bellevue East shown improvement? In what areas do you think the program could strengthen?
7. Is the program one you would implement in other schools in the district?
8. What qualities and characteristics are exhibited by school leaders who are engaging in equity for all students?
9. What is it that educators should know and be able to do to narrow the racial achievement gap? Are there professional development opportunities for staff concerning the education gap?
10. Is there a long-term plan to get and keep the program improving and meeting the needs of the students it is serving?

Appendix D

School Climate

The purpose of this survey is to obtain the opinions held by the staff about the safe learning environment at this school. Your answers are confidential. Do not write your name on this form.

Please decide the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement below.

School Climate					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	NA or I don't know
The atmosphere at this school is positive					
Students are proud of this school.					
Staff members are proud of this school.					
Staff members at this school demonstrate their care and concern for students.					
Students value the opinions of the adults at this school.					
Staff and administration value the opinions of students at this school.					
Students at this school show respect for one another.					
Staff members exhibit a sense of trust and acceptance among themselves.					
Parents and visitors are welcomed when they visit the school.					
School Safety					
Students feel safe at school.					
Students are safe on the way to and from school.					
The school has practiced a plan to respond to tornado, fire, and other emergencies.					
Equity/Respect for Diversity					
All students, regardless of					

ethnicity, are treated with respect at this school.					
All students, regardless of gender, are treated with respect at this school.					
Respecting diversity is a regular part of day-to-day learning at this school.					
Discipline					
Expectations, procedures, and subsequent consequences are clearly defined at this school.					
Procedures for correcting problem behaviors are implemented consistently by staff and administration.					
Consequences are fairly and consistently applied to all students regardless of ethnicity or gender.					
A structure exists for organizing resources and personnel for a student with chronic problem behavior.					
Effective teaching practices are being used to minimize problem behavior in classrooms.					
Generally, students use appropriate social skills at this school.					

Appendix E

Does Your School Have High Expectations for All Students?

Are examples of the achievements and ideas of diverse authors, thinkers, and historical figures woven into—not separated from—the curriculum?

Are texts, lessons, and discussion topics chosen with thought about how to provide a safe environment for discussion of controversial issues?

Do all students feel safe in the classrooms, hallways, and lunchroom?

Does the school challenge anyone making generalizations about racial and ethnic groups?

Is evidence of diverse cultures displayed in hallways, in the library, in classroom examples, and in the racial and cultural backgrounds of adults working in the building?

Does the school take students' and parents' discomfort, frustration, or anger seriously?

Are issues worked out through mediation and discussion?

Do teachers expect *all* students to complete and turn in work, know the answers to different levels of questions, work in class, follow class guidelines, and respond to structure?

Do parents of color feel welcome at conferences, parent advisory group meetings, and school events?

Do students of all ethnicities represented in the school participate in all academic courses and programs?

Are students of color counseled to consider high-level academic programs and college?

Are administrators and teachers willing to counter racist comments?

Do teachers value inclusive curriculum even when the school is primarily populated by white students?

Do teachers and staff members feel they can openly discuss issues of race, class, and gender without feeling defensive or ashamed?

Appendix F

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED



- STUDY'S TITLE:** “Effect of Racial Socialization and Racial Identity in Adolescent African American Males on Academic Achievement”
- PURPOSE:** The purpose of this study is to acknowledge the impact of race on education achievement, draw attention to barriers, and examine a program implemented based on the Courageous Conversations about Race Curriculum in order to provide direction for other schools to bridge the education gap between White and African American students.
- ELIGIBILITY:** African American males actively involved in MANDATE
- PARTICIPATION:** If you choose to participate in the study you will be placed in one of the five different focus groups each containing about seven students. These focus groups will be held at Bellevue East on Tuesdays after MANDATE’s “Real Talk” session and will be recorded for the researchers use only. Each focus group will last about an hour.
- CONTACT:** RaSheema Pitt-Principal Investigator
(402) 598-5583 or rasheema_pitt@yahoo.com
Rochelle Dalla-Supervising Investigator
(402) 472-6546 or rdalla1@unl.edu
Location of research: Bellevue East High School
Person to contact for additional information at school-MANDATE Director



November 26, 2012

Rasheema Pitt
Department of Child, Youth and Family Studies
501 W 31st Ave Bellevue, NE 68005

Rochelle Dalla
Department of Child, Youth and Family Studies
132 MABL, UNL, 68588-0236

IRB Number: 20121112780EP

Project ID: 12780

Project Title: Effect of Racial Socialization and Racial Identity in Adolescent African American Males on Academic Achievement

Dear Rasheema:

This letter is to officially notify you of the approval of your project by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects. It is the Board's opinion that you have provided adequate safeguards for the rights and welfare of the participants in this study based on the information provided. Your proposal is in compliance with this institution's Federal Wide Assurance 00002258 and the DHHS Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR 46). Your project has been approved as an Expedited protocol, category 6 & 7.

Dates of EP Review: 09/12/2012, 10/08/2012 & 11/09/2012

You are authorized to implement this study as of the Date of Final Approval: 11/26/2012. This approval is Valid Until: 11/25/2013.

We wish to remind you that the principal investigator is responsible for reporting to this Board any of the following events within 48 hours of the event:

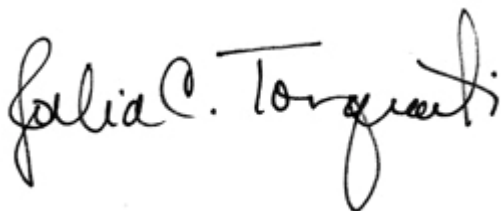
- * Any serious event (including on-site and off-site adverse events, injuries, side effects, deaths, or other problems) which in the opinion of the local investigator was unanticipated, involved risk to subjects or others, and was possibly related to the research procedures;
- * Any serious accidental or unintentional change to the IRB-approved protocol that involves risk or has the potential to recur;
- * Any publication in the literature, safety monitoring report, interim result or other finding that indicates an unexpected change to the risk/benefit ratio of the research;

- * Any breach in confidentiality or compromise in data privacy related to the subject or others; or
- * Any complaint of a subject that indicates an unanticipated risk or that cannot be resolved by the research staff.

For projects which continue beyond one year from the starting date, the IRB will request continuing review and update of the research project. Your study will be due for continuing review as indicated above. The investigator must also advise the Board when this study is finished or discontinued by completing the enclosed Protocol Final Report form and returning it to the Institutional Review Board.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB office at 472-6965.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julia C. Torquati". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Julia" and last name "Torquati" clearly legible, and "C." as a middle initial.

Julia Torquati, Ph.D.
Chair for the IRB



Appendix H



Director Consent Form

Please thoroughly read below. You can ask questions at any time and you can talk to others for clarity before you fill out the form.

Study's Title: "Effect of Racial Socialization and Racial Identity in Adolescent African American Males on Academic Achievement"

Why is this study being done? This study involves research. The purpose of this study is to acknowledge the impact of race on education achievement, draw attention to barriers, and examine a program implemented based on the Courageous Conversations about Race Curriculum in order to provide direction for other schools to bridge the education gap between White and African American students. This will be done by answering four questions: (1) What do male African American students believe promotes their academic success and racial identity? (2) What do male African American students believe challenges their success and racial identity development? (3) How do the components of MANDATE contribute to school success and racial development for African American male students? and (4) Does the atmosphere of a large metropolitan public school promote success and equality for its students?

What will director do in the study? There will be an interview that takes place at Bellevue East. A combination of specific, probing, and reflective questions will be used. Through interview questions the researcher is attempting to acknowledge how MANDATE has positively impacted the school climate, influenced the expectations of African American students, and has contributed to positive racial and social development for Black student participants. Sample interview questions for the director will as follow: What motivated you to begin MANDATE? How has the program specifically affected the African American males? Do you see this program expanding, and if so, in what ways? What changes have you seen in your students since their involvement in MANDATE? How do you think MANDATE contributes to the climate of the school? Have you seen any positive social/racial differences in your students? Has their involvement of the program caused your expectations of them to change? This interview will also be recorded and transcribed for accuracy purposes. There are no experimental procedures in this study. Once the study is over the interview recording will not be used in any other way.

Risks: There are no known foreseeable risks or discomforts to the participants.

Benefits: Results may be used to improve the MANDATE program and promote awareness/change in the school.

Will people know which students were involved? MANDATE director will not be linked to presentations. The researcher will keep the identity of the MANDATE Director confidential. The Director will be given an Identification Number and a pseudonym.

If there are any questions or concerns please contact RaSheema Pitt (Principal Investigator) at rasheema_pitt@yahoo.com or (402) 598-5583. Rochelle Dalla, the Supervising Investigator can also be contacted at rdalla1@unl.edu or (402) 472-6546. Please contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board at (402) 472-6965 for the following reasons:

- ☐ you wish to talk to someone other than the research staff to obtain answers to questions about your rights as a research participant
- ☐ to voice concerns or complaints about the research
- ☐ to provide input concerning the research process or
- ☐ in the event the study staff could not be reached

Participation in this study is voluntary. You can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without harming your relationship with the researchers or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Bellevue East staff, affect their relationship with the MANDATE program, or in any other way receive a penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose to participate please fill in the lines below.

☐ ease check this box to indicate it is ok to audio tape your interview

Print Name

Signature

Date

Appendix I

Superintendent Consent Form

Please thoroughly read below. You can ask questions at any time and you can talk to others for clarity before you fill out the form.

Study's Title: "Effect of Racial Socialization and Racial Identity in Adolescent African American Males on Academic Achievement"

Why is this study being done? This study involves research. The purpose of this study is to acknowledge the impact of race on education achievement, draw attention to barriers, and examine a program implemented based on the Courageous Conversations about Race Curriculum in order to provide direction for other schools to bridge the education gap between White and African American students. This will be done by answering four questions: (1) What do male African American students believe promotes their academic success and racial identity? (2) What do male African American students believe challenges their success and racial identity development? (3) How do the components of MANDATE contribute to school success and racial development for African American male students? and (4) Does the atmosphere of a large metropolitan public school promote success and equality for its students?

What will superintendent do in the study? The Superintendent will be interviewed at the central office. During the interview the superintendent will be asked various questions to share his opinions and reasoning about the school, how MANDATE components contribute to school success, and student's racial development success. From this the researcher hopes to gain insight concerning his awareness and overall outlook of inclusion and achievement. Sample interview questions include: What do you think is the biggest challenge facing the African American students in public schools right now are and do you have a plan to address it? Have you seen any changes in the African American male students since their involvement in MANDATE? How do you think MANDATE contributes to the climate of the school? Have you seen any social/racial differences in students? Has their involvement of the program caused your expectations of them to change? This interview will also be recorded and transcribed for accuracy purposes. There are no experimental procedures in this study. Once the study is over the interview recording will not be used in any other way.

Risks: There are no known foreseeable risks or discomforts to the participants.

Benefits: Please be advised that the results will be shared with the MANDATE director. Results may be used to improve the MANDATE program and promote awareness/change in the school.

Will people know which students were involved? The superintendent will not be linked to presentations. The researcher will keep the identity of the superintendent confidential. The superintendent will be given an Identification Number and a pseudonym.

If there are any questions or concerns please contact RaSheema Pitt (Principal Investigator) at rasheema_pitt@yahoo.com or (402) 598-5583. Rochelle Dalla, the Supervising Investigator can also be contacted at rdalla1@unl.edu or (402) 472-6546. Please contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board at (402) 472-6965 for the following reasons:

- ☐ you wish to talk to someone other than the research staff to obtain answers to questions about your rights as a research participant
- ☐ to voice concerns or complaints about the research
- ☐ to provide input concerning the research process or
- ☐ in the event the study staff could not be reached

Participation in this study is voluntary. You can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without harming your relationship with the researchers or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Bellevue East staff, affect their relationship with the MANDATE program, or in any other way receive a penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose to participate please fill in the lines below.

☐ Please check this box to indicate it is ok to audio tape your interview

Print Name

Signature

Date

Appendix J

Teacher Consent Form

Please thoroughly read below. You can ask questions at any time and you can talk to others for clarity before you fill out the form.

Study's Title: “Effect of Racial Socialization and Racial Identity in Adolescent African American Males on Academic Achievement”

Why is this study being done? This study involves research. The purpose of this study is to acknowledge the impact of race on education achievement, draw attention to barriers, and examine a program implemented based on the Courageous Conversations about Race Curriculum in order to provide direction for other schools to bridge the education gap between White and African American students. This will be done by answering four questions: (1) What do male African American students believe promotes their academic success and racial identity? (2) What do male African American students believe challenges their success and racial identity development? (3) How do the components of MANDATE contribute to school success and racial development for African American male students? and (4) Does the atmosphere of a large metropolitan public school promote success and equality for its students?

What will teachers do in the study? There are two surveys for teachers: “Is Your Climate Inclusive & Inviting?” and “Does Your School Have High Expectations for All Students?” The purpose of the school climate survey is to assess the atmosphere students are learning in to determine if it meets the physical, social, and emotional needs of students. Does Your School Have High Standards for All Students? is a questionnaire that will help measure staff expectations for their minority students. The surveys for teachers will take about 20-25 minutes each to complete. There are no experimental procedures in this study. Once the study is over the surveys will not be used in any other way. For your convenience surveys will be emailed to teachers. There will also be a few hard copies located in the MANDATE director’s office. Teachers have the option of completing the surveys and emailing them back to me or they can place them in the locked box located in the MANDATE Director’s office.

Risks: There are no known foreseeable risks or discomforts to the participants.

Benefits: Please be advised that the results will be shared with the MANDATE director. Results may be used to improve the MANDATE program and promote awareness/change in the school.

Will people know which students were involved? Teachers will not be linked to presentations. The researcher will keep who the teachers are confidential. All teachers

will be given an Identification Number and a pseudonym; teachers' names, or any other identifying information, will not be used.

If there are any questions or concerns please contact RaSheema Pitt (Principal Investigator) at rasheema_pitt@yahoo.com or (402) 598-5583. Rochelle Dalla, the Supervising Investigator can also be contacted at rdalla1@unl.edu or (402) 472-6546. Please contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board at (402) 472-6965 for the following reasons:

- ☐ you wish to talk to someone other than the research staff to obtain answers to questions about your rights as a research participant
- ☐ to voice concerns or complaints about the research
- ☐ to provide input concerning the research process or
- ☐ in the event the study staff could not be reached

Participation in this study is voluntary. You can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without harming your relationship with the researchers or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Bellevue East staff, affect their relationship with the MANDATE program, or in any other way receive a penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. By completing and returning the surveys, your consent to participate is implied and you should keep this form for your records. Thank you!

Appendix K

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Please thoroughly read below. You can ask questions at any time and you can talk to others for clarity before you fill out the form.

Study's Title: "Effect of Racial Socialization and Racial Identity in Adolescent African American Males on Academic Achievement"

Why is this study being done? This study involves research. The purpose of this study is to acknowledge the impact of race on education achievement, draw attention to barriers, and examine a program implemented based on the Courageous Conversations about Race Curriculum in order to provide direction for other schools to bridge the education gap between White and African American students. This will be done by answering four questions: (1) What do male African American students believe promotes their academic success and racial identity? (2) What do male African American students believe challenges their success and racial identity development? (3) How do the components of MANDATE contribute to school success and racial development for African American male students? and (4) Does the atmosphere of a large metropolitan public school promote success and equality for its students? Results of this study will be used for the PI's thesis.

What will happen while student is in the study? A student will be placed in one of the five different focus groups each containing about seven students. These focus groups will be held at Bellevue East on Tuesdays after their "Real Talk" session and will be recorded for the researchers use only. Each focus group will last about an hour. Your student is being asked to participate in the study because they are an asset to the research. Their participation provides a student's perspective and personal testimony in better understanding the impact of race in their educational experiences and endeavors as African American males. During this time prompting questions will be asked to gain an understanding of student's perspective concerning their school success, formation of a positive racial identity, challenges they believe affect their success and identity development, their environment, the teaching process in the classroom, sense of belonging, self-confidence, and opinion about MANDATE. There are no experimental procedures in this study. Once the study is over the recordings will not be used in any other way.

Risks: There are no known foreseeable risks or discomforts to the participants. However, due to the nature of a focus group, I cannot guarantee complete confidentiality, I will ask participants to respect the other members of the group and not share what is said.

Benefits: Results may be used to improve the MANDATE program and promote awareness/change in the school. Therefore, results will be shared with the MANDATE director, however, the names of student's will remain confidential.

Will people know which students were involved? All students will be given an Identification Number and a pseudonym; students' names, or any other identifying information, will not be used.

If there are any questions or concerns please contact RaSheema Pitt (Principal Investigator) at rasheema_pitt@yahoo.com or (402) 598-5583. Rochelle Dalla, the Supervising Investigator can also be contacted at rdalla1@unl.edu or (402) 472-6546. Please contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board at (402) 472-6965 for the following reasons:

- ☐ you wish to talk to someone other than the research staff to obtain answers to questions about your rights as a research participant
- ☐ to voice concerns or complaints about the research
- ☐ to provide input concerning the research process or
- ☐ in the event the study staff could not be reached

Participation in this study is voluntary. You can refuse to have your child participate or withdraw at any time without harming their relationship with the researchers or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Bellevue East staff, affect their relationship with the MANDATE program, or in any other way receive a penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose to participate please fill in the lines below.

☐ Please check this box to indicate it is ok to audio tape your child

_____	_____	_____
Name of Parent/Guardian	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Name of Student	Signature	Date

Appendix L

Assent Form

Please thoroughly read all information below. If you have questions, feel free to ask the principle investigator or others you trust at any time.

Study's Title: “Effect of Racial Socialization and Racial Identity in Adolescent African American Males on Academic Achievement”

My name is RaSheema Pitt. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of race on education achievement, draw attention to barriers to educational achievement due to race, and examine a school program based on the Courageous Conversations about Race Curriculum in order to provide direction for other schools to bridge the education gap between White and African American students. If you would like, you can be in my study.

What will happen while student is in the study? If you decide you want to be in my study you will be placed in one of the five different focus groups. Each focus group will contain about seven students. These focus groups will be held at Bellevue East on Tuesdays after the “Real Talk” session and will be audio-recorded for the researchers use only. Each focus group will last about an hour. During this time prompting questions will be asked to gain an understanding of your perspective concerning your school success, formation of a positive racial identity, challenges you believe affect your success and identity development, your environment, the teaching process in the classroom, sense of belonging, self-confidence, and opinion about MANDATE. There are no experimental procedures in this study. Once the study is over the recordings will not be used in any other way.

Risks: There are no known foreseeable risks or discomforts to the participants. However, due to the nature of a focus group, I cannot guarantee complete confidentiality, I will ask participants to respect the other members of the group and not share what is said.

Benefits: Results may be used to improve the MANDATE program and promote awareness/change in the school.

Will people know which students were involved? Other people will not know if you are in my study. I will put things I learn about you together with things I learn about others, so no one can tell what things came from you. When I tell other people about my research, I will not use your name, so no one can tell who I am talking about. You will be

given an Identification Number and a pseudonym; students' names, or any other identifying information, will not be used.

Do you need parental approval? Yes, you do. Your parent(s) or guardian(s) have to say it's OK for you to be in the study. After they decide, you get to choose if you want to do it too. If you don't want to be in the study, no one will be mad at you. If you want to be in the study now and change your mind later, that's OK too. You can stop at any time.

You can call me if you have questions or concerns about the study or if you decide you don't want to be in the study any more. RaSheema Pitt (Principal Investigator) at rasheema_pitt@yahoo.com or (402) 598-5583. Rochelle Dalla, the Supervising Investigator can also be contacted at rdalla1@unl.edu or (402) 472-6546.

I will give you a copy of this form in case you want to ask questions later.

Agreement

I have decided to be in the study even though I know that I don't have to do it. RaSheema Pitt has answered all my questions.

Signature of Study Participant

Date

Signature of Researcher

Date

Appendix M: School Climate Table

<i>School Climate Survey Agreement</i>					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	NA or I don't know
<i>All Survey Responses</i>					
School Climate					
Atmosphere positive		5	1		
Students proud of school		5	1		
Staff members proud		4	1		
Staff demonstrate care & concern	2	4			
Students value staff opinions	1	4	1		
Staff value students opinions		4	1		
Students respect each other		3	3		
Staff trust & accept each other	1	3	1	1	
Parents & visitors are welcomed		4	1		
School Safety					
Students feel safe	1	5			
Students safe to & from school	1	3	1		1
School practices safety procedures	3	3			
Equity/Respect for Diversity					
Students regardless of race treated with respect	1	5			
Students regardless of gender treated with respect	1	5	1		
Respecting diversity apart of daily learning		5			
Discipline					
Expectations, procedures, consequences clearly defined	1	4	1		
Procedures to correct behaviors consistent by staff	1	2	2	1	
Consequences are consistently applied regardless of race or gender	1	2	2	1	
Structure exist for student with chronic problem behavior	1	3	2		
Effective teaching used to minimize problem behavior	1	4	1		
Generally, students use appropriate social skills at school		5	1		