

Rowan University

Rowan Digital Works

Theses and Dissertations

4-16-1999

Study of the African American male adolescent in a suburban school district

Jane Anne MacWright
Rowan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd>



Part of the [Elementary and Middle and Secondary Education Administration Commons](#)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you - share your thoughts on our feedback form.

Recommended Citation

MacWright, Jane Anne, "Study of the African American male adolescent in a suburban school district" (1999). *Theses and Dissertations*. 1844.

<https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/1844>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Rowan Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Rowan Digital Works. For more information, please contact LibraryTheses@rowan.edu.

STUDY OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE ADOLESCENT
IN A SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

by
Jane Anne Mac Wright

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
of
Rowan University
May, 1999

Approved by

Date Approved April 16, 1999

ABSTRACT

Jane Anne MacWright

Study of the African American Male Adolescent
in a Suburban School District

1999

Dr. Theodore Johnson
School Administration

This study investigated the academic and social status of the African American male adolescent in a suburban upper middle class school district and compared the findings with the literature at large. Since most of the literature dealing with the African American male adolescent is conducted in an urban setting, the intent of this investigation was to determine if the same problems that confront today's African American male adolescent in urban centers are prevalent in suburbia. Research was a combination of quantitative and qualitative investigation. The quantitative research compared discipline referrals, grade point average, classification, demographics and referrals to the Pupil Assistance Committee with the findings in the literature. Qualitative research involved interviewing 10th, 11th, and 12th grade African American male adolescents. Interviews dealt with importance of the family and peer group, unrealistic expectations of the future, perception of academic performance, perceived treatment by teachers and classmates, and involvement in extra-curricular activities. Results were then compared with the literature.

A strong positive correlation was found in all areas of the investigation with the exception of the importance of the peer group. The study suggests that the same problems that confront today's African American adolescent in our urban centers are prevalent in suburbia.

MINI-ABSTRACT

Jane Anne MacWright

Study of the African American Male Adolescent
in a Suburban School District
1999

Dr. Theodore Johnson
School Administration

Investigation of academic and social status of the African American male adolescent in a suburban school district and comparison of findings to the literature at large. Quantitative and qualitative research showed a strong positive correlation with the literature, thus indicating that problems confronting these adolescents in urban centers are prevalent in suburbia.

Acknowledgements

To my husband

for his support, encouragement and love.

To my sons, Tom, Bill, and Michael

for their endless understanding.

To my parents

for their unconditional love.

To Dr. Lynn Schilling and Dr. Vito Germinario

for your continued support.

To Dr. Theodore Johnson

for keeping me on the straight and narrow,

with the "good of the child" always foremost in my mind.

Thank you.

Table of Contents

	Page
Acknowledgments.....	ii
List of Tables.....	v
Chapter I Introduction.....	1
Purpose of the Study.....	2
Definitions.....	3
Limitations of the Study.....	4
Setting of the Study.....	4
Significance of the Study.....	5
Organization of the Study.....	6
Chapter 2 Review of Literature.....	8
Introduction.....	8
Problems Confronting the African American Male Adolescent.....	8
Programs and Proposed Solutions as Found in the Literature.....	17
Chapter 3 Design of the Study.....	26
Research Design.....	26
Development and Design of Instruments.....	27
Sampling and Sampling Techniques.....	27

Data Collection Approach.....	28
Statistical Analysis.....	28
Chapter 4 Presentation of the Research Findings.....	30
Analysis of the Quantitative Research.....	31
Discipline referrals.....	31
Grade Point Average.....	32
Classification of Students.....	32
Demographics.....	33
Referrals to the Pupil Assistance Committee.....	33
Comparison of the Findings with the Literature.....	34
Analysis of Student Interviews.....	36
Chapter 5 Conclusions, Implications, and Further Study.....	41
Implications for the Intern and the Organization.....	44
Implications for Further Study.....	44
References.....	46
Appendix A.....	50
Appendix B.....	52
Biographical Data.....	55

List of Tables

Table 1 Discipline Referrals of the African American Male Adolescent.....	53
Table 2 Grade Point Average of the African American Male Adolescent.....	53
Table 3 Demographics of the African American Male Adolescent.....	54

Chapter I

Introduction: Focus of the Study

It is estimated by the Commission of Minority Participation in Education that by the year 2000, 70% of African American males will be imprisoned, awaiting trial, on drugs or killed (Reglin, 1994). Homicides are the leading cause of death of African American males over the age of nine.

Such staggering statistics have drawn nationwide attention to the plight of the urban African American male. For years, urban social service organizations have directed their attention to African American women and children. R. Stables, in a 1982 speech, summarizes the situation which is still prevalent in our urban centers today: "To be young and black in the urban areas of the U.S. is to be subjected to the harshest elements of oppression at the most vulnerable period in one's life (Ascher, 1991).

Dr. James Comer contends that we must move rapidly in solving the problems of the "Black Male Crises." If not attended to quickly and directly, the problem will escalate beyond control and solution (Reglin, 1994).

Flight of the black middle class from urban centers has long been seen as one of the major reasons for the demise of the African American male adolescent (Berringer & DeLacy, 1993). The lack of successful African American males in urban centers has left the African American male adolescent with few positive male role models. The peer group assumes the role of the extended family and becomes a major factor in

reinforcing the values and behaviors of the African American male adolescent (Reglin, 1994).

It is ironic that middle-class African Americans who left the urban centers to seek a better life for themselves and their families have not completely escaped the problem that confronts the urban African American male adolescent. Many parents are finding that their own sons are suffering from the very same problems that confront the urban adolescent (Berrington, 1993).

It is imperative that the suburban school districts realize that this is no longer an urban issue and that districts prepare themselves to face the needs of the African American male student.

This problem must be dealt with immediately. In 1970, students of color made up 21% of public school enrollment; by 1990, they made up 31%. By the year 2000, the anticipated increase in African American enrollment is 19% (Reglin, 1994).

However, little research has been conducted in suburban school districts. It is the intent of the intern to investigate the research conducted on the African American male adolescent in both urban and suburban areas of our nation, to investigate the academic and social success of the African American male adolescent in an upper middle class suburban school district, to formulate the correlation between the two studies, and to make recommendations for programs to better meet the needs of the African American male student in the suburban setting.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe and investigate the academic and social status of the African American male student in a suburban upper middle class school

district, using action-based research resulting in a report to school administration. The findings and recommended solutions to this problem will enable the African American male student to become more empowered in his educational career.

The purposes of the study will be as follows:

- 1) To identify specific indicators of academic and social achievement of African American male population at a suburban high school.
- 2) To compare the findings with the literature at large.
- 3) To interview ten African American male students to develop a sense of student perception of academic and social success.
- 4) To compare results of the interviews with the literature at large.

Definitions

At-risk--students who consistently show a lack of necessary intellectual, emotional, and/or social skills to take full advantage of the educational opportunities afforded to them. (Germinario, 1992).

Cross-age tutoring--instruction provided to a student by another student, usually older.

Drop out--a student who has withdrawn from school and has not enrolled in an academic program leading to high school diploma or the equivalent. (Schilling, 1996).

CASA (Community Alliance on Substance Abuse)--a town based organization that works closely with the schools to fight drug and alcohol abuse.

MEND (Moorestown Ecumenical Neighborhood Development)--a community non-profit organization incorporated in 1969 to provide housing for low and moderate income families.

ACE Program (Alternative Classroom Education Program)--a program developed in Moorestown's William Allen Middle School to provide alternative forms of educational opportunities to at-risk children.

Peer tutoring--remedial instruction provided to a student by another student.

Self-concept--beliefs and feelings a person has about himself.

Self-fulfilling prophecy--a theory developed by Jacobson and Rosenthal (1968) which correlates teacher expectations with students' behavior and performance. Also known as the Pygmalion effect. (McCown, Driscoll, & Roop, 1996).

Limitations of the Study

- 1) Most information that is found in the literature regarding the African American male adolescent is confined to large urban centers. Very little information is available on the African American male adolescent in suburbia.
- 2) Another limitation is that this study will be confined only to the ninth to twelfth grade high school students in one suburban district.
- 3) While some recommended solutions will be implemented during the 1998-1999 school year, it will be difficult to assess the long term success of these programs during the practicum of the intern.
- 4) Recommended solutions to this problem may not be possible to implement until 1999-2000 school year because of budgetary and/or administrative constraints.

Setting of the Study

The study will be conducted in a 9-12 grade high school located in an upper middle class suburban community approximately twenty miles from Philadelphia in the

southern part of New Jersey.

The population for this study will be 9-12 grade African American male high school students. The study will be based on the enrollment of the 1997-98 school year. This will enable the intern to establish the GPA, discipline referrals, PAC referrals, and absentee records of the African American male students for a complete year.

Ten students will be chosen to complete the interview portion of the study. These students will be tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade students during the 1998-99 school year. This will allow for correlation with the other research data collected.

Significance of the Study

It is imperative that every school district meets the needs of the total student population. Parents and educators of suburban upper and middle class majority children must realize that the equal education of all children also is their concern. By educating every child to his fullest potential, in the long run, everyone will benefit. Alfie Kohn (1998) claims that affluent and middle class parents no longer can sacrifice other children's education for the sake of bettering their own child's education. Kahn (1998) states that "no longer can we support segregated and school structures that benefit mainly student of the majority middle class."

It is the moral obligation of every school district, as well as that of every individual teacher, to constantly assess and re-evaluate the status of the African American male within their own school community. Some resistance to the necessary changes will undoubtedly occur.

Dr. Vito Germinario, (1995) Superintendent of Moorestown Township Public

Schools, states this most succinctly:

“Resistance to change, in one form or another, has been a common theme in education. While not unique to organizations, resistance to educational change manifests itself most frequently in relation to policy or curriculum innovations. Typically, the resistance comes from teachers to whom the change has the greatest impact. Interestingly, a corollary of change is the almost overwhelming desire of individuals to maintain the status quo. Both formal and informal influences exist to preserve the traditional ways of thinking and acting, as well as the roles and functions of staff members within the school. In a very real way change upsets the balance and order that has been institutionalized over varying lengths of time. If schools are to change to meet the needs of students in the twenty-first century, major stakeholders in the schools must plan for the dynamics inherent to the change process.”

If such change is to occur and the academic and social status of the African American male adolescent is to improve, each district must review their own data to determine if they are reflecting the national norms and how they can best address the problem.

As the population and resources of various communities vary, so do the possible solutions to the problems. However, we in suburban districts need to confer with other similar districts for possible suggestions to the solutions of this pressing problem.

Organization of the Study

The study will be organized into five chapters. Chapter I includes the Introduction, or focus of the study. A framework is presented under the headings: Purpose of the Study, Setting of the Study, Significance of the Study and Organization of the Study.

Chapter II is entitled the Review of the Literature. This is divided into two sections. The first section describes the problems confronting the African American male adolescent. The second segment outlines the programs and proposed solutions as found in the review of literature.

Chapter III is the Design of the Study. This section addresses four areas related to the research design. The first is the general description of the research design. Second, is a description of the development and design of the research instruments used in the study.

Third, is a description of the data collection approach. Finally, a description of the data analysis plan is enclosed. This chapter also describes the subjects, materials and procedures used in the study.

Chapter IV is entitled Presentation of the Research Findings. This section includes a description of the findings and an analysis of this information.

Chapter V is entitled Conclusions, Implications and Further Study. This section will present the major conclusions of the study and their corresponding implications. This chapter also highlights the conclusions and implications of the study on the intern's leadership development, as well as a description of how the organization changed as a result of the study. Finally, the need for further study is addressed in this chapter.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Introduction

The problems facing today's African American male adolescent are overwhelming. In 1990, it was estimated that 44% of all murder victims were African American males. It was also estimated that 48% of those arrested on murder charges were African American males (Jackson-Allen & Christenberry, 1994). By the year 2000, it is predicted that 70% of the urban African American male population may be imprisoned, awaiting trial, addicted to drugs, or killed (Reglin, 1994).

Fifty percent of all males in state and federal prisons are African American. In 1993, there were more African American males in prison than attending college (Cross & Foley, 1993). With such staggering statistics, it is obvious that the problems confronting the African American male population are multifaceted and that a careful review and an ongoing analysis of the situation is essential.

This chapter will be divided into two sections: an investigation into the causes of the problems confronting today's African American male adolescent and current programs and proposed solutions prevalent in today's literature.

Problems Confronting the African American Male Adolescent

The many problems and adversities facing the African American male adolescent are so overpowering and multi-layered that any one solution may be ineffective in solving the crises. It is therefore necessary to look at the many causes in totality, and

to address the causes in conjunction with each other.

In a society where the homicide rate of African American males is seven to eight times higher than that of white males, and the suicide rate of African American males has, for the first time in history, surpassed their white counterparts, it is easy to see why the African American male has been characterized as an “endangered species” (Cross & Foley, 1993).

One major area of concern is the African American family. In 1989, one half of all African American children lived in single parent families. In 1993, the median income of a two parent family was \$43,578, while the median income of a family headed by a single parent who never married was \$9,272 (Bradshaw, 1995). According to Bradshaw (1995), the greatest cause of this crisis is that most black infants are being born to unmarried mothers, half of them teenagers.

The role of the woman as the head of the household is an important factor. From 1960 to 1985, the proportion of African American families headed by women increased from 22% to 44%. In the mid 1980s, 86% of all African American children were likely to spend some time in a single family household, usually a mother only family (Ascher, 1991). An exclusively female society is often seen as detrimental to adolescent boys (Cross & Foley, 1993). The adolescent male sees goodness as a female virtue and “bad” as masculine. Mothers become the heads of households because the fathers often lack the social, educational and economic skills necessary in a marriageable partner. Social service programs have long overlooked the African American male and have focussed on the female and children.

The flight of successful minorities from the urban centers has left the African

American male adolescent with few positive role models. This leads us to the heart of the problem. In viewing the development of the child and his social environment, many look to Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development. This theory emphasizes how relationships with others influence one's search for his identity. By virtue of our cultural traditions, adults occupy an important position in the lives of young people. Erikson's theory establishes a way of understanding how the relationships young people build and model influence their sense of identity.

Each stage in Erikson's framework is structured as a dichotomy, indicating the positive and negative consequences for each stage. Each dichotomy defines a developmental crisis, a psychosocial issue that will be resolved in either a positive or negative way. The resolution of each developmental crisis will have a lasting effect on the person's view of himself or of society in general (McCown, Driscoll, & Roop, 1996).

Two stages which are extremely critical in the development of positive self concept are industry versus inferiority and identity versus role diffusion. From the age of six to twelve years, it is crucial that the child win recognition through performance, thus developing a sense of industry, an eagerness to produce. If the child does not experience success, if his efforts are treated as unworthy and intrusive, the child will develop a sense of inferiority.

It is during adolescence that the child must undergo a developmental crisis of identity versus role diffusion. This centers on the youth's attempt to discover his identity - "a sense of psychosocial well-being...a feeling of being at home in one's

body, a sense of knowing where one is going, and an inner assuredness of anticipated recognition from those who count” (Mc Cown, Driscill, & Roop, 1996).

Also included in this stage of development are the choice of occupation and the adolescent’s emerging sexuality. Positive resolutions instill a sense of self-confidence and stability whether fulfilling the role of friend, child, student, leader, or boyfriend. Negative experiences that do not allow a child to integrate his various social roles into a unitary, stable view of self lead to a sense of diffusion. The adolescent who feels torn apart by what he perceives as inconsistent expectations often exhibits role diffusion.

Such is the case with many African American male adolescents. Living in a society where few positive role models exist, the adolescent is forced to turn to the peer group for fulfillment of his needs. Inappropriate importance is thus placed on this group, replacing the family and often inhibiting the youth’s ability to develop his own individual identity and often creating what Erikson referred to as role diffusion.

This also impedes the adolescent’s future psychosocial development, inhibiting him from developing the necessary childbearing and nurturing characteristics to successfully complete the next stage-generativity. Unsuccessful resolution of this stage leads to a sense of stagnation, the feeling that one’s life is at a dead end.

The final stage of positive psychosocial development is the establishment of a sense of integrity. According to Erikson, integrity is a sense of understanding how one fits into one’s culture and accepting that one’s place is unique and unalterable. An inability to accept one’s sense of self at this stage leads to despair-the feeling that time is too short and that alternative roads to integrity are no longer open (McCown,

Driscoll, Roop, 1996).

It is the view of some theorists that for many African American males, stagnation has occurred at the stage of role identity. The differing interpretations of masculinity of the Anglo and African cultures has greatly added to the identity crises. According to Harris (1995), to compensate for feelings of powerlessness, guilt and shame that result from the inability to enact traditional masculine roles, some African American males of low income status have redefined masculinity to mean sexual promiscuity, toughness, thrill seeking and use of violence in interpersonal relationships.

Afrocentric values that emphasize collectivism over individualism, spiritualism over materialism, and oneness with nature are at odds with the values associated with the alternative behaviors adopted by a significant portion of the disadvantaged African American youth (Harris, 1995).

Forming a masculine identity in the face of conflicting norms and values can be especially stressful. Harris (1995) has found that middle class African American males often conform to the peer group in the middle school grades. However, low income African American males latch on to the peer group at a much earlier age. This often results in permanent disengagement from the family because of dysfunctional family dynamics.

As the peer group replaces the family in importance and often becomes the extended family, a unique subculture develops. This subculture is often referred to as "cool posing." Reglin (1994) defines cool posing as a set of "language, mannerisms, gestures and movements that exaggerate or ritualize masculinity." An appearance of being in complete control at all times with aloof facial expression is often

characteristic of cool posing.

Other aspects of cool posing are physical posture, style of clothing, content and rhythm of speech, walking and standing styles, forms of greeting, overall demeanor, and emphasis on physical strength. In a recent study it was found that by the third grade, many African American boys thought that fighting and risk taking were considered manly (Harris, 1995).

Reglin (1994) offers an interesting view of cool posing. He defines this alternative identity style as a camouflage within the environment of the African American male adolescent, used to hide hurt and often misread, especially by educators.

Courtland C. Lee expresses another view of cool posing. He explains this “black expressiveness” as a “desirable psychosocial construct and basis of positive attitude, values, and behavior” (Lee, 1996). Lee sees this as an important coping mechanism, by which “rather than confronting the tradition of racism and oppression, black males have released their tension by channeling their energies into the development of expressive personality dynamics” (Lee, 1996).

Another problem which confronts the African American adolescent is the idolizing of entertainers and sports figures (Reglin, 1992). Reglin (1992) commends the famous tennis player, Arthur Ashe, for addressing the issue of sports and its negative effects on the African American youth. Ashe felt that unrealistic expectations hurt the young African American male’s future chance of success. Ashe often lectured that the emphasis of a child’s life should be placed on academics and preparation for future, not sports as a solution to all problems. He felt strongly that once children begin to think irrationally, they greatly limit their future. If they don’t succeed in

sports, there are no other options, because academics have often been neglected.

Reglin (1992) states that of the 35 million African Americans, only 1200 are professional athletes. There are 12 times as many black lawyers as athletes, three times as many dentists and 15 times as many doctors (Reglin, 1992).

Some theorist, in light of the environment in which many urban African American children are raised, have added tasks to Erikson's dichotomy. Crawley and Freeman (1993) have described an additional series of developmental tasks and socialization issues that confront African American males in childhood and adolescence (Lee, 1996). They have expanded Erikson's theory of psychosocial development and have added tasks influenced by race, ethnicity and culture.

Some of the additional steps that African American males must complete during childhood and adolescence are:

Recognition of self and others based on color.

Incorporation of racial labels into evolving self-concept.

Recognition, identification of social inconsistencies e.g. racism, discrimination, prejudice.

Recognition and development of skills for negotiating multi-racial environments and bicultural experiences.

Forge an appropriate and healthy identity in the face of racism, discrimination, prejudice.

Fine-tune sensing and judging skills to screen out or transform negative racial/color images and messages.

Refine healthy identity which transforms and societal messages of inferiority,

pathology, and deviance based on color, race and culture.

Strengthen skills for negotiating bicultural and multicultural environments.

(Lee, 1996)

It is easy to comprehend why the proper passage through adolescence is so difficult for the African American male. The environments in which many African American adolescents live are characterized by “poverty, crime, unemployment, inequitable educational opportunities, and a perceived sense of social and cultural alienation .” (Lee, 1996). Young boys in such environments often experience difficulty in developing the basic trust, sense of autonomy, initiative, and industry which characterize the stages of psychosocial development.

Ineffective teaching strategies and predetermined negative views of African American males and their learning potential may also impede the successful completion of developmental stages (Lee, 1996). Instead of developing a sense of industry and success that comes with the mastery of the fundamental skills in the elementary grades, many African American males experience a sense of frustration with education.

African American male progress is closest to their counterparts at grade one. As the grade level increases, so does the gap in progress between African American males and other children. This trend begins in first grade with the grouping of students for learning (Jumal, 1991).

It is important to note that African American youngsters participate in preschool programs at rates higher than white children. However, while African American children exhibit verbal memory skills comparable to whites, they score far below on

tests measuring vocabulary skills (ERS Publication, 1997). Some theorists believe that this reading problem is the beginning to their disassociation with school. The academic slide of the African American male can often be noted before grades three or four (Ascher, 1991). A 1997 study of African American males showed that these students disidentified most strongly with reading (Osbourne, 1997).

Often these economically and socially disadvantaged children bring to school frustration, bitterness and violence. Many African American males feel turned off to school because they have no sense of belonging in a system based on Anglo mores and culture. A recent study showed a dramatic decrease between the correlation between grade level and self-esteem (Osbourne, 1997). While African American males may have developed or adapted alternative ways of coping with problems in their neighborhoods, such behaviors are often viewed as disruptive in schools (Taylor & Nixon, 1996). Teachers often respond to the black male adolescent by trying to control the child or by having low expectations (Reglin, 1994).

Such self- fulfilling prophecies can be seen by the over-representation of African American males in special education (28.7%), vocational (29.8%), and alternative programs (23%) (ERS Publication, 1997).

Results of another study on self-esteem differ with the above mentioned study. This study describes most African American men as desiring the same opportunities and appear not to suffer from low self-esteem or low self-evaluation of academic potential. However, the African American male showed a profound lack of interest and investment in education as a means of getting ahead in life (Gallien, 1992).

This disassociation with academics and feeling of alienation in our schools has

been addressed by various programs and studies. It is the intent of the intern to investigate these in the second part of the review of literature.

Programs and Proposed Solutions as Found in the Review of the Literature

As previously stated, the problem confronting the African American male adolescent in today's society is multi layered. Therefore, solutions to this problem must take a multifaceted approach, working on many aspects of the problems at the same time. Many theorists agree that this is a social problem. Identification of the causes of the problem is the first step in creating programs. Remediation at an early age, aimed at the reversal of negative behaviors that children have learned from their environments, is a crucial element of any solution. Instructional programs emphasizing interpersonal skills and solving social problems are essential, as the African American male is often not exposed to appropriate male social models in the urban centers (Taylor & Nixon, 1996).

The vital need to teach social skills to the African American male adolescent was recently incorporated into a program designed to improve reading and math skills. Emphasis was placed on bonding, attention, sense of belonging, recognition of roles, position in the group, development of confidence, motivation and problem solving techniques. Positive results were recorded in both the grades the children received, as well as the assessment of the program by students, parents and teachers (Taylor & Nixon, 1996).

A similar program, called Positive Impact Program, has also shown positive results. Children , grades K-8, were identified for this program by exemplifying low self-esteem, poor academic success, discipline problems, poor attendance, poor

hygiene, and poor social skills. A program based on positive role models, emotional support, increase of self esteem, awareness and appreciation of cultural heritage, community pride, and support and encouragement to deal with negative peer pressure was developed. All but one student involved in the program demonstrated improvement in attitude and performance (Cobbs & McCallum. 1992).

Cortland Lee has developed the concept of empowerment of the African American male. He feels that such an empowerment initiative promotes self concept by emphasizing African American culture and history. As many other theorists, Lee sees the necessity for intervening at an early age. The first stage of Lee's program, entitled the Young Lions, is a "multi session, psycho-educational empowerment experience for African American males in grades 3 through 6"(Lee, 1996). The program stresses the development of the motivation and skills necessary for academic success, the development of positive and responsible social behavior, understanding and appreciation of African American history and culture, and the modeling of positive African American images.

Lee's program continues with "Black Manhood Training". This stage of Lee's program involves a counseling program designed to promote the transition from boyhood to manhood for adolescent African American males. This program centers around the African rite of passage to manhood. As with the Young Lions, this program focuses on an appreciation of the Black man in African and African American history and culture, by developing achievement motivation, fostering positive and responsible behavior, and modeling positive black male images (Lee, 1996) This is a multi session, developmental, group guidance experience.

Counseling strategies focus on proactive measures in dealing with the community at large.

The role of the successful African American male in Lee's program is one of the cornerstones of its success. According to Cortland Lee, African American boys need constant exposure to successful role models. The program makes a concerted effort to involve successful African American men in the "academic, career, and personal-social empowerment of adolescent males." (Lee, 1996)

A final stage of Lee's program is a training program for the African American males who volunteer to become role models. It is Lee's belief that while African American women and persons of other ethnic backgrounds can have a significant effect on the life of African American adolescents, only African American men can truly teach adolescents the road to successful manhood (Lee, 1996).

James Comer, a professor of psychiatry at Yale University, has also stressed the importance of parental/adult involvement. Comer has developed a research-based school centered on the idea that if parents, teachers and staff share control of the school, they will convey a positive attitude to children who will therefore be motivated to learn. A strong emotional bond is often created between the child and school. This atmosphere of commitment and positive attitude within the entire school community has proved most successful. Although the Comer system works well in many urban communities, it also has proved successful in communities where the student population differs from the staff racially, socio-economically or culturally. This commitment and bond with the parents and community allows teachers to recognize that student academic and behavior lapses may reflect cultural gaps

between home and school (Stocklinski & Miler-Colbert, 1991).

All male African American schools have been presented as a possible solution to the problems confronting the urban African American adolescent. These schools offer an atmosphere free from barriers which inhibit the growth of the African American adolescent. However, opponents to these schools call for great caution. Pedro Noguera (1996), a professor at the University of California-Berkeley, claims that “regardless of how benevolent or well-intentioned such efforts may seem, history would suggest that great risks are involved in advocating and promoting separate treatment for African Americans, be they male or female.” Organizations, such as the NAACP and NOW, are also in opposition to all male African American schools (Ascher, 1991).

A review of the major programs designed to help the African American male to achieve the goal of successful manhood includes the following similar characteristics: development of a positive self-concept and racial identity, early identification of goals and aspirations, ability to exercise self-control and channel rage, development of a spiritual foundation, contact with positive role models who administer adult supervision, and the ability and self assuredness to become positive risk takers (Cross & Foley, 1993).

Such programs are often designed to meet the most basic needs of these children—the need for safety, and emotional and psychological stability. Once the most basic of these needs are met, it is imperative that we, as educators, strive to develop a connection to the school affording these children the same opportunities as their majority counterparts throughout the country. Children who enter school

deprived of “intellectual capital”, (the resources and experiences in preschool years which build a strong foundation on which to build an academic career) must be afforded the support and resources to succeed both academically and socially in today’s school (Maeroff, 1998).

At this point in the review of the literature, therefore, it is essential to investigate various instructional aspects in reference to the African American adolescent.

The first issue, briefly mentioned above is that of the development of a mentoring program. It is vital that the African American male adolescent have contact with African American males from diverse professional fields. It is the goal of such a program to develop such relationships that will foster and encourage academic achievement. Local businesses, colleges and universities, churches, and neighborhood organizations all are excellent sources of mentors.

In some areas, the availability of African American males to mentor adolescents is limited. In such situations, it is essential that teachers invite African American males as guest speakers and visitors to the classrooms on a regular basis.

Mentors, although preferably African American males, may be of other ethnic backgrounds. Bradshaw (1995) states that it is the amount of time spent with the child, rather than sex or race of the mentor, that is the determining factor in the success of the relationship.

Another essential component in the success of the African American male in the classroom is the teacher. First, in-servicing of the teacher is essential. Universities need to better prepare teachers to interact with black males. A recent study regarding teacher in-servicing of multi-cultural youth showed that before in-servicing, the

majority of the teachers attributed student failure to poor home background.

However, after teacher in servicing, the majority of the teachers attributed student failure to ineffective teacher methods (Artiles & McClafferty, 1998). Also, teachers need to pay greater attention to the history and culture of the African American student (Gallien, 1992).

A recent study showed that teachers who take responsibility for the quality of education that they provide for African American students and for the student's academic success or failure, more often than not, produce students who achieve (Davis & Jordon, 1995).

Teachers must adopt and implement high standards for the African American male adolescent. Educators must be sensitive to the needs of potential achievers and hold them to the same high standards of accountability, while realizing that some students might take longer than others in achieving the goals (Reglin, 1992, 1994,).

Educators must familiarize themselves with the learning styles most prevalent among African American males. It is imperative that educators are of the belief that all students can learn if taught in ways that utilize their strengths (Jackson-Allen & Christenberry, 1994). In a study designed to determine the preferred learning styles of African American males, a test to measure cognitive laterality determined that African American males favored a right laterality (Wesson & Holman, 1994).

Teachers must incorporate activity oriented learning with real problems. They also must develop activities that encourage the development of higher order thinking skills to deal with these problems in life. A variety of teaching strategies, including the use of technology, must be employed in the classroom. Acceptance of students as they

are and the development of autonomy in students is essential. Finally, elimination of the current system of competition in the classroom is vital. It is known that African American children learn better with cooperative, not competitive styles of instruction (Reglin, 1994).

Regarding the area of curriculum development, it is imperative to find ways to integrate the accomplishments of African American males into the curriculum. Continuous examination of the current curriculum is essential to assure that African American males are included and not stereotyped (Lee, 1992). Also, there must be great focus on the area of cultural miscommunication to assure that misconception and misinterpretation does not occur (Berrington & DeLacy, 1993).

Peer tutoring and cross age tutoring are other means of improving the academic success of the African American male. Local colleges and universities, National Honor Society members, or simply in-class pairing of students affords the adolescent the opportunity to learn at his own pace without the pressure of his peers.

Another aspect of the success of the African American adolescent is the placement of African American male adolescents in leadership roles within the school community. Besides developing the child's self esteem and leadership qualities, this also affords the opportunity of modeling positive behaviors for other African American males.

The employment of African American male teachers and the recruitment of young African American men into the teaching force, is crucial. Early identification of potential teaching candidates, marketing of teaching as a viable profession for the African American male and financial assistance for college education are necessary

elements of the solution to this problem (Gallien, 1992). These men will serve as role models and mentors. They may also help motivate minority students as well as promote programs that enhance cultural awareness (Scott, 1993).

Hiring practices need to be examined. "Institutional racism, wrapped in noble proclamations of tradition, fairness and high standards" (Hanssen, 1998) should not be tolerated.

Specific counseling interventions must be made available to the African American male adolescent. Counselors must be trained and sensitive to the needs of these adolescents. Counseling intervention programs should be developed which teach the African American male specific ways to increase competency in interpreting social cues, to differentiate among situations and individuals, to develop a repertoire of alternative responses, to evaluate and select situation and person appropriate responses and to enact chosen chain of behavior with accuracy (Harris, 1995).

Inclusion of community resources is essential for the success of the African American male adolescent. It is imperative that this be seen as a social problem, needing the support of all socio-economic areas of the community. Parents of suburban upper and middle class majority children must realize that this also is their concern. By educating all children, in the long run everyone will benefit. Alfie Kohn (1998) claims that affluent and middle class parents no longer can sacrifice "other children's education for the sake of bettering their own child's education." Kohn (1998) claims the no longer can we "support segregated and stratified school structures that benefit only students of the middle class."

Involvement of the African American parent in their child's education is crucial to the

solution of this crises. However, having parents buy into a system which previously failed them is no easy task. . Empowerment of parents is essential. Alfie Kohn (1998) calls for advocates to teach the poor and uneducated parent how to become advocates for themselves and their children. Counseling services must be offered to parents. Community centers and churches often provide excellent sites for such services. A strong bond must be formed between home and school. Parents must be assured that their children are valued just as much as the wealthy or majority students.

Such is the situation that confronts today's African American male. The studies and statistics presented in this chapter of the review of the literature are concerned primarily with African American males living in an urban environment. It is the intent of the intern to determine if a correlation exists between the urban and suburban African American male adolescent.

Chapter III

Design of the Study

The purpose of this chapter is to give a general description of the research design, a description of the development and design of the research instruments used in the study, as well as a description of the sample and sampling technique. Also included in this chapter are a description of the data collection approach and a description of the data analysis plan.

Research Design

This research was a combination of quantitative and qualitative investigation. The quantitative research was a comparison of five items dealing with the African American male adolescent taken from the literature at large to a target population of 9-12 grade African American male adolescents in a suburban high school during the 1997-98 school year.

The qualitative component of the research design involved a much smaller number of the same target population and allowed for a more in-depth study of the problems confronting the African American male adolescent in a specific suburban high school. It was important to realize that the external validity of this study was greatly diminished by its limited population.

Development and Design of Instruments

The research design for the quantitative portion of this study was a comparison of statistics of the 9-12 grade African American male population of a suburban high school during the 1997-98 school year to the findings in the literature at large.

Statistics were collected in five areas: discipline, grade point average, classification of students, demographics, and referrals to the Pupil Assistance Committee. Statistics dealing with the first four categories were collected from the Colombia Data Base system used by the school district. Permission was obtained from the high school administration to use the system to obtain the necessary statistics.

The statistics regarding the referrals to the Pupil Assistance Committee were obtained from the Student Assistance Coordinator of the high school. All statistics were shared with the high school and district administration.

The design of the qualitative section of the research was an interview. Questions were developed to secure responses to five specific areas found in the research at large. The areas addressed in the interview were the importance of the peer group, unrealistic goals and expectations with regard to the future, learning styles and perception of classes, social acceptance and extra-curricular activities.

Sampling and Sampling Technique

A sampling of the interview questions was distributed to the Student Assistance Coordinator, a guidance counselor and a classroom teacher. An informal interview was conducted with a current ninth grade African American male student not involved in the study. Necessary changes were made. The purpose of the pilot run was to check for

ambiguity and confusion among the interview items. Feedback was useful in finalizing the final interview instrument.

Data Collection Approach

Data collection of the quantitative portion of this inquiry from the Columbia Data Base was based, whenever possible, on the ninth through twelfth grade population of African American male adolescents enrolled in the high school during the 1997-98 school year. If instances occurred in which data collection must be based on a specific segment of the African American male population, special notation was made.

It was decided through consultation with the high school administration, that an interviewer other than the intern would be employed. This was to insure the level of comfort of the African American male student in responding to the questions.

Data collection was tabulated and synthesized. Cross case analysis were conducted on the information gathered from the student interviews.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis of the quantitative data obtained from the Columbia Data Base and from the Student Assistance Coordinator were conducted. Comparisons were made with the literature at large found in Chapter II.

Qualitative information concluded from the student responses to the interviews were analyzed for frequency in which the responses occur. Analysis of this segment were presented using frequencies and means. Dissimilar answers were reported separately. These findings also were compared to the literature at large.

It is the hope of the intern that by researching the literature at large, conducting the quantitative research, and interviewing the individual child, a determination will be made

as to whether a problem does exist in this suburban district and what steps can be taken to best address the problem.

In Chapter IV of this research, the results of the quantitative and qualitative research will be presented. Chapter V will address possible solutions to this problem as well as implications for future research.

Chapter IV

Presentation of the Research Findings

The purpose of this chapter was to analyze the data and to present findings of the research relative to the research questions stated in Chapter I.

As stated in Chapter II, the research was a combination of qualitative and quantitative investigation. The quantitative research was a comparison of five items dealing with the African American male adolescent taken from the literature at large to a target population of ninth to twelfth grade African American male adolescents in a suburban high school during the 97-98 school year. This research was conducted during the summer of 1998.

The qualitative component of this research involved a small target population of ten African American male adolescents. The students were members of the sophomore, junior, and senior classes during the 1997-98 school year. An interview was established as the means of conducting the research.

The findings were discussed in four parts. The first part analyzed the results of the quantitative research. The second part compared the analysis of the findings to the literature at large. The third section conducted a cross case analysis of the findings of the interviews. The fourth part compared the results of the interviews with the review of the literature. A summary of the findings concluded the chapter.

The total enrollment of the high school for the 1997-98 school year was 863. Forty three African American males appeared on the roster in September, 1997. This represented 4.98% of the total school population. By June, 1998, there were 35 African American males on the school roster, accounting for a 4% population.

Analysis of Quantitative Research

Statistics dealing with the African American male population of the high school during the 1997-98 school year were collected in five areas: discipline, grade point average, classification of students, demographics and referrals to the Pupil Assistance Committee. Statistics dealing with the first four categories were obtained from the Columbia Database system used by the school district. Permission was obtained from the high school administration to use the database to obtain the necessary statistics for this investigation.

Discipline Referrals

Discipline referrals of the African American male adolescent were found to be disproportionately higher than referrals of other students. Discipline referrals involving African American male adolescents totaled 340 incidents. This resulted in an average of 7.9 referrals per student. One student, who was classified, was seen forty three times. This student was then removed from the calculations, for fear of presenting a skewed view of the discipline referrals of the African American male adolescent. The calculation was then redone, and an average of 6.9 referrals per student was derived.

Of the forty three African American males enrolled in September, 1997, 34 were referred at least once to the vice-principal for discipline reasons. One student was seen 28 times. Four students were seen 21-25 times; three students were seen 16-20 times; three students were referred 11-15 times; seven students were seen six to ten times, and fifteen students were seen one to five times.

Grade Point Average

Of the 34 African American males who completed the 97-98 school year, the following GPAs were recorded. Of the seven freshmen enrolled, a GPA of 1.72 was calculated. Of the seven sophomores, a GPS of 2.08 was recorded. The nine juniors had an average GPA of 1.98. The average GPA of the 11 seniors was determined to be 2.08.

While the freshmen African American males showed a GPA of 1.72, the average GPA of all ninth grade males was reported as 2.97. The sophomore African American male showed a GPA of 2.08. This is compared to the overall GPA of the sophomore male adolescent of 2.9. The average calculated for the junior African American male student was 1.989. The average of all junior males was 2.847. Senior African American males had an average of 2.088, as compared with the average of all senior males of 3.096.

It was necessary to note that the discrepancy between the GPA of the African American male population of the high school and the rest of the student male population was even larger than appeared, because the average of the male population included the African American male's GPA.

The average GPA of all African American male high school students during the 1997-98 school year was 1.98. Also, it is important to note that 29% of the African American males enrolled as of June, 1998, appeared of the failure list in June, 1998. This is a list of students who have failed at least one course.

Classification of Students

Of the 43 African American male adolescents who appeared on the roster in September 1997, 13 were classified. This accounts for approximately thirty percent of the

African American males enrolled in the high school. It was also interesting to note that no African American male student appeared in the 504 program, a parent initiated program.

Demographics

A demographic study was completed on the 23 African American male students who were enrolled as tenth, eleventh, and twelfth graders in September, 1998. Of the 23 African American male adolescents in this group, eleven lived in a single parent household headed by a mother, and one lived in a single parent household headed by a father. Eight of the students lived with two parents of the same surname as the child. Two adolescents lived with two parents of different surnames than the child. One adolescent live a female guardian, in a single parent household.

Of the 23 African American male adolescents enrolled in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades during the 1998-99 school year, 56% lived in a single parent household headed by a woman.

Referrals to the Pupil Assistance Committee

The last area of quantitative research conducted by the intern was that of referrals to the PAC committee (Pupil Assistance Committee). This committee is a group consisting of guidance counselors, Student Assistance Coordinator, members of the Child Study Team, the school nurse, teachers and administrators who meet weekly to address the needs of the students. Student referrals can be made by any staff member. This is a multi-faceted approach to dealing with students with serious problems. Normally, the issues are addressed first by the guidance counselor.

The referrals to the PAC Committee for the 1997-98 school year numbered 89. The number of these referrals dealing with African American males was 12. This accounted for 13.48% of the total number of referrals.

Comparison of the Findings with the Literature

Chapter II cited many problems facing today's African American male adolescent. In the area of discipline, the quantitative research conducted by the intern has shown that African American male adolescents have three times greater discipline referrals than the rest of the school population. These findings are consistent with the literature at large. Reglin (1994) cites African American males as more likely to have discipline problems, absences, tardiness to school and disruptive classroom behavior.

Dulaney (1995) has stated that African American males have frequently been identified as behavioral problems, and have found that African American males are three to four times more likely to be suspended or expelled than their majority counterparts.

Taylor & Nixon (1996), concluded that while African American male adolescents have developed alternative ways of coping with problems in neighborhoods, such behaviors are often viewed as disruptive in schools.

In the area of grade point average, the results of the quantitative research of the intern are consistent with the trends found in the literature at large. Davis & Jordan (1994) found that while white females are the most successful group academically, African American males are the least. Also found, was that in a large urban district, three quarters of the African American male adolescents performed below average, and only 2% of this urban African American male population received above a 3.0 GPA.

The literature at large also correlates positively to the interns research regarding classification of the African American male adolescent. African American males are more frequently identified as learning disabled, or as behaviorally and emotionally handicapped and have been tracked in slower classes at disproportionate rates than their majority counterparts (Jackson-Allen & Christenberry, 1994, Dulaney & Bethune, 1995).

Reglin (1994) faults the teachers for much of this problem, citing that low expectations of African American males cause a self-fulfilling prophecy. According to the ERS Publication (1997), 28.7% of African American males participate in Special Education.

The demographic portion of the study also correlated positively to the literature. The U.S. Bureau of Census cited that 57.5% of African American children resided in single parent homes (Reglin, 1994). From 1960 to 1985, the proportion of African American families headed by women increased from 22% to 44%. In the mid 1980s, 86% spent some time in a single household, usually a mother only family (Ascher, 1991).

Cross & Foley stated that an exclusively female society is often seen as detrimental to adolescent boys (Cross & Foley, 1993). Lack of male role models only escalates the problem.

In summation, the quantitative research of the intern was consistent with the research found in the literature at large. In the areas of grade point average, discipline, classification, demographics and referral to the Pupil Assistance Committee, the African American male adolescent in the suburban school district is experiencing similar problems to the African American male adolescent in the urban areas.

Analysis of Student Interviews

Ten African American male students were questioned by the same interviewer. Questions were developed to secure responses to five specific areas found in the literature at large. The areas addressed in the interview were the importance of the peer group, unrealistic goals and expectations with regard to the future, disassociation with academics, social acceptance by teachers and peers, and extracurricular activities.

Six seniors, two juniors and two sophomores were interviewed. Regarding the importance of the peer group, three of the six seniors ranked family the highest in priority. Both eleventh grade boys ranked family as the highest priority, while both tenth graders ranked friends as the most important.

The interviewees were equally split in ranking family and friends as the most important influence in their lives. This is at odds with the literature at large.

Harris (1995) found that middle class African American males latch on to the peer groups in the middle school grades. The peer group then often replaces the family in importance, and often becomes the extended family, thus creating a unique subculture.

However, in the case of half of the African American adolescents interviewed, the family still was regarded as the most influential force in their lives.

The next question dealt with the concept of socializing with teens of other races. Only two twelfth graders and one 10 grader said that they did not socialize with teens of other races. However, eight of the ten young men interviewed, stated that this socialization generally took place during the school day. After school, eight of the ten said that they socialized primarily with other African American youths.

This concurs with the literature. Again, the issue of the peer group is addressed. Reglin (1994) defines the subculture of the African American male as cool posing and defines such as an appearance of being in complete control at all times. Other aspects of this subculture are posture, style of clothing, speech patterns, walking and standing styles, forms of greetings and overall demeanor.

The second group of questions dealt with unrealistic expectations of young African American males toward the future. Seven of the ten interviewees said that their current grades have no effect on their success in the future. Only one eleventh grader and two twelfth graders realized that their academic preparation today would have a direct correlation with their future success.

The question of post high school plans was most insightful. Four of the six seniors said that they planned to attend college. Two seniors planned to enter the Armed Services-the army and marines. Both eleventh graders said that they were planning to attend college. One tenth grader said that he was not sure, the other planned to go to college. In six of the ten interviews, the African American adolescents seemed to equate college with playing a sport. Only two children had a solid idea of what their major would be in college. Academics were a secondary issue. Only four of the adolescents interviewed carried a 2.0 grade point average or above for the 1997-98 school year.

These findings correlate positively with the literature at large. The idolization of sports figures can cause unrealistic expectations that can hurt the young African American male's future chance for success. The literature emphasizes a need to prepare the African American male adolescent for the future through academics, not sports (Reglin, 1992).

During the interview process, nine of the ten students interviewed stated that they felt they were had the ability to do better academically than they had to date.

This finding strongly correlates to the literature. In a 1992 study, Gallien found that most African American males desire the same opportunities and appear not to suffer from low self-esteem or low self evaluation of academic potential. However, the study concluded that the African American male showed a profound lack of interest and investment in education as a means of getting ahead (Gallien, 1992).

This disassociation of the African American male adolescent with academics as recorded in the interviews has been greatly reinforced by the literature at large. When asked if they found their courses interesting, seven of the ten students answered that they did not. Two students said some were interesting and one student, an eleventh grader, stated that he found his courses to be of interest. Gallien (1992), Reglin (1994) and Osbourne (1997) have reported similar findings regarding this disassociation with academics.

The next area of questioning dealt with the issue of perceived treatment of the African American male adolescent by teachers and students. Only one African American eleventh grader said that all teachers were fair. Two adolescents, one twelfth grader and one tenth grader said that they were not treated with respect by the faculty. The remaining seven realized that most teachers did treat them fairly and with respect, but felt that some individuals did not.

All students interviewed found that the majority of the student body treated them fairly and with respect. However, all were quick to note that there were some students whom they felt were biased.

These questions are indeed multi-layered. The literature states that the teacher is an essential component to the success of the African American male adolescent. Teacher inservicing and better preparation of student teachers to interact with the African American male are crucial components of the solution.

Jackson-Allen & Christenberry (1994) state that educators must familiarize themselves with the learning styles most prevalent among African American males. In a recent study designed to detect the preferred learning styles of African American males, a test to measure cognitive laterality determined that African American males favored a right laterality (Wesson & Holman, 1994). Incorporation of activity oriented learning with real problems is essential to the development of higher order thinking skills.

The final question dealt with after school involvement in extracurricular activities and sports. Of the ten males interviewed, only one participated in the arts program. This was as a member of the band. Two belonged to a school club, although one admitted that he was not an active member. Five of the students participated in sports. Two adolescents cited grades as a reason for non-participation in sports.

The literature review revealed that the placement of African American males in leadership roles within the school community was crucial. This allowed for the development of the child's self-esteem and leadership qualities. It also afforded other African American male adolescents the opportunity to model positive leadership behaviors.

In general the responses to the interview questions showed a strong positive correlation to the literature at large. The only area which did not show a strong positive correlation was the issue of the importance of the peer group. While the peer group was

perceived by all students to be of importance, the family superceded the peer group in importance in five of the ten interviews.

In summation, the responses of the students to the interview correlated positively on four of the five items-unrealistic expectations regarding the future, disassociation with academics, social acceptance by teachers and peers, and involvement in extra-curricular activities and sports. The survey did not correlate with the literature with regard to the peer group superceding the family in importance.

Problems which have plagued the African American male adolescent in the inter city schools have become prevalent in suburbia. The implications of this study and suggested solutions are dealt with in Chapter V of this study.

Chapter V

Conclusions, Implications and Further Study

There certainly is no panacea to the complex problems facing today's African American male adolescents. The problems facing these children have crept across demographic, social, and economic borders. It has been suggested in this study that not only the lower-class, inner-city African American male experiences the difficulty of attaining academic and social success, but the middle class suburban African American male adolescent as well.

The problems confronting the African American male adolescent are not solely academic problems, and thus, cannot be confronted by the school alone. All areas of society-family, church, community and school must work together to establish the support necessary to assure the success of all African American male children. From an early age, programs such as Cortland Lee's "Young Lions" (Lee, 1991) should assure that a strong sense of identity is established in the child. This sense of identity should continue to be nurtured through the elementary, middle school, and high school years. Along with a sense of identity, a sense of responsibility to the younger African American male children should be encouraged.

The initiation of this kind of program, according to Lee (1996), can only be established by the African American community. This involves the enthusiasm, support and volunteerism of the whole community. Lee's upholds the position that it is through the continuous relationships with successful African American males, that the African

American male child can develop a positive self-identity. This requires an enormous commitment on the part of the local African American community. In a society where adults need to work more than a forty hour week, asking them to leave their families and volunteer is a tremendous expectation. Nonetheless, Lee prescribes to the belief that this is the core to the solution to this complex problem.

This certainly does not excuse the rest of the community from its responsibility to assure the success of the African American male child. Community resources need to be directed to programs aimed at achieving the success of the African American male child. Social and law enforcement agencies need to be seen as positive influences in the young child's life. PAL, and other community youth organizations, should devise programs that contribute to the formation of a positive self image of the African American male child.

There exists a great need for advocates for the African American male adolescents in today's education system. Alfie Kohn (1998) states that there is a great need for the parents of minority and low and lower-middle class students to unite and actively advocate for the needs of their children. Often it is not that these needs are consciously ignored. It is simply that the parents who have the time and the inclination to join HSA and site-based management committees are the more affluent parents. Kohn claims that there prevails in these school committees an attitude of "only for my child". The needs of the other children often go by the wayside.

Good schools need to make minority parents feel welcomed and appreciated. Representation and participation of minority parents is crucial to the success of all students. Parent centers should exist in all schools, encouraging volunteerism, while at the same time, offering seminars on current parental concerns and parenting issues.

While the African American community and the community at large play crucial roles in the creation of a support system for the African American male adolescent, it cannot be denied, that the school is often the focus of an adolescent's life. The creation of a warm, accepting and appreciative climate of multi-culturalism is crucial. On-going in-service of staff and students is imperative. Establishment of a respect, as well as an interest of various cultures, must be initiated throughout the curriculum.

Academically, schools need to better prepare the African American male adolescent for the future. Studies of how students learn and addressing instructional techniques to these finding is a step in the right direction.

Teachers need to be in-serviced on teaching to the multiple intelligences of the child. Academic support must be afforded the child when necessary. Peer and cross-age tutoring, as well as additional instruction by teachers and community volunteers are necessary options.

Innovative, alternative schedules need to be initiated, rather than the standard stereotypical eight period instructional day. Active learning and more "hands-on" courses need to better meet the diverse learning styles of the African American male population.

Social support systems within the school, need to be in place. Pupil assistance committees, substance abuse counselors, attendance officers, guidance counselors and disciplinarians, all need to meet as a committee to discuss the social and academic problems of the children. A positive, not punitive approach, should be employed, whenever possible. Parents and community advocates should be active participants in this process.

Implications for the Intern and the Organization

While investigating the status of the African American male adolescent, the intern developed leadership qualities, improved communicative skills, facilitated group processes in shared decision making, planned and conducted effective meetings, as well as created, collaboratively, opportunities for staff and student developmental experiences.

It is the belief of the intern that the organization has also benefited by the action research. Support systems such as the Evening Study Program were designed. A survey was prepared to assess student interest in more "hands-on" courses. Plans to involve study hall students in seminars with community members were implemented. In-service of students dealing with racial tolerance and appreciation was conducted. Students on the attendance probation list were monitored monthly to assure closer communication between the home, school and student.

Implications for Further Study

As a follow-up to this study, the following suggestions for future research are listed:

1. A longitudinal study of the African American male students, K-post secondary, should be conducted. This will afford the opportunity to see exactly at what grade level African American male students begin to deviate academically from their majority counterparts.
2. Conduct a study to investigate the number of African American male adolescents who have been students of the district K-12. Investigate the mobility rate of the African American male child during his K-12 educational career.

3. Complete a longitudinal study comparing African American male and female students, grades K-12. Attempt to determine the reasons why the sisters in the households achieve at higher levels.
4. Investigate the effects of the incorporation of the core standard curriculum courses and increased standards into the current curricula and the effect that the mandated academic changes have on the African American male adolescent.(Schilling, 1996).

In summation, the problems that have long confronted the inner-city African American male adolescent are prevalent today in middle class suburbia. If we, as a society, do nothing to remedy the situation, if we do not actively involve all stakeholders in the community to solve this problem, then the 21st century will indeed be a time of darkness and despair.

If, however, we as a community of concerned citizenry, actively strive to establish support programs to assist in solving this multi-layered problem, perhaps the new millennium truly will be a time of enlightenment, another Renaissance, for these children.

References

- African American Education Data. (1997, September). ERS Bulletin.
- Ascher, C. (1991). School programs for African-American Male Students. Equity and Choice, 8, 25-29.
- Artiles, J. & McClafferty, K. (1998). Learning to teach culturally diverse learners: sharing change in preservice teachers' thinking about effective teaching. The Elementary School Journal, 98, 190-217.
- Berrington, S. & DeLacy, A. (1993). Making a difference. Middle School Journal, 78, 34-36.
- Bradshaw, R. (1995) All-black schools provide role models: is this the solution? The Clearing House, 72, 146-150.
- Cobbs, C. & McCallum, O. (1992). Positive impact program for at-risk black males. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association. Knoxville, TN.
- Comer, J. (1987). New Haven school community connection. Educational Leadership, 44, 13-16.
- Comer, J. (1993) School Power. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Comer, J. (1991). Second annual conference on youth at-risk. Savannah, GA.
- Cross, M. & Foley, R. (1993). Reclaiming an endangered species: the male responsibility program. IERP, 93, 33-36.
- Dalton, H. (1996). Minority male afterschool program. Mt. Kisco, NY: Plan for Social Excellence, Inc.

Davis, J. & Jordan, W. (1994). The effects of school context, structure, and experiences on African American males in middle and high school. The Journal of Negro Education, 63, 570-587.

Gallien,-Louis-B., Jr. (1992). Lost voices: reflections on education from an imperiled generation. (On-line). Available: Eric database.

Germinario, V., Cervalli, J. & Ogden, E.(1992). All Children Successful. Lancaster: PA: Technomic Publications.

Greif, G. (1998). African American fathers of high-achieving sons: Using outstanding members of an at-risk population to guide intervention. Families in Society, 79, 45-52.

Hanssen, E. (1998). A white teacher reflects on institutional racism. Phi Delta Kappan, 79. 694-698.

Harris, S. (1995). Psychosocial development and black male masculinity: implications for counseling economically disadvantaged African American male adolescents. Journal of Counseling & Development, 73, 279-287.

Holmes, W. (1986). Here's how our school board is boosting black student achievement. The American School Board Journal, 83, 38-39.

Hood, -White, Marian. (1996). Pride, heritage, and self-worth: keys to African-American male achievement. Schools in the Middle, 75, 29-30.

Jackson-Allen, J. & Christenberry, N. (1994). Learning style preferences of low and high achieving young African American males. Paper presented at the Annual meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association. Nashville, TN

Jumal, O. (1991). The vanishing African American male student in middle and high school college preparatory classrooms. Masters of Arts Project, California State

University, San Bernardino.

Kohn, A. (1998). Raising the mark! Only for my kid. Phi Delta Kappan, 79, 568-577.

Kunjufu, J. (1986). Motivating and preparing black youth for success. Chicago, Illinois: African American Images.

Lee, C. (1991). Empowering young black males. Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Lee, C. (1996). Saving the native son: Empowerment strategies for young black males. Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Lewis, A. (1997). Yo! Pay attention to me! Phi Delta Kappan, 79, 179-180.

Maeroff, G. (1998). Altered destinies-making life better for schoolchildren in need. Phi Delta Kappan, 79, 425-432.

McCown, R., Driscoll, M., Roop P., (1992). Personal and interpersonal growth. Educational psychology: A learning centered approach to classroom practice. (pp. 69-73). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Noguera, P. (1996). Responding to the crisis confronting California's black male youth: providing support without furthering marginalization. The Journal of Negro Education, 65, 219-236.

Ogden, E. & Germinario, V. (1995). The Nation's Best Schools-Volume 2. Lancaster, PA: Technomic Publications.

Osbourne, J. (1997). Race and academic disidentification. Journal of Educational Psychology, 89, 1-8.

Reglin, G. (1994). Promoting success for the African-American male student: a blueprint for action. National Dropout Prevention Center. Clemson, SC:GPO.

Reglin, G. (1992, November). Self-perception and achievement of black urban 10th graders. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the North Carolina Association for Research in Education Chapel Hill, NC

Scott, M. (1993). Faculty diversity-a crucial link to the successful recruitment and retention of minority students. JOPERD, 87, 74-80.

Schilling, L. (1996). A study of the factors leading to dropout in selected suburban districts in New Jersey. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Seton Hall University, New Jersey.

Stocklinski, J. & Miller-Colbert, J. (1991). The Comer process: moving for "I" to "we". Principal, 70, 18-19.

Taylor, G. & Nixon, L. (1996). Teachers' and parents' perceptions toward the affects of social skills training on reading and mathematical achievement of young African American males. (On-line). Available: Eric database.

Wesson, L. & Holman, D. Differences in cognitive style and student reading comprehension. (1994). Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Appendix A
Research Instruments

INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT
INTERVIEW OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE ADOLESCENT

1. Importance of peer groups.

Do you often socialize with teens of other races?

Of family, church and friends, which is the most important to you?

2. Academics and unrealistic expectations of the future.

Do the grades that you receive now directly affect your success in the future?

What do you want to do after high school?

Do your classes prepare you for what you want to do after graduation?

3. Learning styles

Are courses at the high school interesting to you?

Do most teachers use a variety of teaching methods to make courses more interesting and the material easier to learn?

4. Treatment by staff and students

Do teachers treat you fairly and with respect?

Do students treat you with respect?

5. Sports and extra curricular activities

Do you participate in an extra curricular activity? Why?

Do you participate in a sport? Why?

Appendix B
Research Findings

Table 1.

Discipline Referrals

Discipline referrals of the 43 African American male adolescents enrolled during the 1997-98 school year.

<i>Number of Students</i>	<i>Number of Discipline Referrals</i>
1	28
4	21 -- 25
3	16 -- 20
3	11 -- 15
7	6 -- 10
15	1 -- 5

Table 2.

Grade Point Averages

Grade Point averages of the 34 African American male adolescents who completed the 1997-98 school year.

	GPA of African American Males	GPA of All Males
Freshmen	1.72	2.97
Sophomores	2.08	2.9
Juniors	1.98	2.84
Seniors	2.08	3

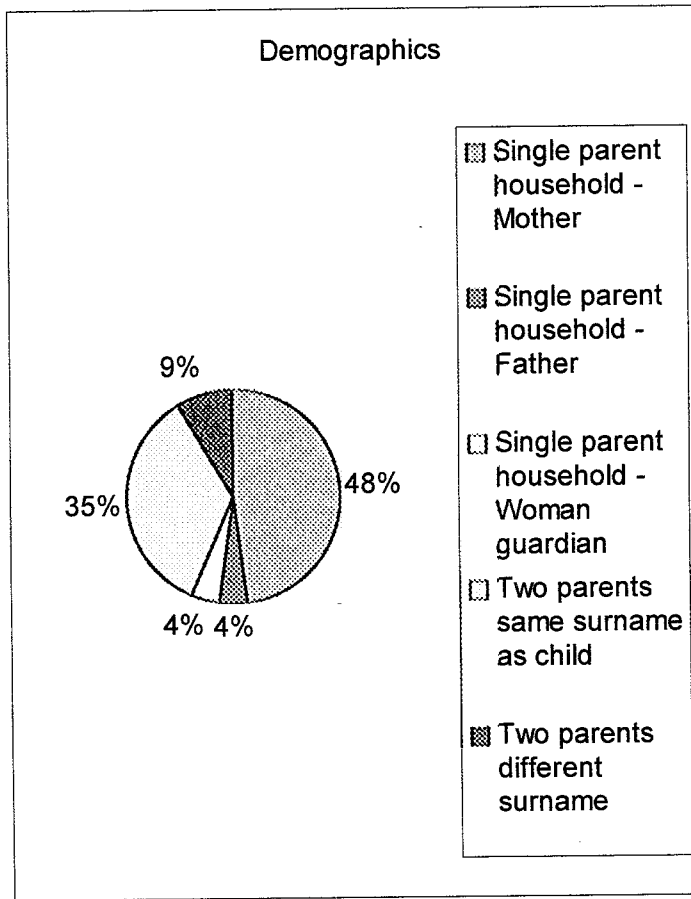


Table 3.

Demographics

Demographics of the 23 tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade African American male adolescents enrolled as of September, 1998.

Biographical Data

Name	Jane Anne MacWright
High School	Bishop Conwell High School Levittown, PA
Undergraduate	Bachelor of Science Secondary Education Shippensburg University Shippensburg, PA
Graduate	Master of Arts School Administration Rowan University Glassboro, NJ
Present Occupation	Spanish Teacher Moorestown High School Moorestown, NJ