EXPERIENCES OF BLACK MALE STUDENTS IN PREDOMINANTLY WHITE HIGH PERFORMING SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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EDUCATING BLACK MALES: AN EXAMINATION OF THE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF BLACK MALE STUDENTS IN PREDOMINANTLY WHITE HIGH PERFORMING SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Masters of Science in Special Education, Touro College, 2006
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A Dissertation
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education in Instructional Leadership in the Department of Education and Educational Psychology at Western Connecticut State University

2016
EDUCATING BLACK MALES: AN EXAMINATION OF THE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF BLACK MALE STUDENTS IN PREDOMINANTLY WHITE HIGH PERFORMING SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

Damien Justin Holst, Ed.D.
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Abstract

This qualitative study examined the perceptions of students, parents, and educators regarding the social, academic, and personal experiences of Black male students in two predominantly White high performing secondary schools. Anchored in the work of Albert Bandura and Gloria Ladson-Billings, this study explored the relationships between critical race theory and self-efficacy as both constructs relate to Black male students. A paucity of research exists regarding the experiences of Black male students within predominantly White secondary high schools. The purpose of the study was to understand the experiences of these Black students as they were situated within an environment where academic excellence was an expectation.

Convenience sampling was utilized to select five students to participate within the qualitative multiple case study. Each student was able to identify a parent and an educator to be interviewed on their behalf. Data collected from the individual interviews and demographic surveys were analyzed and the following four themes emerged: (a) who I am, (b) my world, (c) who I want to be and, (d) my inspiration. Implications for students, teachers, and parents were developed and included the following ideas: (a) developing cultural awareness, (b) developing effective student-teacher relationships, and (c) establishing close relationships characterized by a strong system of support.
EDUCATING BLACK MALES: AN EXAMINATION OF THE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF BLACK MALE STUDENTS IN PREDOMINANTLY WHITE HIGH PERFORMING SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

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2016
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A famous African proverb states that it takes a village to raise a child. The merits of this quote are self-evident and continuously proven throughout the course of our lives. Who I am today, and what I have achieved, is directly correlated to the love and support I have received from my family throughout my life.

I would like to begin by thanking my wife Amanda. She is the one person who has been by my side every step of the way throughout this five-year journey. The love, constant support, and encouragement from my wife are what have enabled me to complete this journey. This has been the most challenging task I have ever completed, and without her by my side, this would not have been possible.

I would also like to thank my mother and father. Their guidance and support throughout my life have enabled me to believe in myself and develop the skill set required to complete this task. To my stepmom, Georgette, thank you for giving me the courage, and providing me with the inspiration, to go into special education. To my younger brother Kyle, I have watched you go from performing on the smallest of stages as a young boy, to playing the role of Simba in the Lion King on Broadway as an accomplished man. I want to thank you for showing me that dreams are truly capable of being achieved. To Jordan and Mark, watching you guys grow up to be such wonderful, loving, and successful people is amazing. The two of you achieved success on your own terms, and that is something I truly admire. To Jamie, Camille, and Jim, thank you for all of your support and embracing me as if I were an actual brother and a son. I would like to thank my grandparents, Aunt Rosie, Stevaughn, Aunt Debbie, and Uncle Mike for always believing in me.
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DEDICATION

As I walked into my mother’s office in 2006 and watched her trying to complete Chapter 5 of her dissertation I uttered words . . . “I am sorry mom, but watching you go through this process, attaining my doctoral degree and completing my dissertation, are two things I will never accomplish”. My mother simply looked up at me with a smile and said, “You have the intelligence and the capability, and who knows someday you may change your mind”.

A mother’s intuition is never wrong. I would like to dedicate this accomplishment to my mother, Dr. Sandra Miller-Holst, who has always had vision to see beyond the present moment and prepare Kyle and I for the future, even when we may have been unsure of what it held. Her love, dedication, and personal sacrifice have enabled my brother and I to achieve our goals. The standard of excellence that has been set for us by our mother has now become our own standard that continually drives us forward. Thank you mom. I love you.
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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

Successfully educating Black males is and continues to be one of the greatest challenges posed to the American Educational System (Davis, 2003). Throughout the nation’s history, there has been a system of inequality that has continually marginalized the experiences and achievement outcomes of Black males within the educational system (Howard, 2013). The actual implementation of legislated integration of American schools was established in 1954 as a result of the Supreme Court decision in the Brown vs. Board of Education case during the civil rights movement (Bell, 1980).

Systematically embedded within our nation’s educational fabric, the solution to the inequality provides non-minority schools with greater funding and enhanced resources allowing students of all races to attend (K-12) schools together. Throughout the early 1970’s, school desegregation resulted in an increased but insufficient number of Black students entering colleges and public universities (Noguera, 2003).

Unfortunately, a trend of underachievement among Black males persists today in spite of advancements and developments designed to combat the factors that influence poor academic performance among Black males (Davis, 2003). Current evaluations of educational achievement have resulted in the identification of an achievement gap between Black males and their peers. The achievement gap is characteristic of the fact that Black students are receiving lower scores on standardized tests. Focusing on the lower test scores and grades achieved by some Black students not only leads educators to ignore the achievements and strengths of Black students, but it marginalizes the social,
economic, and cultural factors that contribute to the development of these lower test scores (Davis, 2003).

Standardized state and national test scores highlight the disparity between Black and White students regarding the achievement gap. The low test scores of Black students as compared to their White peers have been identified as the widest achievement gap between various racial and ethnic groups of public school children. Barton and Coley (2009) illustrated the dynamic between the disparity in academic achievement and the reflection of that disparity in life and school experiences between Black and White students. The disparity is evidenced in high school graduation rates. Davis (2003) posited that there has been a paucity of research regarding the ways in which Black males construct their own social and ethnic identities as they try to successfully navigate through their particular educational environments. Davis (2003) also suggested that the experiences of Black males regarding their perceptions and attitudes toward their educational experiences, as they enter their secondary educational careers, have been neglected within the current research. The experiences of Black male students are highlighted in national high school graduation rates. Holzman (2012) reported that nationally, 60% of Black students graduated high school as compared to 78% of White students.

Researchers have documented the lower performance of many Black students when they are educated in environments with lower achieving students and have reported that this context often creates a culture of failure and despair (Ford, 2010; Ogbu 1987; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Noguera, 2003). In contrast, when Black students were educated
in a culture with predominantly White high achieving students, the outcomes are currently undocumented.

This qualitative study examined the perceptions and experiences of Black males in a predominantly White, high performing secondary school. The researcher conducted qualitative interviews and provided all participants with demographic surveys in an effort to collect data to inform the study. This researcher utilized a multi-case study design, based on data collected from five representative cases of Black males, their teachers, and one parent member for each student participant (Merriam, 2009).

**Rationale**

Black males have been identified and most closely associated with the underperforming portion of the achievement gap (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Currently, there are approximately 8.4 million Black students, representing 16% of the United States’ student population, being educated across the country (NCES, 2013). The disparity between the successes of White students as compared to Black students continues to be an area of concern among educators of all students. The disparity between Black males and White males concerning academic achievement is evidenced by the fact that even in cases where White and Black male students possessed the same expectations of educational success regarding achievement beyond their post secondary schooling, Black males did not achieve results similar to those of White students based upon their previous expectations once they graduated from high school (Wimberly, 2002). In a longitudinal study utilized by Wimberly (2012) containing 123,451 high school students, the data illustrated that White students entering high school exhibited higher achievement scores on standardized academic tests, while in the later stages of
high school, the gap between academic gains of White and Black students continually grew throughout their secondary school experience.

The experiences of Black males within culturally diverse populations and homogenously grouped populations have been well documented (Ford, 2010; Ford & Harris, 1996; Gutman, Sameroff, & Eccles, 2002; Holzman, 2012; Ogbu, 1987). There exists, however, a paucity of research regarding the experiences of Black males who are culturally isolated (less than 3% of the general student population) within a predominantly White, high performing secondary school.

Dickar (2008) illustrated, via a qualitative study, that race and understanding of culture impacts the development of students from the non-dominant culture, especially when their teachers are members of the dominant culture. Dickar concluded that Black male students may not be fully understood by their teachers with respect to cultural differences and expectations regarding education. In addition, the impact educators have on Black male students should not be underestimated. In a quantitative study of Black students \((n = 148)\) conducted by Ford and Harris (1996), 97% of the students reported that they performed well when they felt that their teachers understood them. Conversely, when Black students did not feel supported they exhibited a greater propensity toward underachieving.

As teachers, we are charged with the responsibility of educating all students in our classrooms. Understanding and valuing the unique traits and experiences that Black male students embody with regard to their race and racial identity enables the facilitation of student success through the development of effective student teacher relationships (Wright, 2009).
Within the K-12 public school system in the United States, 83% of teachers are White and female (NCES, 2013). Our educational system has been largely based upon the valuation system of the dominant culture, which contrasts with Black male identity (Davis, 2009). Black students possess cultural values that are different from the instructors who are teaching them, which can lead to a devaluation of the Black students based upon this cultural disparity (Ford, 2010; Ford & Harris, 1996). An example of such devaluation was having lower expectations regarding the capacity of Black students to achieve. Educators may possess a preconceived, deficit-oriented notion of Black students as entering their classroom with predetermined shortcomings that cannot be addressed by education and educators (Ford, Harris, Tyson, & Trotman, 2002).

One case in point was related to language. The existence of a language disparity between an educator and a young Black male student could result in miscommunication. Without marginalizing the ability of White educators, Wright (2009) posited that the valuation or devaluation of language differences that Black males exhibit within the classroom could potentially determine the successful integration of language adaptation, specifically by allowing students to utilize what language systems they already possess in an attempt to adapt their language systems to achieve positive academic outcomes. Perceived differences in language and other perceptions by and about Black males was the focus of this study.

**Statement of the Problem**

Schools within the United States of America are continuing to remain segregated based upon a variety of factors (Logan, Stowell, & Oakley, 2002; Oakes, 2008; Orfield, 2009; Thompson-Dorsey, 2013). The statistics presented within a study by Logan et al.
(2002) suggest that not only are schools racially segregated, but there are a disproportionately large number of minority students in economically impoverished schools, while White students attend schools where the population is characterized by higher socio-economic status. White students throughout the country attend schools that are at least 80% White (Frankenberg, Lee, & Orfield, 2003). According to research conducted by Erica Frankenberg, Chungmi Lee, and Gary Orfield (2003), the number of Black male students who attended majority White schools in the 1990’s was at the lowest percentage in recent history. Unfortunately, students who exist in these isolated educational environments where they could potentially serve as ambassadors for integration are often marginalized; the valuation of their experiences remains subordinate or oppressive (Day-Vines, Patton & Baytops, 2003). The research attempted to provide a qualitative, in-depth, description of the lived experiences of Black males in predominantly White, high school populations.

**Significance of the Research**

Previous literature regarding Black students includes explorations of racial/ethnic identity and achievement (Wright, 2009), perceptions and attitudes of Black males (Ford, 2010; Ford & Harris, 1996), early schooling and dispositions of Black students (Davis, 2003), and the role of environmental and cultural factors that affect Black males (Nogueria, 2003), among research regarding the historical relevance of Black male students as members of the educational community. Although the body of research has been conducted in a multitude of environments (Davis, 2009; Ford, 2010; Gutman, Sameroff, & Eccles, 2002; Nogueria, 2009; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Wimberly, 2002),
research examining the experiences of Black males who are culturally and racially isolated among high performing White students is limited.

Research regarding the academic inadequacies of Black students has been used to identify Black males as the lowest achieving student group in our nation’s schools, without evaluating the contextual circumstances that contribute to these low scores (Davis, 2003). Understanding the various factors incorporated within the lived experiences of Black males and how these factors can influence their educational experience was paramount. In a qualitative study conducted by Kincaid and Yin (2011) where 30 twelfth grade Black students were studied in an educational environment consisting mostly of Black students, the results illustrated several challenges faced by Black students including negative environments, lack of personal confidence, and low motivation that deterred them from academic success. The study also described positive educational experiences where Black students had strong support systems (Kincaid & Yin, 2011).

This research is an attempt to investigate the experiences of Black students within the context of an educational environment saturated with societal, cultural, and educational values that could potentially reflect the values of these students. The researcher obtained perspectives regarding the experiences of Black males within a high performing educational environment. The results were used to provide guidelines to maximize the likelihood of success for Black male students in similar contexts while at the same time providing an outlet where the voices and needs of these students can be heard, understood, and addressed.
Potential Benefits of the Research

Bandura (1993) stated that individuals with positive self-efficacy could persist and succeed in the face of difficult or challenging tasks. In addition, Bandura established the counter point to his initial statement indicating that individuals with low self-efficacy will not persist in difficult situations, while simultaneously choosing to focus on their deficiencies, exhibiting task avoidance as a remedy to alleviate the perceived threats that coincide with difficult tasks. Regarding self-efficacy and the lived experience of Black males, it is proposed that prior to entering an educational institution the relationship between positive self-efficacy and the perceptions the learners have regarding educational institutions have already deteriorated (Davis, 2003; Whiting 2006). When school personnel are sensitive to the needs of diverse learners the self-efficacy of the students can be positively influenced. Conversely, schools that neglected the needs of learners may find the self-efficacy of students could be negatively impacted.

In contrast to the deterioration of positive self-efficacy of Black males due to institutional norms, when school personnel are sensitive, knowledgeable, and accepting of the culture of home and community that young Black males bring to their educational experience, culturally responsive learning communities can be established which value, support, and engage their language, style of presentation, traditions, rituals, histories and norms. Specifically when personnel understand that the cool pose can convey pride, strength, and control as well as strateg[ies] to cope with oppression, invisibility, and marginality, they will be more apt to react more positively. (Wright, 2009, p. 126)
Teachers who are able to better comprehend the experiences of these Black students are more likely to increase those students’ self-efficacy, which will enhance students’ abilities, skills, and attitudes to take advantage of achievement opportunities.

This research was an attempt to provide a greater understanding of the lived experiences of Black students within an educational environment that was affluent, high performing, and predominantly White. Each of the identified stakeholders involved, including students, teachers, parents, and administrators, was given the opportunity to view the results of the study, which should potentially enhance the development of policy and educational decisions for Black students.

**Definition of Key Terms**

Below are key terms that will be utilized throughout the proposed study.

1. *Black* students are African American students who can also identify themselves as multiracial if one parent is Black or African American (Miller Jr., 2010). Black and African American are used interchangeably.

2. *Critical Race Theory (CRT)* is a framework that was originally adopted by the work of legal scholars and is utilized within the field of education to identify and examine the role of race and racism as it pertains to the educational environment and the members within it (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

3. *Marginalized* represents the ideology that a group of people is devalued based upon their culture and associated values, beliefs, customs, and traditions that differ from those of the dominant culture (Noguera, 2003).
4. **Scholar-Identity** is the belief that culturally Black and Hispanic male students view themselves as competent, intelligent, and as capable of succeeding in an educational environment (Whiting, 2006).

5. Individuals with *Positive Racial Identity* are not only aware of the racism and discrimination they face, but are also able to interpret and overcome negative situations while taking pride in their racial/ethnic background (Helms, 1990; Wright, 2009).

6. **Stereotype Threat** means being at risk of conforming to particular negative stereotypes that could potentially result in negative cognitive affects simply based upon the threat of fulfilling that stereotypical role (Steele & Aronson, 1995).

**Related Literature**

Educating Black youth is a paramount concern in the 21st century. The miseducation of Black youth is a detriment not only to the young men and women who are not well educated, but represents a pressing issue for the larger society when a majority of Black and other non-White students are not prepared to enter the workforce, attend college, or be contributing members of our nation (Noguera, 2003).

Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995), and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1993) provide the basis of the theoretical framework for this research study. CRT was used to understand the impact that race and racism have upon the education of Black males throughout the country (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Stereotype threat refers to the negative cognitive effect stereotypes have on members of a particular race or ethnic group when they are facing a
situation where they actually fulfill the negative stereotypes within an academic challenge. Self-efficacy represents a self-fulfilling prophecy when students achieve or underachieve based upon the positive or negative beliefs they have about their own ability (Bandura, 1998). As Black males navigate the complexities of various educational environments, there are several factors, such as gender, culture, environment, identity, and institution that affect the perceptions and attitudes of these Black male students.

**Critical Race Theory**

Critical Race Theory is based upon the premise that racism is deeply embedded within our societal framework (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). The impact that race and racial ideologies have upon our school districts continues to pervade educational environments, especially in settings where minority students are practically non-existent, (i.e., less than 3% of the student population). Within this study, race played an integral role in shaping the research; therefore, CRT provided the foundation for the researcher’s investigation of the experiences of Black males in a predominately White, high performing school environment.

**Stereotype Threat.** The anxiety and negative effects exhibited by Black males are often a result of the negative expectations placed upon Black males by other members of society, such as administrators, teachers, and other school staff (Steele & Aronson, 1995), which can result in the fulfillment of these expectations. This was the essence of stereotype threat. Black males within a predominately White, high performing school district may experience this type of threat involving the pressure to perform at a high academic level based upon others’ expectations for achievement.
Racial Identity. Research has shown that the development of a positive racial ethnic identity aids Black students with regard to their academic performance (Wright, 2009). The Black experience and contributions made by African-Americans throughout history is not reflected in the curriculum in U.S. school systems. For example, there is a lack of Black-related curriculum materials in the language arts and social studies programs (Noguera, 2009). It has also been recorded that the behaviors of Black students are often perceived to be oppositional to common educational standards, leading to the marginalization of their talents and abilities (Wright, 2009). Educators as well as students who are able to value Black racial identity provided Black students with a greater propensity toward achieving academic excellence (Wright, 2009).

Environmental and cultural factors. The environmental and cultural factors that Black males are required to negotiate, while developing a sense of who they are, present a steep challenge. Barriers faced by African American students outside of the classroom often impact their educational experiences.

Beset with such an ominous array of social and economic hardships, it is hardly surprising that the experience of Black males in education, with respect to attainment and most indicators of academic performance, also shows signs of trouble and distress. (Noguera, 2003, p. 432)

Boykin and Noguera (2011) explained that the cultural values possessed by Black males are in direct opposition to the dominant values within the education system, however, this disparity can be addressed by devising certain strategies that were relevant to Black male students. Understanding that certain environmental and cultural factors will impact their view of educational achievement, it is imperative that educators are
aware of these values that many Black students possess. Cultural and environmental factors shape the motivation Black males possess regarding school and personal decision-making (Noguera, 2003). Understanding the lived experiences, the way Black students were raised, the values that were impressed upon them, and their idea of Black male masculinity, provided insight into the cultural and environmental factors that shape their value systems.

**Educational perceptions of Black males.** The perceptions Black students hold regarding educational attainment and achievement shape their daily educational experiences. In fact, their beliefs are often reflective of the perceptions that educators have regarding Black students (Ford, 2010). Black students often “feel” the perceptions of others pertaining to how they act and react. These perceptions can be antithetical, or at least conflicting, considering their own beliefs, causing feelings of alienation regarding school norms, perceptions of lower ability, and the absence of significant personal meaning developed from school experiences (Ford & Harris, 1996). Dissimilar to White students, Black students typically come to school with differing perspectives and understandings of what is required to successfully navigate the complexities of the public education system based upon their cultural perceptions.

**Understanding Black Males.** Black students often experience profound internal struggles that complicate the navigation of acquiring the competencies associated with successful educational experiences. In particular, Davis (2009) explained that although Black males might not feel a sense of ownership or belonging within their school environment, there are many methods by which educators and school personnel can understand Black males’ construction of race, gender, and social identity that can
positively influence Black male outcomes. Winberly (2002), who conducted an American College Testing (ACT) policy project found that fostering effective school relationships, along with developing an understanding of Black culture, positively affected outcomes for Black students. Harper and Davis III (2012) illustrated the misconception held by some educators that Black students are apathetic and lack a valid interest in achieving success in schools.

Considering the multitude of factors that influence the education of Black males, the study of these students in an environment where expectations reflect a standard of excellence, coupled with the opportunity and means by which to achieve these goals, were examined. Studying Black males in a high performing White secondary school provided insight into the experiences of Black males when they exist in an environment that has been shown to produce exemplary educational results.

Self-Efficacy

Bandura (1993) distinctly identified two types of self-efficacy: positive and negative. Delineating between the two, Bandura (1993) stated that people who have positive self-efficacy will have a greater propensity toward success than those people who have negative self-efficacy, with the latter focusing on their deficiencies rather than accomplishing the challenges they may face. Teachers play an integral role in the development of student self-efficacy and research has shown that their positive perceptions and valuation of Black students increases the chances for academic success (Davis, 2003; Davis, 2009; Wright 2009). Additional research has also shown that when Black male students have poor student-teacher relationships, their overall educational experience deteriorated (Caton, 2012). Therefore this research was conducted to provide
insight into the student-teacher relationships that existed for Black male students in an educational environment.

**Research Questions**

In an effort to discover the perceptions and attitudes held by teachers, students, and close family members regarding the experiences of Black students in a predominantly White, high performing educational environment, the following questions were been constructed to guide this research.

1. What are the perceptions held by Black students regarding their academic, social, and personal experiences within a predominantly White, high performing secondary school?

2. What are the perceptions held by the educators of Black students regarding the student’s experiences within a predominantly White, high performing secondary school?

3. What are the perceptions held by the parents/guardians of Black students regarding the student’s experiences within a predominantly White, high performing secondary school?

**Methodology**

Throughout the research process, data were collected through qualitative research procedures. Student participants provided information regarding the perceptions of Black students within predominately White, high performing secondary schools through a series of interviews, coupled with information garnered from demographic surveys.
Description of the Setting, Participants, and Sampling Procedure

The accessible population was derived from two affluent communities adjacent to the New York and Connecticut state border. The schools were selected after an exhaustive process in which all the school districts within both counties were reviewed. All Schools in the selected counties within proximity to the researcher were evaluated by the following criteria: (a) Only secondary schools were included in the study, grades 9-12, (b) the school population had to be comprised of less than 3% Black students, (c) the school had to be considered a high performing school with excellent academic standards and, (d) Black males were identified to participate in the study, and (e) students involved within the study were required to have attended the school district for at least two years. Following the application of these criteria, the schools that remained were then contacted to participate within the study. The two schools that responded favorably met all three criteria.

In an effort to elicit participation, convenience-sampling procedures, along with purposive sampling procedures were implemented (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Convenience sampling was conducted based upon the geographic proximity of the researcher to the school districts. A purposive sample was selected from a population of all students within the aforementioned school districts who identified themselves as Black or multiracial (with Black as one of the components that determined their multiracial background), and who have been in the district for at least two years. Consent was obtained from two school superintendents and the appropriate high school principals. Guidance counselors at both schools assisted in identifying and contacting parents of students who met the criteria for the study.
From this accessible population, five parents of Black male students provided their consent for their children to participate in the study and the students gave their assent to participate in the interview process. Of the five students, one parent/guardian who the student identified as understanding the student the best was selected by the student and asked to participate in the study. One educator was also identified by the student as a teacher who knew him best. The identified Black students completed a demographic survey and individual semi-structured interview regarding their school and cultural experiences.

**Research Design**

The researcher utilized a multi-case research design characterized by Merriam (2009) as collecting and analyzing data from more than one distinguishable case in an effort to provide an array of experiences. Each of the Black students selected represented a distinct case within the multiple case study design. Selecting five different participants allowed for variance in terms of case characteristics. Yin (2003) explained that the purpose for conducting multiple cases was similar to a scientist conducting multiple experiments. Multiple cases should illustrate similar results or should produce contrasting results that can be explained through the theoretical framework. There were several advantages for selecting a multiple case design as opposed to a single case design. Utilizing a case study approach, where the researcher has selected multiple cases, provided unique insight regarding the individual cases allowing the reader to determine the generalizability of each case based on the context of the experience (Merriam, 2009).
Instrumentation

Within qualitative research, the researcher served as the conduit for the observation and analysis of the data while providing the interpretation of the information from which the readers make meaning (Merriam, 2009). The experience the researcher had while conducting the study was not only informed by the participants within the study, but the researcher’s inherent subjectivity also impacted the data. The researcher served as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Then, the researcher compared the results to existing data (Merriam, 2009).

While the researcher is the primary instrument, there were several options available to facilitate the collection of data. Semi-structured open-ended interview protocols, along with demographic surveys, were the primary instruments employed throughout this study.

**Student demographic survey.** The student demographic survey (Appendix A) was designed to collect demographic data from each student participant. The survey consisted of 13 questions that informed the researcher regarding the student’s background and his perceptions of the educational context. Students were asked to complete the demographic survey prior to the initial interview.

**Student interviews.** One interview per student was conducted throughout the course of the study. The initial interview was scheduled for 60 – 90 minutes. The student interview consisted of approximately 29 possible questions (Appendix B). Philosophically, the questions were designed to elicit information pertaining to the student’s overall educational experience. The student interviews consisted of semi-structured questions that were designed to discover student perceptions toward his
educational environment, as well as the identification of factors that pertained to his specific racial and ethnic identity. Students were asked to review the transcription to ensure that the content was complicit with what was stated within the interview. All data were gathered during non-instructional time.

**Educator demographic survey.** The Educator’s demographic survey (Appendix C) was designed to collect background information from each participating educator. The survey consisted of 11 questions designed to elicit information regarding the educators demographical information coupled with his or her teaching history and foundational knowledge as it pertained to the teaching profession. Educators were asked to complete the survey prior to the completion of their initial interview.

**Educator interviews.** Each teacher participant was asked a series of 17 questions (Appendix D). The questions were developed to build rapport and trust with the individual and elicit information with regard to the teacher’s philosophy of education, along with his or her concept of educational achievement and competency as it related to the students within his or her classroom. Questions were also designed to elicit specific information regarding the teachers’ perceptions of the identified Black student or students within his or her classroom. The interview protocol contained follow-up questions that were based upon the teacher’s initial responses from the demographic survey. The interviews lasted between 45 - 75 minutes. Each participant was sent his or her transcript to ensure the participant agreed with what was stated within the interview. All data were gathered during non-instructional time.

**Parent/Guardian demographic survey.** The parent/guardian demographic survey (Appendix E) consisted of eight questions regarding their perspectives on the
experiences of their son. Parent/Guardian members were asked to complete the demographic survey prior to the initial interview.

**Parent/Guardian interviews.** Each Parent/Guardian was interviewed once. The Parent/Guardian interview consisted of approximately 10 questions (Appendix F). The content of the Parent/Guardian interview included questions designed to elicit information regarding the perceptions of the parent/guardian towards his or her son’s educational experience and the factors that influenced the social construction of success from the parental point of view. The Parent/Guardian interview was scheduled for approximately 60 - 90 minutes and each participant was sent his or her transcript following the conclusion of the interview to ensure that the participant agreed with what was stated within the transcript.

**Data Collection Procedures**

Initially, permission to conduct the study and disseminate information about the study was sought from the district superintendent and the building principal utilizing the superintendent letter of consent (Appendix G) and the principal letter of consent (Appendix H), respectively. Once access was granted by the school district administrators, a cover letter and parent/guardian consent form (Appendix I), along with a student assent letter (Appendix I) requesting participation, were sent to the parents/guardians and students, respectively. Each student was asked to recommend a teacher and a parent or caregiver who could be contacted to participate in the study. Letters of consent stipulating the educators’ (Appendix J) or parent/guardian’s (Appendix I) voluntary participation within the study were sent.
Student, parent/guardian, and teacher interviews were conducted to gather information regarding the perceptions of the participants. As the researcher received data from one source, it impacted the questions or process of collecting data from another source. Creswell (1998) illustrated this process through the circle of data collection in which the process of collecting data is not a singular pathway but is a circular process by which the researcher understood that data collection in a series of interrelated activities that are utilized to ultimately inform the research questions.

**Data Analyses**

Data collection and data analysis are processes within qualitative research that occurred simultaneously (Merriam, 2009). The nature of the data collected within a qualitative study was organic. Each piece of information collected and analyzed may influence subsequent data collection and analysis procedures. Merriam (2009) also continued to establish that if cases are unique in nature, the analyses of each case were independently important.

Data collected for this study included interviews and demographic surveys. All interview data were transcribed utilizing a professional transcription service. Data sources were analyzed utilizing specific codes assigned to each data set by the researcher (Corbin & Strauss 2015; Merriam, 2009). Following the coding of the data, categories were developed in an attempt to organize and collapse the data codes based on potential commonalities exhibited by the codes (Corbin & Strauss 2015; Merriam, 2009). Finally, categories were further developed and collapsed into themes that captured the essence of the responses of the students, teachers, and parents/guardians, which were then related to
the research questions (Corbin & Strauss 2015; Merriam, 2009). For this study, all three research questions were examined per case.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this research study was to examine the perceptions and experiences of Black male students who attended predominately White high performing secondary schools. Throughout the process of understanding each particular student’s experience, the parents/guardians, and educators of these students were also asked to provide insight into the experiences of these young men. Utilizing the available literature, research questions were developed to guide the research process. The findings from this study were utilized to provide insight into the experiences of these Black male students and ultimately provided further understanding of what can be done to expand the opportunities for these and all students.
CHAPTER TWO:

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chapter 2 has been dynamically articulated to aid in the establishment of a clear and concise understanding of literature as it relates to the examination of Black males who attend predominately White, high performing secondary schools. The literature review will be utilized to both illuminate and substantiate the rationale regarding the purpose of this qualitative study, while also identifying the factors that impact the education of Black males.

Initially, the chapter will highlight the theoretical frameworks that provide the foundation for this qualitative study which include Bandura’s (1998) Self-Efficacy Theory, and Critical Race Theory as defined by Ladson Billings and Tate (1995). The Scholar Identity Model, developed by Gilman Whiting, is a construct that was utilized by the researcher to provide a framework for the development of the components to be addressed throughout the qualitative interviews. Several factors impacting the education of Black males including, racial identity, masculinity, environment, cultural influences and perceptions will be discussed within the context of the research study. The research studies directly impacting and influencing the formulation of this particular research study will be identified and explained to provide the reader with further insight regarding the necessity and importance of the aforementioned study.

Self-Efficacy Theory

Situated within the context of Social Learning Theory, Bandura (1977) identified the cognitive construct of self-efficacy and elaborated upon the formulation of individualized self-efficacy expectations developed through various experiences.
Cognitively, self-efficacy theory significantly impacts, performance, learning capabilities, and behavior. Within education, expectations derived from self-efficacy could potentially impact a student’s perseverance, coping strategies, and behavior especially when faced with challenging or adverse experiences (Bandura, 1977). Self-Efficacy Theory, as postulated by Bandura (1977), seeks to extensively illustrate a component of social science that illuminates the particular behavioral change that is preempted by the establishment of self-efficacy expectations through the development of four particular sources, which include: (a) performance accomplishments, (b) vicarious experience, (c) verbal persuasion, and (d) emotional arousal.

Performance accomplishments are representative of a personal level of achievement related to a specific task. Bandura (1977) stipulated that success, also identified as personal mastery, will enhance the inclination toward positive self-efficacy expectations, while repeated unsuccessful attempts and negative outcomes will deteriorate self-efficacy expectations.

Vicarious experiences create the opportunity for one person to perceive and interpret the experiences of another, alleviating the necessity of having undergone the actual experience. Bandura (1977) illustrated the increased self-efficacy of a person who has the opportunity to view another person complete a difficult task successfully without any negative consequences.

Verbal persuasion exists when an individual is attempting to persuade or dissuade another individual based upon the desired outcome originally determined by the person who is disseminating the verbal cues. Bandura (1977) espoused the merits of verbal persuasion to increase self-efficacy expectations, but warns that verbal persuasion
coupled with positive outcomes based on the actions of the individual must be realized in order to increase the effectiveness of the verbal persuasion attempts. Emotional arousal can be characterized as any intensified or diminished feelings associated with fear, agitation, frustration, etc. (Bandura, 1977). Bandura continued to examine the impact of emotional arousal on self-efficacy by postulating that feelings of anxiety and fear may cyclically enhance feelings of incompetence, while feelings of decreased vulnerability and competence will aid in positive emotional arousal, in turn increase self-efficacy.

Bandura’s self-efficacy theory not only impacts social sciences and aids in the cultivation of behavioral change, but it also has tremendous implications cognitively. “Efficacy beliefs influence how people feel, think, motivate themselves, and behave,” (Bandura, 1993, p. 118). The delineation between positive self-efficacy and negative self-efficacy is discussed in great detail. Bandura (1993) establishes a relationship between the self-efficacy of students and the self-efficacy of their teachers addressing the fact that the performance of both parties is directly reflected in student’s ability to achieve academically. Self-efficacy coupled with positive student-teacher relationships are cornerstones regarding the achievement of Black male students (Caton, 2012; Davis 2009; Ford, 2010).

Positive self-efficacy contributes to school success and achievement, while negative self-efficacy contributes to measures of repeated failure due to the lack of perseverance and belief in one’s cognitive ability to achieve as posited by Bandura (1993).
Bandura (1993) stated that student self-efficacy, teacher self-efficacy and student achievement are linked together in a cyclical pattern with each component of the cycle playing an integral role in the creation and substantiation of the other. A student’s cognitive self-efficacy is impacted by a teacher’s belief in his or her ability to implement instructional strategies coupled with the expectations that he or she may have of a particular student. While student achievement is a result of that particular student’s efficacy coupled with the expectations and efficacy of the teacher (Bandura, 1993). Building effective student-teacher relationships based on mutual positive self-efficacy will impact student performance, especially as it relates to the performance of Black male students (Noguera, 2009).

In a quantitative study conducted by Chinew Uwah, George McMahon, and Carolyn Furlow (2008) they examined the relationships between school belonging, educational aspirations, and academic self-efficacy among 40 Black male high school students. The researchers identified a relationship between student interactions with teachers and academic self-efficacy stating, “Specific, direct, and authentic interactions with members of the school community who believe that they can perform at a high level appear to be more important to African American males than how much they perceive that they are liked by others” (p. 3).

Additionally Bandura (1993) stipulated the importance of the self-efficacy of the teachers as an integral component towards developing self-efficacy among students. Lastrapes and Negishi (2012) conducted a mixed methods study to assess the self-efficacy of teachers related specifically to those teachers working with a group of learners who represented diversity in schools. The teachers participated in a program to build the
self-efficacy of teachers working with minority children. As a result of the study, the importance of providing the teachers with opportunities to work with diverse learners, which increased their self-efficacy, was paramount in the development of a positive self-efficacy attitude. The results of this study reiterate the importance of the teacher’s self-efficacy, as well as the students’ self-efficacy, as it related to Bandura’s (1993) theory.

**Critical Race Theory**

Historically, the issue of race and racism has been prevalent since the country’s inception and has become particularly apparent in the American educational system (Bell, 1980). CRT was initially developed by a group of legal scholars who witnessed the inequities and inequality within the legal system (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Described by Delgado and Stefancic (2001), “The Critical Race Theory movement is a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationships among race, racism, and power” (p. 2). Although CRT began as a movement among minority law students, its merits are transferable to the field of education where the movement exists not only to explain the various components of our educational landscape but also to transform the educational landscape through the removal of these particular inequities and injustices (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

CRT established four themes that guide the theory and practical implications pertaining to the theory that include: (a) racism is ordinary, (b) white over color ascendancy, (c) social construction of race, and (d) unique voice of color (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). All of the aforementioned tenets of CRT pertain to the development of the educational system within America, however the unique voice of color theme provided the impetus for this particular qualitative study.
Delgado and Stefancic (2001) commented, as established through Critical Race Theory that, “racism is ordinary, not aberrational . . . normal science,” or simply the usual way society does business, in other words; the common everyday experience of most people of color in the country. Functioning within the premise that racism is a part of our everyday lives, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) elaborated upon the idea that education has been fortified through the original ideas about race and property. Schools are reflective of the values of the surrounding properties, such that schools within Black communities underserved their children, while schools within White communities provided their children with ample opportunities to experience success.

CRT also illustrated the tendency of American society at-large to function under the presumption that White over color ascendancy was an integral aspect of our culture, where blatant racism was addressed through rule changes and law; however, underlying subtle racism was difficult to eradicate due to the intricate nature of its existence (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Interest convergence established through CRT highlighted the idea that systematic racism was beneficial to the working class as well as elite White people in America, thus disabling the motivation to remove racism from society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Race is currently, and has always been, socially constructed throughout American history lending itself to arbitrarily classifying people who have similar and dissimilar attributes into various categories dependent upon the goals and purposes of those who are in power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

The final theme identified within Critical Race Theory is providing the opportunity for people of color to have a voice regarding their life, as well as their
educational experiences (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

CRT outlined the following three reasons for providing a unique voice for people of color also called “naming one’s own reality,” that included: (a) people of color providing their socially constructed accounts of their lives; (b) people of color having the opportunity to preserve their culture and avoid the acceptance of commonly held stereotypes; and (c) the impetus for the oppressor to self-reflect, providing a chance for cognitive dissonance to occur regarding the treatment of people of color within education and the larger society as a whole (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995). Regarding the unique voice of color, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) explained, “As we attempt to forge links between critical race theory and education, we contend that voices of people of color are required for a complete analysis of the educational system” (p. 21).

Tyrone Howard (2008) attempted to capture the voices of Black male students by conducting a qualitative study based in Critical Race Theory where her recorded accounts of Black male students in middle and high school provided stories that were used to examine their school experiences. Howard (2008) found that students spoke of the following three items: (a) how race impacted the way they were viewed by teachers and administrators; (b) how the students tried to remove negative stereotypes held about Black students, and (c) how students felt about the opportunity to discuss race within the school setting in an unprecedented manner. Each of the aspects of Howard’s study directly related to the existence of Critical Race theory as it applies specifically to Black male students within education.

Graves (2014) conducted a qualitative study regarding Black high school students’ conception of racial socialization and the development of racial identity in
Graves (2014) found that students express views based in Critical Race Theoretical framework that speak to the fact that their racial socialization and development of identity impacts their dispositions toward school. Employing a Critical Race Theoretical framework for students situated within a predominantly White environment may provide similar experiences.

The following qualitative research study provided the opportunity for Black male students who attend a predominantly White, high performing educational environment to express themselves through their own individualized stories where their experiences are established and valued. “The ‘voice’ component of Critical Race Theory provided a way to communicate the experience and realities of the oppressed, a first step on the road to justice” (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 21).

**Scholar Identity Model**

The scholar identity construct established and elaborated upon by Whiting (2006) was an essential structure in the formulation of this qualitative study. Whiting (2006) presented the Scholar Identity Model as a solution and archetypal paradigm that has been designed to develop a positive Black male image through education that transcends the underachievement and negative stereotypes associated with Black males within education. The Scholar Identity Model consists of nine key components including: (a) masculinity, (b) racial identity, (c) academic self-confidence, (d) need for achievement, (e) self-awareness, (f) internal locus of control, (g) willingness to make sacrifices, (h) future orientation and, (i) self-efficacy (Whiting, 2006, p. 224).

Davis (2009) identified that Black male masculine identity serves to harm or benefit Black males within school systems. The self-expression directly related to Black
male masculinity can provide satisfaction to the Black male, but may alienate him from his teachers and, at the same time, fulfill the potential negative stereotypes that may be held by some educators (Davis, 2009). Whiting (2006) explained that Black males who have a positive scholar identity view their intellectual ability and positive school performance as an integral part of their self-expression, while at the same time considering their scholarship as a part of their masculinity, as opposed to being a feminine attribute.

Murrell Jr. (2009) illustrated the fact that racial identity for Black males is a complex construction based upon sociological, socio-cultural, psychological, and cultural factors. Within the Scholar male Identity Model, Black males have a positive racial identity, where they seek to deepen their understandings of their identity while understanding that they have to constantly adapt to their current environment, always working to overcome negative connotations associated with their racial background (Worrell, Cross & Vandiver 2001; Whiting, 2006).

Academic self-confidence has been identified in Black males who have a positive scholar identity as illustrated by their belief that they can thrive and achieve in an academic setting where they face challenging and rigorous educational situations, particularly students who have successfully navigated their way in school (Whiting, 2006). “For [these] Black males their need for achievement is greater than their need for affiliation” (Whiting, 2006, p. 225). Whiting (2006) continued to explain that while Black males understood the need to develop friends and other socially appropriate relationships, Black males who have a positive scholar identity recognized that the key to success within the field of scholarship requires a focus on academic achievement.
Self-awareness, according to Whiting (2006), existed among Black males who possessed a positive scholar identity and understood that they should not let their weaknesses inhibit their ability to attempt and complete academic assignments. Students with positive self-awareness were able to seek help when they need it, and were able to fully maximize their utilization of resources when necessary.

Internal locus of control among Black males who have positive scholar identity was described by Whiting (2006) as individuals who take responsibilities for their action and develop the realization that their successes and their failures were based upon their work ethic and effort regarding their educational achievement.

Willingness to make sacrifices was a key component to achieve success regardless of the endeavor. Whiting (2006) stated that Black males with positive scholar identity fully realize and were willing to make the necessary sacrifices in pursuit of their educational goals and potential achievements.

Black males who possessed positive scholar identity exhibited an orientation toward the future (Whiting, 2006). Whiting (2006) established that “Black males with high and realistic aspirations are not overly concerned about immediate gratification and short-term interests and goals” (p. 225).

Bandura (1993) and Dweck (1999) commented on the impact of self-efficacy on the educational achievement and motivation of all children. Whiting (2006) explained that students who have a positive scholar identity also possess positive self-efficacy and, “…are not deterred by challenges or setbacks because they are optimistic; they even seek out academic challenges, and thrive when educators hold high expectations for them” (p. 224).
Whiting (2009) provided the scholar identity model as a solution to be utilized to combat the threats associated with the underrepresentation of Black male students in gifted programs. According to Whiting (2009) Black males faced several limiting factors regarding their participation in achievement programs, which included: (a) identity and self-perception, (b) peer pressures, (c) social injustices, (d) beliefs about achievement, and (e) notions of masculinity. Whiting (2009) stated that these threats to achievement can be decreased by instilling the values held within the scholar identity model and infusing them into the minds of young Black male students who are ready to receive them.

**Stereotype Threat**

The constructs of identity, educational ability, and self-efficacy are developed through varying means including socio-cultural, physiological, and external influences (Bandura, 1993; Davis, 2009; Dweck, 1999). External influences may impact a student’s intellectual performance either positively or negatively. Steele and Aronson (1995) defined stereotype threat as a threat that “derives from the broad dissemination of negative serotypes about one’s group; the threat of possibly being judged and treated stereotypically, or possibly self-fulfilling such a stereotype” (p. 798). Steele and Aronson (1995) continued to explain that this threat can appear within any group, or member of that group, for which negative stereotypes that exist.

This threat can play a particularly important role within the education of Black males. Steele and Aronson (1995) hypothesized that African-American students face this stereotype threat whenever there is an opportunity for an intellectual task to be completed where the negative stereotypes can impact their intellectual functioning. Students within
this research study could have experienced this construct, especially when they are functioning in an environment where they represent a minority of the population. Students may experience, overtime, the need to disidentify with school achievement based upon their negative self-evaluation that may result from the threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995).

Steele and Aronson (1995) illustrated this threat by conducting two independent studies where the intellectual performances of Black students were analyzed under the pretense of stereotype threat. With SAT scores controlled, the first study consisted of Black and White college students who were given a 30-minute exam consisting of Graduate Record Exam (GRE) questions (Steele & Aronson, 1995). The college students were separated into three groups consisting of conditions where the: (a) test was presented as a diagnostic measure of intellectual ability (stereotype threat condition); (b) test was presented as a non-diagnostic problem-solving task (non-stereotype threat condition); (c) test was presented as a non-diagnostic problem-solving task with an additional challenge factor (Steele & Aronson, 1995). The results of the experiment regarding the three groups concluded that the Black students in the diagnostic condition performed significantly worse than the Black students in both of the non-diagnostic ($p < .01$) conditions and White students in the diagnostic group ($p < .01$).

The existence of stereotype threat can occur based on conditions directly related to teachers, administrators, and others responsible for young Black students. Therefore, student-teacher relationships are an integral component of cultivating success among Black male students (Ford, 2010; Noguera, 2003; Whiting, 2006). The existence of stereotype threat may occur at a greater rate due to the cultural disparity that exists
between Black male students and the White female teachers that make up 83% of the educators in America (NCES, 2013).

Stereotype threat can be impacted by teachers and administrators, but can also have a tremendous impact on academic learning and knowledge acquisition. Taylor and Walton (2011) conducted an experiment in which 75 Black and White students were asked to complete an academic exercise with vocabulary cards under threatening and non-threatening conditions. Black students performed better on vocabulary recall items in non-threatening, learning performance environment than White students (Taylor & Walton, 2011). Black students were the lowest performing group when experiencing a threatening learning and performance environment.

By nature, stereotype threat can exist in an educational environment where there is a racial disparity between Black male students and their White teachers. Combating the impact of the potential stereotype threat occurring, teachers within this educational environment can provide a comfortable, non-threatening atmosphere that is conducive for achievement and learning. In a predominantly White school, Black students could potentially benefit from an environment where a mutual respect exists between teachers and students.

**Educational Perceptions of Black Males**

The disparity that exists between Black and White students regarding their performances on standardized tests has been well documented through both quantitative and qualitative research studies (Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Caton, 2012; Davis, 2003, 2009; Ford, 2010; Gutman, Sameroff & Eccles, 2002; Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; Wimberly 2012). The perceptive interpretation Black male students exhibit regarding
their educational environment, their expectations of success, and their self-efficacy play an integral role in the determination of their academic performance (Bandura, 1993; Davis, 2009; Steele & Aronson, 1995).

Ford and Harris (1996) conducted a mixed methods study examining attitudes and perceptions of young Black students who comprised three separate groups that included: (a) gifted students, (b) potentially gifted students, and (c) regular education students. The following three groups were provided with surveys with the following subscales: (a) attitudes toward school; (b) attitude toward achievers; (c) attitudes toward achievement ideology; (d) parental achievement orientation; (e) peer relations and pressures; (f) social injustices; and (g) psychological issues (Ford & Harris, 1996).

Students in the gifted group scored statistically significantly higher than students in the potentially gifted and regular education groups regarding attitude toward achievers, attitudes toward achievement ideology, and parent achievement orientation (Ford & Harris, 1996). Students in the regular education groups exhibited statistically significantly higher perceptions regarding peer pressure and psychological issues, and lower perceptions regarding parental achievement orientation (Ford & Harris, 1996). Ford and Harris (1996) concluded that a paradox exists between Black male student attitudes and Black male student achievement, across ability levels.

Kincaid and Yin (2011) conducted a qualitative research study regarding attitudes and perceptions of Black males as they pertained to a group of 30 African-American seniors who attended secondary school. Data were additionally collected from nine educators in an attempt to provide insight into the attitudes and perceptions of the 30 student participants. The study resulted in the following three themes: (a) the path to
educational success contained challenges; (b) the impact of negative environments, lack of personal confidence, and motivation played an integral role regarding academic success; and (c) academic achievement was positively influenced by strong human systems of support (Kincaid & Yin, 2011).

**Understanding Black Males**

Understanding Black males and their potential to successfully navigate the complexities involved in our American educational system are to a certain extent based upon the comprehension of the counter narrative that Black males do not care about education.

Black men do care about education. Despite their recognition of how schools, postsecondary institutions, and policies unfairly disadvantage them and others in their families and communities, the undergraduates upon whom this article is based maintained their belief in the liberating potential of education. (Harper & Davis III, 2012, p. 116)

Ogbu (1987) initiated the argument that Black males will develop oppositional behaviors and identities based on their interpretations of school success and the reinforcement of positive school experiences that are defined as conflicting with the cultural identity of Black males. Ogbu (1987) continued to elaborate on the fact that Black males will not acquiesce to the development of an attitude geared toward achievement because educational success has been historically synonymous with the behavior of those from the White culture.

The existence of the attitude achievement paradox (Mickelson, 1990) provided a contradictory perspective regarding Black males and their attitudes toward educational
success. Mickelson (1990) posited that the development of a student’s attitude is not only multi-dimensional, consisting of a multitude of factors, but that especially among Black students there exists positive attitudes toward schooling while students simultaneously exhibit low school performance.

Harper and Davis III (2012) conducted a study utilizing 304 essays that were composed by Black male students who were currently enrolled in a university or college. By qualitatively analyzing the composed essays, Harper and Davis III (2012) were able to compile the following three themes: “(1) awareness of educational inequities, (2) beliefs in education as the great equalizer, and (3) purposeful pursuits of the Ph.D. in education” (p. 111). Harper and Davis III (2012) illustrated the counter perspective to Ogbu’s when they reported that although these Black male students had faced inequities within their lives and experienced a lack of positive Black male role models, such as teachers, they were able to persevere, eventually overcoming those inequities to achieve educational success.

Harris and Robinson (2007) added to the literature regarding the factors that impact Black male student behavior by conducting a quantitative study that utilized data from the National Center for Educational Statistics that included 5,659 White students, 764 Black students, and 597 Asian Students. Data were collected from standardized math and reading tests administered by the NCES. For Black students, prior skill development before high school contributed significantly to their academic achievement during high school (based upon standardized math and reading tests). Results presented within the research study were statistically significant with ($p < 05$). Consequently Harris and Robinson (2007) found that how students behave in schools had a greater
impact on academic performance when prior skills were not established for Black male students.

Although there are several factors that may inhibit the successful education of Black male students, researchers have found that when Black students are instructed by educators who believe in developing effective student-teacher relationships accompanied by an understanding and positive evaluation of Black culture and a strong support system at home, Black students can achieve educational success (Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Caton 2012; Davis 2009; Ford 2010).

Racial Identity

Research has shown, especially regarding young Black males, that a positive racial identity is impactful regarding the development of a positive scholar identity and the formulation of a success-achievement oriented demeanor (Davis, 2009, Ford 2010; Whiting, 2006; Wright, 2009). How students perceive themselves impacts their self-esteem and their ability to develop positive self-efficacy (Bandura, 1993; Dweck, 1999).

Within this particular research, racial identification played a significant role in the understanding of the student participants. Miller Jr. (2010) stated that racial identification in America for Black students is a complex process that involves many factors. A main concept is that students can self-identify as Black as long as they have one Black parent (Miller Jr., 2010).

Nigrescence theory, developed by Cross in 1971, is a varying conception of Black racial identity, which includes a multiple stage process of dynamic racial identification. Since 1971, the Nigrescence theory has undergone several changes as discussed by Vandiver (2001). Originally presented as a five-stage process, the Nigrescence theory
has been revised into the following four stages: (a) pre-encounter, (b) encounter, (c) immersion-emersion, and (d) internalization (Vandiver, 2001). In the revised model, race salience and race valence were introduced (Vandiver, 2001). Vandiver (2001) explained that race salience is the importance or significance of one’s race, and valence is representative of the positive or negative connotations one holds with regard to racial identity.

Pre-encounter is the initial stage characterized by low racial salience where Blacks either identify as pro-American, or develop an anti-Black racial identity (Vandiver, 2001). During the initial stage, racial valence remains neutral with the pro-American identity. Blacks who develop a pre-encounter, anti-Black identity do so based upon miseducation and self-hatred (Vandiver, 2001).

The encounter stage can be characterized as a stage within the Nigrescence theory where a Black person goes through a series of changes with regard to his or her development and begins to identify as Black (Vandiver, 2001). During this stage of development, Blacks will begin to re-evaluate their understanding of their own racial identity.

The immersion-emersion stage was characterized by the development of two distinct possible identities where Blacks develop intense feelings of Black Nationalism or they develop an intense feeling of anti-White identity (Vandiver, 2001).

Internalization is the final stage within the Nigrescence theory (Vandiver, 2001). Internalization is characterized by the following three identities: (a) Black nationalist (d) biculturalist, and (c) mutliculturalist (Vandiver, 2001). Black nationalists exhibit behaviors that are consistent with the development of Black pride and the establishment
of actions that empower the Black community. Being a biculturalist essentially establishes the idea that a Black person has developed two distinct identities: one that focuses on their development as a Black person and one as an American (Vandiver, 2001). The development of a multicultur alist identity is consistent with the development of a multitude of identities that represent being Black but may also include identities based on gender, sexual orientation, and so forth. (Vandiver, 2001).

Tatum (2004) conducted a study using the Nigrescence theory to examine the experiences of 18 (12 women and 6 men) middle class Black college students about their experiences living and growing up in a predominantly White community. Within the study three females and two males were selected and their individual case studies were presented. The participants were all individually interviewed for a two-hour period about their experiences growing up in predominantly White communities. Tatum (2004) reported the following results: (a) participants reported having positive same race peer relationships, (b) participants reported their specific achievements, (c) participants reported the existence of role models, and (d) participants also reported experiencing encouragement from specific adults being integral regarding academic success and the development of racial identity.

Chavous, Bernat, Schmeelk-Cone, Caldwell, Kohn-Wood, and Zimmerman (2003) conducted a mixed-methods longitudinal study over a two-year period involving 606 (n = 287 males and n = 319 females) African American students. Data were collected over a two-year period from quantitative surveys and qualitative individual interviews. The researchers examined the relationship between racial identity and academic achievement. Following the analysis of data the researcher’s findings, “... suggest that
African American youths’ beliefs about self and race relate to their educational and social development through their attitudes and self-evaluations around education” (Chavous, et al., 2003, p. 1088).

The study pertained the idea that race and racial identity is directly related to educational and social development, therefore Black students who exist within a predominantly White, high performing secondary school may experience a similar experience based on their own racial identity as it relates to their personal social and academic development.

**Deficit Thinking**

Black males, within our current educational system, are thrust into educational environments where, “meaning-making practices, which students from historically non-dominant communities bring to their school learning, are often missed or dismissed as being interpreted as having no real intellectual value in the classroom” (Wright, 2011, p. 5). The valuation or devaluation of Black male students within our educational system is embedded within the idea of deficit thinking.

Deficit thinking is a representation of the theoretical construct that educational opportunities for Black male students are limited because of deficient ideologies, held by educators and policy makers, that Black male students come to classrooms with deficiencies that require immediate remediation and low level academic courses, as opposed to dynamically trying to meet the needs of the Black students through knowledge and understanding (Ford 2010; Ford, Harris, Tyson, & Trotman, 2002; Ford, Moore & Scott, 2011; Wright 2009). Deficit thinking exponentially impacts the ways in which policymakers and educators perceive and shape the educational environments in
which Black students exist (Ford, Moore, & Scott, 2011).

Deficit thinking ideology is present in schools as evidenced by a mixed methods longitudinal study, that took place over the course of two years, conducted by Duncan (2002) in which he interviewed 27 (21 female and six male) Black and Hispanic students. Data were collected from individual interviews, along with surveys, demographic info, and standardized test scores acquired from the school. From the results of his research Duncan (2002) found that deficient thinking within a school environment lead to deterioration of school morale and an increased propensity for students to underperform.

Thinking about how deficit thinking impacts outcomes for students Milner IV (2007) outlined five critical constructs that have emerged from his research data regarding how to overcome deficit thinking that include: (a) envisioning a future, (b) knowing who you are in the context of other people, (c) be cognizant of possibilities and not negative situations, (d) demonstrate care, and (e) thinking directs actions. Milner IV (2007) gathered data from his personal research and research data collected by colleagues within the field. Based upon the analysis and synthesis of research that has been conducted, Milner IV (2007) created an outline of strategies that could potentially be utilized to empower educators to provide an educational environment where African American students can achieve.

Prejudice

Ford (2013) defined prejudice as, “preconceived judgments toward people or a person because of race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, gender, age, disability, and other sociodemographic characteristics that are grounded in stereotypes that are often negative but can be positive as well (p. 63). Ford (2013) illustrated that
prejudice and racism can and do impact educational expectations, relationships, and placement of students into various educational programs.

When discussing prejudice and the potential impact that it can have on the educational welfare of a young Black male student, we must discuss the varying degrees of prejudice. Allport (1954) established the five degrees of prejudice, which include: (a) antilocution, (b) avoidance, (c) discrimination, (d) physical attack, and (e) extermination.

Antilocution is the least potent of the degrees of prejudice and can be characterized by verbal or non-verbal insults based on a person’s racial or ethnic background (Ford, 2013). Avoidance represents the next degree of prejudice where a person seeks to distance himself or herself from a particular racial group based upon prejudicial feelings (Ford, 2013). Discrimination can be described as the action of a person who deliberately denies the legal rights of another human being based on their particular or ethnic background (Ford, 2013). Physical attacks are characterized by violence against a particular person or group based on their race (Ford, 2013). Extermination represents the greatest degree of prejudice and entails completely eliminating a racial group (Ford, 2013).

Ford (2013) posited that prejudice occurs at the personal and institutional level. Prejudice and its impact can be pervasive in the educational careers of Black males (Ford, 2013; Wright 2009; Davis, 2009). Racial microaggressions occur at the institutional level as well, and can be characterized as subtle interactions where non-Whites are racially attacked through verbal and non-verbal insults (Ford, Scott, Moore, & Amos, 2013). Ford et al. (2013) established that as a result of these microaggressions Black students
will experience anger, frustration, and disengagement, which may have a detrimental impact upon their educational performance.

Allen (2010) conducted a nine-month qualitative research study in which the researcher assessed the experiences of three Black male students who attended predominately white high schools, as well as two Black males who attended predominantly Latino schools. The parents of each of the students were also interviewed to gather their perspectives on the experiences of their children. Both parents and students reported being angered and upset by the microaggressions the students would experience within the school setting. Students and parents were also able to articulate the fact that they were able to overcome these racial microaggressions through the use of social and cultural capital.

Microaggressions could be a reality for Black male students who attend predominately White, high performing secondary schools. As stated within the previous research, the impact of microaggressions could potentially be harmful for students of color.

**Chapter Summary**

Within the context of this particular study, Bandura’s theory of self-efficacy, coupled with Ladson-Billings and Tate’s educational adaptation of Critical Race Theory, provide a theoretical framework that serves as the foundational structure upon which this study was developed. In addition, the scholar identity mode, stereotypes threat, along with several of theoretical constructs have been identified and explained within this chapter. The experiences of Black male students within our educational system are comprised and impacted by not only who the students are but, how they view themselves,
their expectations, parental guidance, student-teacher relationships, and the existence of racial issues that pervade our societal framework. The aforementioned constructs and available knowledge regarding the subject area have influenced the formulation of the qualitative semi-structured interview protocol questions.
CHAPTER THREE:

METHODOLOGY

This chapter details the process by which data were collected and analyzed throughout the qualitative study. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions and experiences of Black males who attended predominantly White, high performing secondary schools. Interpreting and collecting data from multiple sources including educators, parents/guardians, and the students who participated within the study, provided diverse perspectives from which meaning was developed. This chapter will provide information pertaining to the specific methodology utilized by the researcher and includes the following sections: (a) researcher biography, (b) statement of ethics and confidentiality, (c) description of settings and participants, (d) research questions, (e) research design description, (f) instrumentation, (g) data collection procedures and timeline, and (h) trustworthiness.

Researcher Biography

The inevitability of researcher bias within qualitative research and the development of meaningful interpretations from qualitative data are not mutually exclusive (Mehra, 2002). Interview research is an interactive process where the dialogue between the researcher and the participant are dynamically connected to form meaning (Ellis & Berger, 2001). Providing a contextual understanding of the researcher’s background may illustrate any bias and an internalized understanding for the reader.

I am a proud member of a family of scholars, some of whom were educated traditionally, and others non-traditionally. My father and mother, Mr. Frank and Dr. Sandra Miller Holst, have provided me with unconditional love and support enabling me
to achieve unbridled success. Kyle, Jordan, and Mark represent my three siblings who provide me with tremendous motivation to succeed. My wife, Amanda, and our joined families represent my future.

As a young man my mother instilled in me the importance of education. Love, family, and education were the three components that aided in the cultivation of the man I have become today. Setting your own standard of personal excellence, regardless of external expectation or influence is, the key to success.

Understanding my family’s rich history regarding educational and personal success was one of the factors that influenced me tremendously. Knowing that those who had come before me were successful, and possessed the ability to overcome challenges, resulted in the development of my personal confidence. I knew from an early age that my mother’s expectations were appropriate and achievable based on my family’s personal history.

That history continues today. My mother is a retired Vice President of several colleges, my brother Kyle is the understudy for Simba on Broadway and a graduate of Yale University. My wife is an extraordinary and passionate English teacher, my father is a retired athletic director, my brother Jordan is an IT specialist, and my brother Mark is a videographer and music producer. My stepmother, Georgette, a retired special education teacher, provided me with a tremendous example of how to truly educate from the heart and was my main motivation for becoming a special education teacher.

Studying Black males in education is personal for me. As a young man I had the opportunity to attend a number of schools with varying racial demographics. In middle school I attended a predominantly White, high performing school, in the northeastern
United States. As I recall, attending this particular institution had a profound impact upon my life both as a young Black male and as student. This experience enabled me to understand the intricacies involved in navigating an environment where educational success is paramount and where the external expectations placed upon me varied depending upon the circumstances. Having successfully navigated this particular environment, I wanted to investigate the experience as an objective researcher 20 years removed from the experience. The research is personal; I had a tremendously positive experience in this particular environment, while continuously learning to deal with the inherent challenges that existed.

My family, my teachers, and a vast array of educational experiences in environments with both heterogeneously and homogenously grouped student populations, have helped to shape my educational and life experiences. As an educator, and most importantly, a special educator, my purpose is to create an environment where all students can learn and achieve personal growth. Understanding the context in which students exist and the various educational factors that influence their success is paramount. The essence of the Black male experience within a predominately White high performing secondary school may potentially impact the development of equity for all students.

**Statement of Ethics and Confidentiality**

Approval for the study was submitted (Appendix K) and acquired in December 2014 from the Western Connecticut State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). All of the prospective participants were contacted by the researcher and presented with an overview of the study. Participants were made completely aware of the time constraints
and request for their personal involvement within the research project. All participants within the research participated voluntarily with a full understanding that they could withdraw from the study, at any time, without repercussion.

Students signed assent forms (Appendix I); Educators (Appendix J), and Parents/Guardians (Appendix L) signed consent forms that detailed the confidentiality, purpose, and time requirements of the study. Within the consent letter, the participants were also made aware of the fact that upon completion of the member-checking portion of the study they would receive a $25 gift card as a token of appreciation for their participation within the research study.

Participants were made aware that all data collected by the researcher would be maintained in a secure location. Any specific identifying factors exhibited by the participants would not be readily apparent within the description of the cases or within the report. Pseudonyms pertaining to the school districts and the participants were utilized throughout the research to maintain confidentiality.

**Description of Sampling Procedures and Settings**

**Sampling Procedures**

Both purposeful and convenience sampling were used to identify the districts schools, and participants for this study. According to Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011), “Purposeful sampling in qualitative research means that researchers intentionally select (or recruit) participants who have experienced the central phenomenon of the key concept being explored in the study” (p. 173). Throughout the initial recruitment process of the study the researcher purposefully selected schools that contained Black students who
were experiencing the central phenomena of attending predominately White, high performing, secondary schools. Merriam (2009) stipulates,

The criteria you establish for purposeful sampling directly reflect the purpose of the study and guide in the identification of information-rich cases. You not only spell out the criteria you will use, but you also say why the criteria are important. (pp. 77-78)

Convenience sampling (Gall, Gall, & Borg 2007) is the type of purposeful sampling utilized when a researcher recruits and enables the participation of a sample of the population that is available. They state, “Although a sample randomly drawn from a population is more desirable it usually is better to do a study with a convenience sample than to not do the study at all” (p. 175).

Throughout this study convenience sampling was utilized based upon limited access, ability to travel, and financial resources.

The targeted population for this qualitative research study included three school districts within the northeastern United States. The schools were selected from two distinct states within the Northeast, comprising two different counties. For purposes of confidentiality, the three secondary schools will be referred to as school A, school B, and school C. School A was selected from County one and schools B and C were selected from County two. The researcher was located in a suburban area in the northeastern United States on the border between the two states that encompassed the two different counties. Each of the schools was conveniently targeted from the aforementioned counties based upon the following selection criteria: (a) Only secondary schools were included in the study, grades 9-12, (b) the school population had to be comprised of less
than 3% Black students, (c) the school had to be considered a high performing school with excellent academic standards and, (d) Black males were identified to participate in the study, and (e) students involved within the study were required to have attended the school district for at least two years. Within each county, schools that met the aforementioned criteria were purposively selected to provide rich and meaningful data from the viable populations.

The sample criteria were developed specifically to identify participants who could potentially provide rich information that would inform the research. High school students were selected based upon their cognitive and metacognitive capabilities. Black students who represented fewer than 3% of the total school population were selected in order to truly understand the Black male experience in an environment where there was a small minority of Black male students. Schools with excellent academic attributes were selected due to the lack of research that has been conducted in high performing environments for Black male students (Goldsmith, 2004). Blue Ribbon distinction in one state was utilized to identify academic success, while being ranked within the top eight schools within the state was utilized in the alternate state. Black male students were selected instead of females for the study because of the tremendous disparity manifested by the achievement gap evidenced by standardized test scores between Black male students and their White counterparts (Davis, 2003; Ford, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Wimberly (2012) reported that the impact of student underperformance as it relates to Black male students continues to grow as student’s progress throughout their educational career. Gershenson, Holt, and Papageorge (2015) conducted a study utilizing longitudinal data from the National Center for Education
Statistics where they found White teachers expectations for black students were less as compared to Black teachers of those same students. Furthermore, Gershenson, Holt, and Papageorge, (2015) found that White teachers possessed lower expectations for Black male students involving academic tasks involving math. Students who participated within the study must have attended the school district for a minimum of two years in an attempt to select students who were able to grasp the school culture.

**School A.** The selection of school A involved an exhaustive process in which all schools in the county were considered. Of the 52 high schools located within the particular county, 17 of the high schools had a Black population of three percent or fewer. Of the 17 schools containing three percent or fewer Black students only two of the schools received the national distinction of being a Blue Ribbon institution (United States Department of Education, 2015). Blue Ribbon distinction is awarded to schools where academic excellence is coupled with exemplary teaching, resulting in the closing of the achievement gap between all students (United States Department of Education, 2015). Finally, School A was selected between the remaining schools due to its proximity to the location of the researcher.

School A was selected from County one. County one is located in the southeastern part of one of the states utilized during this research study. This county has a population of approximately 949,114 according to the United States Census Bureau (2010). Including rural, suburban, and urban areas the county is diverse containing approximately 74% White, 23.7% Hispanic, 16.1% Black and 6.2% Asian population. County one is comprised of approximately 52 public high schools. Two schools met criteria a. through c. One school was ultimately selected due to convenience.
Within School A, the researcher scheduled meetings to review the letters of consent (Appendix G and H) with the superintendent and principal, respectively. During the initial meeting the overview, purpose, and timeline of the study were explained and presented by the researcher. The particularly sensitive topic of race was taken into account by the researcher and the necessity for confidentiality, professionalism, and discretion required with regard to student responses was conveyed to the administration.

During the meeting with the principal from School A, a couple of students were identified as potentially available based upon the aforementioned criteria \((n = 2)\). Those who were personally averse to discussing race, or who had been previously identified as students who were uncomfortable speaking about racial issues were eliminated to avoid any potential trauma caused by participation within the study. A guidance counselor from School A informed the principal that one of the students could not participate within the study based upon personal reasons that were not made available to the researcher. Subsequently one student was selected who identified himself as Black, had been within the district for seven years, and attended a school with a 1% Black student population.

Following the meeting, the researcher met with the school guidance counselor to introduce the study and schedule an opportunity to meet with the potential participant initially selected by the principal. During the meeting between the researcher, potential participant, and guidance counselor, the researcher provided the participant with an overview of the study along with a student assent letter (Appendix I) and a parent/guardian consent letter (Appendix I). At that meeting the researcher collected the student’s name and contact information as well as the contact information for one of his parents using the researcher developed Student Information Sheet (Appendix M).
parent was contacted that same day and provided with a detailed description of the study via telephone and e-mail.

Once the consent and assent forms were signed by the student participant and the parent/guardian, the researcher scheduled an individual interview at the student’s convenience. During the initial interview the student was asked to complete a demographic survey and provide the name and contact information for a parent/guardian and an educator the student felt would be comfortable with the researcher interviews regarding the student’s experience. Following the student interview, consent forms for educators (Appendix J) and parent/guardians (Appendix L) were completed.

**School B.** Although two different states were utilized the selection process for Schools B and C were similar to the process regarding the selection of School A. Schools B and C were selected from County two, which was located in the second state that was utilized during the research study. County two consisted of rural and suburban neighborhoods and had a population of approximately 916,828 according to the United States Census Bureau (2010). The county included some diversity consisting of 79.8% White, 18.7% Hispanic, 12.2% Black and, 5.5% Asian. Of the 56 high schools located within the county from which Schools B and C were selected, 23 of the schools contained three percent or fewer Black students. Five of the 23 schools within the county where distinguished by U.S. News (2015) as the top eight public high schools within the state. School B and School C were selected based upon the proximity to the location of the researcher.

Through e-mail communication, the researcher was able to obtain consent for the study from the superintendent and principal from School B. The principal met with the
researcher to review the list of students who potentially met the initial, aforementioned criteria. From the initial list of 14 students, six students were selected as potential participants by the principal and the guidance counselor. The principal and guidance counselor met to discuss personal issues that may have precluded the students from participating. Six of the Black students were participating in a program where they attended the school during the day and were then transported back to an urban area where they lived. Those six students who were being transported did not fit the criteria of being within the district for two to three years. The remaining two students were not selected based upon personal reasons that were not made available to the researcher. The principal suggested that the researcher create an informational protocol (Appendix N) to be used by the guidance counselors when they met with the students individually to introduce the research study to the students. Following the meeting with their respective guidance counselor, five of the six students agreed to meet with the researcher during their lunch hour the subsequent week. During the meeting the researcher provided each student with a Student Information Sheet (Appendix M) as well as student assent and parental/guardian consent forms (Appendix I). The researcher made a phone call, as well as e-mailed, the potential parents/guardians to address any questions or concerns they had regarding the study. Of the students who met with the researcher, four students agreed to participate within the study.

Individual interviews were scheduled at the students’ convenience following the receipt of the signed student assent and parent/guardian consent forms. While completing the initial demographic survey, each student was able to provide the researcher with an educator and a parent/guardian whom the student felt could be
comfortable with the researcher interviews on their behalf. The parent/guardian and the educator identified by the students were contacted and individual interviews were scheduled once the consent forms were received.

**School C.** A meeting was scheduled with the assistant superintendent from School C, once the researcher provided the administrative office with the purpose, overview, and potential benefits of the study via the Superintendent consent letter (Appendix G). Following the initial meeting, the researcher contacted the principal to schedule a meeting where the research study was explained. After signing the Principal Consent Form (Appendix H), she asked the researcher to submit a letter (Appendix I) to be sent to potential parents of the prospective students. The principal explained that she preferred the parents be contacted first. A letter was mailed to the homes of the parents/guardians of the potential participants. The school principal was contacted on four different occasions by the researcher to inquire about the responses of the potential participants. The principal stated that she had not received any responses. Eventually no students or parents responded to the letter.

Demographic data for schools students, parent/guardians, and educators are included in Tables 1 through 4, respectively.
Table 1

*Population Description*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Population Percentage from Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A</td>
<td>$n = 2$</td>
<td>$n = 1$</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>$n = 14$</td>
<td>$n = 4$</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School C</td>
<td>$n = 0$</td>
<td>$n = 0$</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 2**

*Description of Student Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Racial/Ethnic Status</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Bobby</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Black and Latino</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Student Government, National Honor Society, Band</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Calvin</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Track, Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Devin</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Black, White, and Latino</td>
<td>A/B</td>
<td>Soccer, National Honor Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Ezra</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Black and White</td>
<td>A/B</td>
<td>Chorus, Wrestling, Track</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: GPA = Grade Point Average*
### Table 3

**Description of Parent/Guardian Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Racial/Ethnic Status Parent</th>
<th>Additional Racial/Ethnic Status Parent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>Black</td>
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<td>Cathy</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debra</td>
<td>47</td>
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<td>White</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezra</td>
<td>53</td>
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<td>White</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4

**Description of Educator Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Racial/Ethnic Status</th>
<th>Years teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. A</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. B</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. C</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. D</td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. E</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Settings

School A. School A is situated within a community of approximately 4,737 as reported by the United States Census Bureau (2010). The estimated median income per household, as of 2012, was $121,905 according to Advameg (2012). Demographically, the town’s population is predominantly White, consisting of 93.4% White and 1.2% Black (United States Census Bureau, 2010). U.S. News (2015) reports that as of the 2012-2013 school year there were a total of 693 students attending the high school consisting of .1% American Indian, 2% Asian, 1% Black, 7% Hispanic, and 88% White, with students who identify as two or more races comprising the remaining 2%.

School B. School B was located within a community consisting of a population of approximately 18,062 as reported by the United States Census Bureau (2010). The estimated median income for the community per household was approximately $173,056 according to the Advameg (2012). The town was predominantly White, consisting of 92.3% White citizens and 1% Black citizens (United States Census Bureau, 2010). U.S. News (2015) reported that as of the 2012-2013 school year, there were a total of 1,309 students attending the school, consisting of 7% Asian, 2% Black, 3% Hispanic, and 88% White, with students who identify with two or more races comprising the remaining 1%.

School C. School C is located within a community consisting of a population of approximately 24,677 as reported by the United States Census Bureau (2010). The estimated median income for the community per household was approximately $107,354 according to the Advameg (2012). The town is predominantly White, consisting of 93.9% White citizens and 0.7% Black citizens (United States Census Bureau, 2010). U.S. News (2015) reports that as of the 2012-2013 school year, there were a total of 1,759
students attending the school consisting of 4% Asian, 1% Black, 4% Hispanic, and 90% White, with students who identify with two or more races comprising the remaining 1%.

**Research Questions**

This qualitative research study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions held by Black students regarding their academic, social, and personal experiences within a predominantly White, high performing secondary school?

2. What are the perceptions held by the educators of Black students regarding their experience within a predominantly White, high performing secondary school?

3. What are the perceptions held by the parents/guardians of Black students regarding their experience within a predominantly White, high performing secondary school?

**Research Design Description**

This study was completed utilizing a qualitative research design. It represents an interactive process between the researcher and the participants, where the researcher is the instrument by which the process of discovery and meaning regarding the lived experiences of the participants is inductively analyzed to the extent that meaning is derived as an outcome (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Creswell, 1998; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Merriam, 2009).

Within the umbrella of qualitative research, the researcher has selected a multicase study design among several traditions of qualitative research (Bogdan &
Biklen, 2007). Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) outline the essential components of case study research as follows, “…(a) the in-depth study of (b) one or more instances of a phenomenon (c) in its real-life context that (d) reflects the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon” (p. 447). In selecting a multiple case study design, the researcher was able to apply all aforementioned components of a quality case study design.

Completing in-depth interviews with the Black male students captured the real-life context of their perspectives and their experiences as Black males attending predominantly White, high performing secondary schools. For the purposes of this particular research study, one Black male student, one parent/guardian, and one educator represented a singular case. The purpose for selecting three different participants for each case was two-fold: (a) the use of multiple sources of information can facilitate the use of triangulation, which promotes the credibility of the data collection process, and (b) the utilization of multiple sources of information increases the propensity toward variation within the data. Merriam (2009) provided reasoning for the development of utilizing multiple cases, “The more cases included in a study, and the greater the variation across cases, the more compelling an interpretation is likely to be” (p. 49).

According to Yin (2003), each case utilized in a multicase study design must either be selected because it will reproduce replicable results or because the case will produce contrasting results. The cases selected for this study have similar characteristics and have provided replicable results, as well as contrasting views, on the same phenomena. A multiple case study design is essential for fields of study such as education, where a researcher is trying to understand the intricacies of a real-life
phenomenon where meaning can be developed to potentially inform policy and practice (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Merriam, 2009).

Instrumentation

Within a particular qualitative research study, the researcher is the primary instrument by which the data are collected and interpreted establishing the equivalent importance between the participants, data, and data collector (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Coupled with the researcher as the primary instrument collecting qualitative data, additional instruments were used in the study including qualitative semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, demographic surveys, field notes, a reflexive journal, and additional notes to supplement the data collection process (Bogdan & Biklen 2007; Merriam, 2009). The following sections describe the instruments utilized throughout this research study.

Student Demographic Survey

The researcher created survey (Appendix A) was designed to collect information regarding student demographics. The 13 questions include the following data: age, school achievement, grade level, interests, racial status, community involvement, and two open-ended questions designed to elicit specific information regarding the participant’s perspective of his school experience. Purposeful collection of demographic data serves multiple purposes within a qualitative research study, which include: (a) aiding the researcher in providing a thick description of participants; (b) providing the basis for transferability of the study; and (c) providing a variety of comparative characteristics across multiple cases (Krefting, 1991; Yin, 2003). The survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete.
Student Interview Protocol

Warren (2001) focused on the idea that the development of qualitative interview protocol questions should incorporate a portion of reviewed literature, but should be entirely dependent upon open-ended questions that are designed to elicit appropriate information from the participant as it relates specifically to the purpose of the research study.

The researcher created a 29-item student interview protocol (Appendix B) based upon the Scholar Identity Model developed by Whiting (2006). The Scholar Identity construct establishes the belief that Black and Latino males are capable of developing and possessing a scholarly male identity based on the following nine components: (a) masculinity, (b) racial identity, (c) academic self-confidence, (d) need for achievement vs. need for affiliation, (e) self-awareness (f) internal locus of control, (g) willingness to make sacrifices, (h) future orientation, and (i) self-efficacy (Whiting, 2006). The interview protocol also included questions based upon Ladson-Billings’ (2006) Critical Race Theory, and Bandura’s (1993) theory of self-efficacy.

The content validity regarding the student interview protocol was developed through the critical analysis of the aforementioned literature. A national expert in the field of Black studies, along with a qualitative research expert also validated the student interview protocol questions to establish content validity. Student interviews were scheduled for 60 – 90 minutes. Student interviews were conducted individually without a parent/guardian present.
Parent/Guardian Demographic Survey

The researcher-developed parent/guardian demographic survey (Appendix E) was designed to acquire information from the parent/guardian participant. The 9-item survey contained information regarding the parent/guardian’s (a) age, (b) gender, (c) occupation, (d) highest level of educational degree, and (e) two open-ended questions designed to gather information about the student participant’s school experiences from a parental or guardianship perspective. The survey was designed to take no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

Parent/Guardian Interview Protocol

Rubin and Rubin (1995) illustrated that within a qualitative interview protocol there are three types of questions to include: (a) main questions designed to elicit information central to the phenomenon; (b) probes designed to have the participant expand upon an original answer; and (c) follow-up questions designed to acquire additional information as it pertains to the main question. The 10-item parent/guardian interview protocol was designed based upon these criteria.

The parent/guardian interview protocol was designed, edited, and implemented based upon the development of the educator interview protocol to develop the ability to triangulate the adult interview responses with responses of the other members of each case. Interviews spanned a 90-minute timeframe.

Educator Demographic Survey

The educator demographic survey (Appendix C) was designed by the researcher to elicit information regarding data as it pertained to the educator. The 11 questions on the survey included the following information: (a) gender, (b) race, (c) age, (d) level of
education, (e) years involved in education, (f) familiarity with multicultural education, and (g) school type. Educators completed the survey in approximately 10 minutes.

**Educator Interview Protocol**

Warren (2001) advised that field-testing potential questions may enhance the quality of the questions being asked. Prior to the final revisions of the Educator Interview Protocol (Appendix D), the researcher conducted a focus group including eight teachers who were located in a school district in the Northeast. Following the focus group, modifications were made based upon the suggestions of the group members and the qualitative interview protocol outlined by Robin and Robin (2011). The educator interview was disaggregated into two distinct sections. The initial section of the protocol was designed to develop rapport with the educator while at the same time assess and understand the educator’s teaching philosophy and characteristics. Eight questions pertaining to the student were specifically asked in the remaining portion of this interview protocol.

The educator interview protocol was piloted with a group of eight teachers from a school district in the Northeastern United States. From the pilot, several changes were discussed and implemented. Language of the questions was modified to elicit responses that were concise and clear. Direct questions were transformed to open-ended questions to provide participants with the opportunity to share their experiences. Some of the follow-up questions were also eliminated to reduce redundancy. All interviews were scheduled for a 90-minute time period.
Field Notes

Field notes, as defined by Bogdan and Biklen (2007), were taken throughout the course of the interview using a digital recording pen. The researcher utilized the field notes to primarily record observable actions throughout the interview, as well as interesting comments or phrases that would require clarification before the conclusion of the interview. Reflexive field notes were kept as a part of the reflexive journal maintained by the researcher.

Reflexive Journal

Merriam (2009) identifies reflexivity, and the ability for the qualitative researcher to establish and identify any existing bias inherently held toward the topic of research, as a process to cultivate credibility within the study. Reflexive journaling occurred throughout the duration of the research. Within the electronic journal the researcher detailed meetings, events, interviews, observable behaviors, and reflective thoughts regarding the research process.

Audio Recordings and Transcriptions

All interviews were audio taped and transcribed according to the outline stipulated by Poland (2001). Poland (2001) states that the transcription quality is of utmost importance and should be reviewed by the researcher in an attempt to clarify any details that may have been missed during the original transcriptions of the audio recordings. Following the collection of the data, the researcher sent the audio files to a professional online transcription service. Once the researcher received the transcription files, he proceeded to listen to each interview while the document was on the computer screen so that the necessary edits could be made. Conducting each interview in a quiet
location while at the same time utilizing a high quality audio recording device, ensured high audio quality. All transcriptions were also sent to each participant to check for accuracy. No significant changes were made to any of the responses.

Data Collection Procedures and Timeline

The following schedule details the timeline and data collection procedures for the study:

1. Institutional Review Board (IRB) applications were submitted and approved (Appendix K) by December 2014.
2. Introductory e-mails, along with consent letters (Appendices G and H), were sent to superintendents and principals of Schools A, the principal of School B, and the assistant superintendent of School C in December 2014.
3. The researcher scheduled meetings and received consent forms from the superintendents and principals of schools A, B, and C throughout January and February, 2015.
4. The researcher met with all potential students within the study and received parent/guardian consent forms (Appendix I), and student assent forms (Appendix I) and for all participants between February 2015 and March 2015.
5. Individual interviews with student and parent/guardian participants were scheduled. Students and parent/guardians completed demographic surveys (Appendices A and E) and individual interview protocols (Appendices B and F) from February 2015 to April 2015.
6. Educator consent was received (Appendix J) and educators completed the demographic survey (Appendix C), along with the educator interview protocol (Appendix D) from February 2015 to June 2015.

7. Transcriptions of the individual interviews were completed immediately following the interview. Transcriptions were checked for accuracy and sent to the participants for member checking from March 2015 to June 2015.

8. Reflexive Journal entries along, with field notes, were recorded throughout the duration of the study.

9. Member checking occurred approximately a week after completing transcriptions.

10. Transcriptions were hand coded and analyzed from July 2015 to November 2015.

**Data Analyses**

Analysis of data is not only an integral part of the research process but it is important for a researcher to develop his or her own strategy regarding analysis based upon several factors (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Merriam (2009) established the fact that the interpretation of the data will provide a distinct insight into the lives of the participants from which the data are collected. Before beginning the initial coding, Corbin and Strauss suggest selecting from a multitude of coding strategies which include; (a) questioning, (b) constant comparison, (c) theoretical comparisons, and (d) complete review of all data prior to analysis.

Questioning involves asking the participant questions that will elicit information that will serve to inform the study (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Constant comparison
involves comparing and contrasting data across and within cases (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Theoretical comparisons involve ways of creating alternative methods by which a researcher can analyze and interpret the concepts that emerge from the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The last strategy outlined by Corbin and Strauss (2015) involves analyzing the data prior to coding and recording memos in an effort to aid in the development of initial codes once the coding process begins. For this study the researcher utilized questioning, constant comparisons, theoretical comparisons, and completed a complete review of all data prior to analysis.

**Coding**

Before the coding process could begin the researcher reviewed the field notes, interview transcripts, and demographic surveys pertaining to each of the participants in order to acquire an in-depth understanding of each person within context.

Questioning, as outlined by Corbin and Strauss (2015), is a process by which the researcher attempts to develop meaning from the data by asking questions based upon the raw data responses of each participant. As initial codes developed from the data the researcher utilized the technique of questioning to provide perspective when establishing all codes. Throughout the process, codes were revised and altered based upon interpretation.

Constant comparison, as defined by Corbin and Strauss (2015), includes comparing the results and answers to initial coding analysis to codes from alternative data analyses to confirm or compare the results. Throughout the data coding process the researcher completed constant comparison as responses from student participants,
parents, and teachers were compared; which aided in the establishment of concrete codes that were utilized to develop meaning.

Theoretical comparisons are utilized when a researcher is struggling to find meaning from the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Theoretical comparisons involve examining the data from a multitude of perspectives, asking theoretical questions, and exploring alternative definitions for the words that the researcher can use to derive meaning.

From the initial coding process 1000 codes emerged. Krefting (1991) discussed completing a code/re-code analysis in an attempt to alleviate the threat of a lack of dependability. A re-code was completed and those findings were compared to initial codes that were developed. Following the code/re-code analysis 900 codes were recorded. Analysis of those open codes helped to establish 17 categories. There were four categories that were omitted due to relevance to the study that included moving, miscellaneous, childhood, and lifestyle. Within each of these categories students shared individualized stories that contained information that did not pertain to the research questions and were not pertinent to the study. The 13 remaining categories were analyzed and substantiated by cross cases analyses and conflated in order to develop four salient themes. These data are located in Appendix O.

Chapter Summary

This chapter was designed to provide an in-depth description of the methodological processes involved within the data collection and analysis for the examination of the perceptions and experiences of Black males students in predominately White, high performing secondary schools. Additionally, this chapter provided a
contextualized understanding of the participants, setting, and parameters involved within the study. The chapter provided detailed information regarding the following sections: (a) researcher biography, (b) statement of ethics and confidentiality, (c) description of settings and participants, (d) research questions, (e) research design description, (f) instrumentation, (g) data collection procedures and timeline, and (h) data analyses. In depth analysis of the coding procedures, results from the findings, and a case-by-case analysis of all participants involved within the research study will be explained within Chapter Four.
CHAPTER FOUR:

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA AND EXPLANATION OF THE FINDINGS

The purpose of this research study was to examine the experiences and perceptions of Black male students who attended predominantly White, high performing secondary schools. Information utilized to inform the study was collected through a series of qualitative semi-structured interviews and demographic surveys designed to elicit candid perspectives as they related to the experiences of these particular Black male students. Throughout the process data were gathered and analyzed from the students themselves, a parent member of their choosing, and an educator selected by the student.

Chapter four details a discussion of the findings as they pertain to the interviews that were conducted with the students, parents/guardians, and educators. Including school and individual profiles focusing on the student participants, Chapter four also provides a brief description of the educator and parent/guardian participants. Following the description of participants, coding analyses and data collection procedures are explained. The chapter concludes with a discussion of themes followed by the categories utilized to substantiate those themes. The following research questions that guided the investigation are described below:

1. What are the perceptions held by Black students regarding their academic, social, and personal experiences within a predominantly White, high performing secondary school?

2. What are the perceptions held by the educators of Black students regarding their experience within a predominantly White, high performing secondary school?
3. What are the perceptions held by the parents/guardians of Black students regarding their experience within a predominantly White, high performing secondary school?

Individual interviews were conducted with 15 participants, during a four-month period, to answer the aforementioned research questions. Five students, five parents, and five educators were interviewed throughout the process. While 15 interviews were conducted in total, each case consisted of a student, a parent member, and an educator. Interviews with the parent members and the students were conducted at a location that was convenient for their travel. Educator interviews were all conducted at their respective schools.

Focusing on the multiple case design framework as explained by Merriam (2009) and Yin (2003), this study was designed to provide a minimum of three perspectives from each case, utilizing a triangulation of information that served to strengthen the integrity of the findings. A multiple case research design was conducive to understanding the complex social nature and the factors involved within the phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). Gall, Gall and Borg (2007), along with Merriam (2009), highlight the importance of the researcher as the essential conduit by which meaning is made from the collection of data through the qualitative interview research process.

Beginning with the profiles of the two school districts in which the research was conducted, this chapter will also outline the profiles for each participant within the five cases. Pseudonyms are used throughout the chapter to maintain the confidentiality related to the identities of the participants. Coding and data analysis procedures will be described followed by the development and explanation of themes generated from the
findings. Finally, research questions will be addressed based upon the analysis of information.

Description of Participants

Five students agreed to participate in the study. Those five students each identified a parent member and an educator who would subsequently be interviewed on the student’s behalf. All parent members agreed to be interviewed in person. Three of the five educators agreed to be interviewed in person, and two of the educators participated through e-mail communication.

The student participants identified themselves as being Black, male, high school students between the ages of 14-18. The five parent members, four mothers and one father, were between the ages of 45-57. The educator participants were between the ages of 30-59. Thirteen of the participants were interviewed individually, while two provided written responses via the Internet. The aforementioned participants were selected from two different counties in two bordering states, and included the two school districts described in the following section.

School Profiles

School A. School A’s mission was designed to create life long learners who possess the ability to solve problems both critically and creatively. The students who participated within the research study were able to substantiate this mission by providing examples of projects and assignments they experienced that fostered critical and creative thought. When speaking with the principal and the superintendent within School A, the researcher discovered that not only did they play an integral role in cultivating the mission, but they promoted the mission among the students, teachers, and community
members alike by having meetings and discussions regarding developing ways to fully utilize the principles that were present within the mission.

**Performance.** School A was one of the six schools in the county that was awarded the Blue Ribbon distinction based upon their dedication to academic success and their ability to develop life-long learners who positively contribute to society. The participants from the study who attended school A shared that they felt as though there was an academic standard and an expectation of success within the school. The participants also mentioned that the teachers were dedicated toward fostering student success as evidenced by the ability to stay with students, either after school or during their prep periods, in order to provide assistance when a student was struggling with a particular concept.

**Climate and Culture.** Outside of the standard of excellence for academics, educators in School A promoted tolerance and acceptance. Participants from School A were able to readily identify the fact that the students were generally accepting with regard to new students and students who had different backgrounds than their own. The teachers were also welcoming and always willing to help, according to the student participants. The principal and assistant principal provided programs for the students that fostered a value system highlighted by hard work, determination, and the development of a well-rounded human being.

**School B.** School B’s mission focused on developing students who were capable of making contributions to the global community through innovative and creative expression based upon authentic and personalized learning experiences. Participants involved within the study from School B spoke to the fact that inquiry was the driving
force behind their personal, academic exploration. The students mentioned that teachers supported their learning by staying after school and taking the extra time to help them with assignments. Programs, sports, clubs, and various activities that were discussed by the students highlighted the diversification present within the school, as well as the commitment from educators to develop global citizens who exemplified leadership, integrity, scholarship, and empathy.

Performance. The high school was ranked amongst the top 10 in the state according to the students and confirmed by US News and World Report (2015). The students mentioned that the teachers hired by the high school were not only competent, but were capable of providing them with an educational experience that reflected 21st century skills. After speaking with the superintendent and principal of the high school, the researcher realized that their leadership was an integral part of moving the mission forward. The principal walked through the school hallways with the researcher and knew both faculty and students by name. Academic success, coupled with being prepared post high school, was a common theme throughout the interviews with the students.

Climate and Culture

The academic standard of excellence was one of the many attributes of the high school that emerged throughout the student interviews. The high school provided a multitude of programs that promoted student engagement in the drive to develop well-rounded young men and women. The focus on academic success and school pride was readily apparent when students spoke about the personal academic success they experienced, as well as their pride in participating within such organizations as the honor society, the Kiwanis club, the track team, and student government.
Case 1 – Andrew. Information to participate within the study was presented to Andrew through his guidance counselor. He agreed to meet with the researcher to discuss the project in further detail. Following that meeting, Andrew recommended that his mother and his track coach be interviewed. Both Andrew and his mother were not only excited about the purpose of the project, they were extremely interested in participating. Andrew and his mother were interviewed at their home on a Saturday afternoon in the spring of 2015. The interview with his coach was conducted at school after regular school hours. Throughout his interview Andrew was expressive and communicative. He was able to articulate his thoughts regarding his academic interests, race, and other aspects relating to his overall experience as a Black male who attended a predominately White, high performing secondary school.

Andrew. At the time of the interview Andrew was a 14-year-old freshman in high school. Attending high school in a small suburban community located in the Northeast, Andrew moved into the community at the end of his 2nd grade year while in elementary school. Within the small community, Andrew lived with his mother, father, and his two sisters. Andrew grew up in a bi-racial household. His mother was Black and his father was White. Andrew identified himself as a Black young man. As a student, Andrew was interested in English. Andrew also served as a counselor-in-training at a local summer camp for kids outside of school. Andrews was also a member of the Winter and Spring track teams at his school.

Transition to a Predominately White School Environment. Entering school in a new community that demographically consisted of an 88% White population was an
adjustment for Andrew, who had previously come from a semi-urban area where the population consisted of 49% White, 27% Hispanic, and 18% Black. Andrew was able to adapt to the new environment and make friends within the school community effectively. He stated that race in elementary school was not a substantial factor in the determination of the kind of person he was or who he could be. Throughout the transition, Andrew mentioned that he would continuously seek support from his parents whenever he needed to talk. Communicating with his sisters daily, along with conversations with his parents regarding race, school, and life, Andrew’s family has fostered an environment where various experiences can be shared and explored. Andrew and Anna (his mother) both shared a story about an article they read concerning President Obama’s race. Andrew concluded that it was important to him to be identified as a Black student, especially in an all-white environment. Both Anna and Andrew’s father agreed with his decision to identify as a Black young man.

Andrew’s Mom (Anna). Anna, a 48-year-old Black female, was a real estate agent. Growing up in middle to upper class neighborhoods, Anna was afforded the opportunity to attend a private school. She was able to empathize with Andrew based upon the fact that while she was attending her private school, she was the only Black female student within her school environment. Anna received her Bachelors of Arts degree and believed that a well-rounded, education where Andrew was exposed to a plethora of experiences, would enable him to have a successful life. Regarding the education that Andrew was currently receiving, Anna stated that she believed he was receiving a fantastic education and believed that the students and teachers were
wonderful. She expected Andrew to be happy and successful in life, regardless of which avenue he pursued regarding a professional career.

Andrew was close with both of his sisters, who were four and six years older, and relied on them for support and guidance. Supporting and always involved in Andrew’s academic and athletic interests, Andrew’s mother Anna had successfully raised three young people who believed in the importance of education as evidenced by the pursuit of their high school and college degrees. Anna was always supportive and willing to have conversations with Andrew to provide him with guidance. Upon entering middle school, Andrew struggled with his personal concept of his own race. Anna was able to provide guidance by presenting Andrew with reading materials and conversations that included articles and books written by bi-racial authors who described their own experiences growing up with a similar racial identity.

Serving as a role model for Andrew, Andrew’s father was someone who Andrew aspired to be one day. Andrew’s father was an executive for a marketing firm in New York City. Andrew described his father as the model of what a man should be. From his personality, to his socially inclusive nature, to his business savvy and understanding of the world around him, Andrew admired and emulated his father.

**High School.** Andrew did well academically. At the time of the study he had a B average throughout all of his classes and was actively engaged as a student participant in all subject areas. Andrew stated that whenever he was having difficulty in a particular class he was able to attend extra help sessions to cultivate an effective student-teacher relationship, as well as gain knowledge in the areas where he was lacking.
Andrew is also a member of the track team, where he has emerged as one of the most talented sprinters. According to his coach, Andrew’s tremendous work ethic, respectful attitude, and ability to implicitly understand that his effort directly impacts his performance outcomes make him a pleasure to coach.

Andrew’s Educator (Mr. A). Mr. A was an English teacher and Andrew’s track coach at the small suburban school in the Northeast. Mr. A was between 50-59 years old and had been teaching for 29 years. Andrew was a member of Mr. A’s track team and had been able to improve his sprinting time tremendously under his coach’s tutelage. Mr. A mentioned that Andrew was a hard working young man who possessed an abundance of natural ability, which could be capitalized upon through his effort and hard work.

Case Study 2 – Bobby. Bobby received information to participate in the research study from his guidance counselor. The principal was able to initiate a meeting between the participant and the researcher during school hours. Following that meeting, Bobby selected his mother and a school guidance counselor to participate in the study on his behalf. Interviews with Bobby and his mother were scheduled simultaneously. Bobby was interviewed in the spring of 2015 at a local library. Two weeks later his mother was interviewed at the same local library. Bobby’s educator was interviewed electronically through e-mail in late, spring 2015. During the initial meeting with Bobby, he mentioned that he was eager to participate within the study. Throughout the interview, Bobby provided a detailed account of his experiences of being a Black male within a predominately White, high performing, secondary school.

Bobby. At the time of the interview Bobby was a 16-year-old sophomore in high school. At the age of five, Bobby moved into this affluent community located in the
northeast United States and began his academic career within this community in the first grade. Although Bobby lived with his mother, he still found the time to spend with his half-sister and his father. Although Bobby identified as African-American, his mother was of Hispanic decent and his father was African-American. Within school, Bobby’s academic interests included science, specifically biology and chemistry. While earning straight A’s within his academic subjects, Bobby served as the sophomore class president, a member of the Boy Scouts, the Jazz band, and the National Honor Society. Bobby described the students as passive and easy going.

Transition to a predominantly White School. The transition to a new community that was predominantly White and middle to upper class, generated concern for Bobby’s mother, Barbara. Prior to her move, Barbara lived within a community that was more diverse. She received discouraging comments from her friends about moving to the new community. After conducting research into the quality of the school systems in several communities, Barbara decided to select the particular school district which Bobby attended. Bobby credited his mother with the success that he experienced throughout his time in school, stating that he would not be who he was today if it had not been for her support and guidance.

Bobby’s mom (Barbara). Barbara was a 45-year-old female who worked as a program manager. Throughout her younger years, Barbara grew up in a large city with two parents who did not speak English, having found their way to America from Columbia and the Dominican Republic. Barbara stated that, at an early age, the foundation for her life became education. She mentioned that she saw education as a means to improve her life. While her father worked as a taxi driver and her mother as a
factory worker, Barbara had to create opportunities within her education where she could succeed. Barbara was able to support herself through college and graduated with a Masters degree.

Understanding the importance of education, Barbara effectively expressed the importance of education as it related to opportunities for Bobby to achieve. Bobby and Barbara mentioned that education was the primary focus for both of their lives and the primary means to accomplish their goals.

At the time of this interview, Bobby still remained in contact with his half-sister. He also had the opportunity to spend time with his father whenever he could. He appreciated the time that he spent with his family and received much of his knowledge of African American culture from his father’s side of the family.

**High School.** At the time of the interview, Bobby was the sophomore class president of his high school. Bobby was proud of his academic accomplishments, as well as his involvement in school activities such as the band ensemble, student government, the school climate committee, and the National Honor Society.

The principal described Bobby as one of the brightest leaders within the student body. When speaking with Bobby’s guidance counselor, she described Bobby as being an intelligent, hard working young man who possessed a willingness to grow and a desire to learn.

**Bobby’s Educator (Mrs. B).** Mrs. B was selected by Bobby to participate within the research study. Mrs. B was a 40-49 year old guidance counselor who earned a masters degree and had been in education for 17 years. Mrs. B became a guidance counselor because she enjoyed helping students achieve their personal, emotional, and
social goals while they were at the high school level. Bobby’s leadership capabilities coupled with his academic success, impressed Mrs. B.

**Case Study 3 – Calvin.** His school guidance counselor gave Calvin information regarding the opportunity to participate within this research project. The principal of the school was able to coordinate a meeting, at which the researcher sat down to discuss the research study with Calvin. During that meeting, Calvin had some trepidation regarding participating within the research project due to an expressed lack of time within his school and extracurricular activity schedule. The researcher was able to develop a tremendous rapport with Calvin, which eventually enabled Calvin to find the time to participate in the study and to select his mother and his guidance counselor as the parent and educator participants within the study. The interviews for Calvin and his mother were conducted a week apart at a local library during the spring of 2015. During the interview Calvin was able to provide insight into his school experiences as a Black male student who attended a predominately White, high performing secondary school.

**Calvin**

At the time of the interview Calving was an 18-year-old senior in high school. Calvin was born and raised within the community and his mother has also been a member of the community since she was born. Calvin was a self-described introvert who enjoyed math, science, participating in dance, theater, athletics, and also enjoyed playing video games. Calvin resides within the community, living with his mother and father. Calvin had one older brother, who was a junior in college. Calvin described the student body as being very welcoming to all interests. Due to the lack of diversity within the community, Calvin’s mom provided the opportunity for him to participate in Jack and Jill. Jack and
Jill is an upper class Black social club that provided the members of the organization with different opportunities to learn and experience African-American culture.

**Attending a predominantly White school.** Within the community there was a lack of diversity in the school population, with less than 3% of the students being classified as Black. Calvin had the opportunity to develop friendships and bonds with other young Black men and women through the Jack and Jill organization. Calvin described himself as a quiet observer regarding social interactions. Both Calvin and his guidance counselor mentioned that Calvin had a tendency to be unnecessarily singled out because of his larger stature and his race. Calvin’s parents were both of African-American descent. Calvin’s mother mentioned that although the school lacked diversity, Calvin had been able to develop racial pride based upon conversations that occurred within his home and through his participation with Jack and Jill. Calvin’s father shared stories about the legacy of his family that date back to one of Calvin’s family members participating in the Tuskegee Institute. Calvin’s mother also talked with Calvin about her lineage as a Black person living in a predominantly White environment and thriving based upon her family’s belief in their abilities and their prominence within the community.

**Calvin’s mom (Cathy).** Calvin’s mother Cathy was a 57-year-old Black woman who had her master’s degree and worked in commodities. Cathy was born and lived within the community, and her mother was a prominent member of the community church and a respected author. Both of Cathy’s parents were African-American. Cathy mentioned that she wanted Calvin to be successful within his life irrespective of the
avenue he pursued. According to Cathy, education was an integral part of Calvin’s life and she believed it would provide him with the opportunity to achieve his goals.

Calvin’s father and grandfather were two men who Calvin admired. Calvin’s father was a successful lawyer. With different personalities, Calvin’s dad was more of an action-oriented person, whereas his mother was more of an observer. Calvin considered himself to be a combination of these two distinct personality characteristics.

**High School.** Calvin experienced some difficulty throughout his senior year. His mother reported that Calvin struggled to turn in assignments on time, which negatively impacted Calvin’s ability to achieve academically. Calvin stated that in order to create a greater opportunity for personal success in high school, he would need to improve his time management skills. When it came to his daily attendance in high school, Calvin stated that he enjoyed the process of learning but did not enjoy all of the assignments that were involved within the process. Calvin was currently applying to get into several colleges with the help of his guidance counselor Mrs. C.

**Calvin’s Educator (Mrs. C).** Mrs. C was a guidance counselor at Calvin’s school. Mrs. C was between the ages of 50-59 and had a Master’s degree, coupled with a 6th year professional certificate. After 23 years in the field of education, Mrs. C still mentioned that the students were her reason for coming to work each and every day and stated she wanted to make a difference in the lives of the students she was working with. Mrs. C believed that Calvin had a unique set of talents that would ultimately guide him toward a successful future.

**Case Study 4 – Devin.** Devin received information from his guidance counselor regarding the breadth and scope of the study. The building principal, in coordination
with the school guidance counselor, arranged a meeting between the researcher and Devin. Throughout the meeting Devin asked several questions regarding the purpose and details of the study. Providing a unique perspective due to his multicultural background, Devin was interested in participating within the study. Devin selected his former English teacher, Mrs. D, and his mother, Debra, to be interviewed by the researcher on his behalf. The interviews with Devin and Debra were scheduled and conducted on the same day at the local library in the spring of 2015. Devin was able to provide pertinent information regarding his experiences not only living in the community; but also regarding his experiences as they pertained to his multicultural background growing up in a predominantly White community.

**Devin.** At the time of the interview Devin was a 16-year-old junior in high school. Devin transitioned into this school system when he was in the sixth grade. He was a self-described extrovert, who derived his energy and enthusiasm from the people around him. Devin had two younger sisters, one of whom was eight and the other had just begun her freshman year in high school at the time of this study. When asked about his relationship with his sisters, Devin described his sisters as having a special bond with him characterized by spending time together and supporting each other. Residing in the community with both of his parents and his sisters, Devin mentioned that he had a good relationship with both of his parents and he felt as though his mom was his biggest supporter. While immersing himself in the different school clubs in which he was a member, Devin also participated on the soccer and track teams, while still having enough time to volunteer for local fundraising activities. When describing the student body,
Devin stated that students were friendly and supportive, but that students were very similar to one another.

**Transition to a predominantly White school.** Devin was born and raised in New York City. Arriving in the community was a change that required tremendous assimilation. Culturally, Devin came from an eclectic family representing multiple cultures. Devin’s mother was a White woman from Australia and his father was a Black man who was part Asian as well. Growing up in New York City, Devin was exposed to a multitude of cultures and races that did not reflect his own. Devin described the community he lived in as being culturally homogeneous. Being accepted within the community was an aspect of the transition that made it easier for Devin. His friendly and outgoing personality allowed him to make friends and develop relationships with people within the community. His teacher, Mrs. D, described Devin as a wonderful kid who was genuinely interested in learning.

**Devin’s mom (Debra).** Debra was a 47-year-old architect with a Bachelors Degree. She grew up in Australia and stated that she completed her degree within a system that had distinctly different values from the educational system within the community where she was residing. Highlighting the major difference between the American education her son was receiving and the education she received, Debra stated that American education was focused on test scores, and her schooling in Australia focused on learning. Debra had the kids focus on completing extra curricular activities that contribute to society and the world at-large. Describing her family, Debra stated that the family members supported one another by always discussing subjects that were important, as well as attending different family events together. Both, Devin and Debra
shared stories of traveling to Arizona and California together. Debra had taken the kids to Haiti where they volunteered during a few weeks one summer, to try to instill in them the value of human life and sacrifice.

Devin was especially close with his sisters and father. He shared a story about leaving for a college visit and having his sisters constantly communicating with him throughout the trip and asking when he would arrive back home because they missed him. Devin’s father was a role model for Devin. Devin’s father was a businessman in the city and Devin mentioned that he looked to him as a role model based upon the character, work ethic, and determination he embodied while at work and at home.

**High School.** Within high school, some of Devin’s academic interests included environmental science, journalism, and music. Experiencing academic success throughout high school, Devin received mostly A’s and B’s within his academic classes. Devin credited some of his success to the quality of the teachers and the education he received. The ability to develop effective teacher-student relationships, where mutual respect and listening were the key components, was something that Devin enjoyed immensely.

As a member of the high school soccer team, Devin also had a tremendous relationship with his coach. Devin stated that his coach was a tough coach, who had high expectations for all of his players, but was also willing to do anything to support his players whether it was inside or outside of school.

**Devin’s Educator (Mrs. D).** Mrs. D was a White English teacher between the age of 30-39 who had been teaching for eight years and had her master’s degree. Mrs. D was Devin’s English teacher during his sophomore year. Mrs. D’s motivation for teaching
was to make connections with students and to make a difference in the world through teaching literature. She mentioned that she was able to develop a relationship with Devin that was characterized by mutual respect and a desire to learn. Mrs. D described Devin as a polite young man, at the top of his class, who possessed the ability to seek her out to improve upon his understanding when he needed help with various concepts.

**Case Study 5 – Ezra.** Ezra was notified through and provided information regarding the study from his guidance counselor. A meeting was scheduled between the researcher and Ezra to disclose and discuss additional information about the study. During the meeting, Ezra and the researcher developed a rapport through similarities they found within their own lives. Ezra was able to provide the researcher with some pertinent background information regarding his family. Following the meeting, Ezra agreed to participate within the research study and selected his father and one of his English teachers to participate on his behalf. The interviews for Ezra along with his father were scheduled on two different days during the spring of 2015 at the local library. Ezra was able to provide information regarding his perspectives and experiences as a young Black male within a predominantly White community.

**Ezra**

At the time of the interview, Ezra was a 17-year-old junior in high school. He was born and raised in the community where he resided with his mother, father, and two older brothers who were three and six years older than him. Academically, Ezra had shown a particular interest in mathematics and English. Music production and creation were aspects of music that interested him. Ezra was hoping to pursue a career with music following completion of high school.
Ezra was an active member of several clubs and athletic teams including wrestling, track and field, theater, Kiwanis club, and the Church youth organization. When speaking about his school, Ezra mentioned that the majority of the teachers and students were kind, supportive, and receptive; however, there were a number of people within the school who could be negative and lacked knowledge regarding cultural tolerance. Ezra took pride in being an African-American and worked diligently to develop positive relationships with all members of the student body.

**Living in a predominantly White school.** Ezra adapted to growing up in a predominantly White environment. Ezra mentioned that although he gets along with a majority of the students, there were still a number of students who made pejorative comments and possessed ignorant views that were based upon accumulated stereotypes about Black students that have been cultivated through media and the news.

Ezra’s father mentioned a kindergarten teacher who had acted upon the assumptions that she made regarding Ezra’s capabilities based upon previous experiences with other Black students. Both Ezra and his father, Edward, stated that the few negative expectations that teachers had with regard to Ezra based upon his race have served as motivating factors contributing to Ezra’s continued progress and desire to break the typical stereotypes people may hold. Ezra believed that he was receiving a tremendous education and that the support from his family provided through conversations and discussions had truly helped him to grow into the student he was today. Ezra spoke specifically about the role of faith within his life. Ezra’s father had spoken with Ezra about the fact that his identity was not distinctly tied to the social construction of what
other people believed he should be, but it should be Ezra’s faith in God that determines who he is.

**Ezra’s dad (Edward).** Ezra’s dad was a 53-year-old pastor who had his Masters Degree. Edward described Ezra as a popular “people person” who was both athletically and musically talented, with a nuanced perspective of the world. Edward believed that education played an integral role within Ezra’s life and will impact his ability to think broadly, with an expanded vocabulary. With God playing a central role in Ezra’s life, Edward hoped that spirituality would guide Ezra’s life and future decision-making. Edward described his high school as an elite public high school that was vastly White, with a culture of academic excellence.

Ezra described his family members as possessing different personality traits. Ezra said he embodied the characteristics of his mother. Ezra’s mother was creative, passionate, and seriously invested in music as evidenced by her career within the music industry. Ezra described his father as a serious logical thinker who was highly detail-oriented.

Ezra’s brothers have served as role models. While Ezra compared himself to each of his brothers, he stated that he did not follow their life choices because he wanted to be unique and set his own path based upon information that he had gathered throughout the years.

**High School.** Describing himself as an intelligent student who received mostly A’s and B’s, Ezra mentioned that the current educational system was not conducive to his style of learning. Thinking, both critically and creatively, were aspects of education that Ezra valued, but he believed these ways of thinking were rarely considered or explored in
the present educational environment. Ezra provided as examples, students who were adept at memorization that do well on tests where regurgitation was required, but did not have anything valuable to add during class discussions. Ezra also stated that projects he completed for his class did not require much thinking; yet, they focused on following a certain set of finite steps to arrive at a conclusion.

Ezra was appreciative of the teachers who took the time to help students and were able to develop effective student-teacher relationships. Ezra was an active participant in classes where he felt comfortable as described by Mrs. E, Ezra’s English teacher. Mrs. E was the type of teacher who Ezra preferred based upon her teaching style and personality.

**Ezra’s Educator (Mrs. E).** Mrs. E was a White English teacher who was between the ages of 40-49 and has her Masters Degree. Mrs. E had been teaching for 22 years and at the time of the study she was Ezra’s freshman English teacher. Mrs. E was motivated to teach because she loved books and she loved reading. Students who possess a desire to learn and an appreciation of literature also motivated her. Mrs. E believed there were valuable life lessons to be learned within literature.

**Coding and Analysis Procedures**

**Pre-Coding Procedures**

Following the initial interviews, all audio recordings were professionally transcribed. With considerable meticulousness, the researcher examined the integrity of the transcriptions by aligning them with the audio recordings collected previously. During this process, the researcher was able to make the necessary edits regarding format and minor transcription errors. Throughout the revising process, the researcher additionally reviewed the transcripts and recorded notes with regard to particular points
of interests within the data. Detailed notes regarding reactions and answers to questions were also recorded to provide context for some of the complex issues presented throughout the duration of the interview. This note taking served as a process as recommended by Corbin & Strauss (2015). Corbin and Strauss (2015) suggest reading the interview transcript in its entirety before beginning the coding process. They explained, “The idea behind the first reading is to enter vicariously into the life of participants, feel what they are experiencing, and listen to what they are saying through their words or actions” (2015, p. 86).

**Coding Methods**

HyperRESEARCH (Salliard, 2011) was the digital computer aided qualitative analysis software (CAQDAS) program utilized by the researcher to analyze all data. The computer program allowed the researcher to digitally load each of the transcripts into the program. Once loaded within the computer system, the researcher was able to code the data according to the inductive method guidelines of data analysis outlined by Corbin and Strauss (2015). Establishing an inductive approach allowed the researcher to complete analysis using a variety of methods, eventually selecting the strategies most conducive for effective analysis of that data.

Corbin and Strauss (2015) described a coding process involving pre-coding, the utilizations of concepts, categories, and ideas that aid in the process toward theme development. During the pre-coding phase the researcher read each interview in its entirety, along with reading the interview field notes. During that phase the researcher utilized questioning and constant comparison to began to identify information within the
interview transcripts that would be pertinent to the study. Through the experience the researcher was able to gather the perspective regarding each participant within the study.

Notes and initial concepts were recorded and hand coded during the second reading of the interview transcripts. Theoretical comparisons were made between concepts in an effort to formulate differentiated ways of considering the concepts. Concepts, as described by Corbin and Strauss (2015), are ideas that are examined and either become initial codes or later discarded, based upon a lack of substantiation from subsequent data findings. During the initial coding phase, the researcher invoked a method of In vivo coding described by Corbin and Strauss (2015) as the development of concepts using the actual words of the participant. An inductive exploratory method was utilized for initial coding. Corbin and Strauss (2015) describe inductive exploratory method of coding as a process by which researcher completes some initial coding, followed by an exploration of additional codes, where codes are then compared and synthesized.

Interview transcripts were transferred to the HyperRESEARCH program. Final initial coding based upon literature review, applied theories, research questions, and interview protocols were conducted at that time. A code-book was maintained throughout the process that detailed the initial codes and In vivo codes, along with the categories related to each code.

All codes were compared across student cases. Certain codes were collapsed within categories when appropriate. Codes and categories from each student were utilized to develop themes. Codes and categories from each educator and parent member were also utilized based upon their relevancy to a particular student theme. The themes,
formed from categories derived from the student, teacher, and parent open codes can be found in Appendix O.

**Theme Development**

Themes are characterized as essential ideas emerging from the data that help to derive meaning and understanding regarding the experiences of the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Merriam, 2009). Themes were found using the following process: (a) an inductive exploratory method of coding was used to understand each response or response fragment, (b) categories were established by collapsing codes, and (c) thematic statements were created that expressed key ideas and emotions which encapsulated the experience of the Black male students, the educators’ perceptions, and the perceptions of the parent members. Following the completion of the coding process, four major themes emerged from the data as described below:

1. **Who I Am:** although there are stereotypes typically associated with being Black, being Black is just a factor or a difference, furthermore, race does not define who these students are, yet their beliefs, families and interests shape the young men they have become.

2. **My World:** despite the existence of microaggressions, the local community, school community, teachers, and friends have provided an environment that is conducive towards academic success, while attempting to understand and accept differences.

3. **Who I Want to be:** in developing ideas of individually defined success, the future plans and locus of control of these young men are impacted by several factors.
4. My Inspiration: Although role models may not have been clearly identified, the existence of someone who the students wanted to emulate was readily apparent.

Confirmability Audit

Confirmability was addressed regarding the coding process and the development of the aforementioned themes. An audit trail was completed by an highly qualified independent third party and can be found in Appendix P.

Discussion of Themes

Detailed within this section are the four themes that emerged from the coding process. Each theme was supported and substantiated by statements that were coded and analyzed from each student, parent, and educator who participated in the study. Supportive statements were derived from direct quotes, paraphrased responses of participants, and researcher interpretations of the data, including field notes, concepts, initial codes and categories. Pseudonyms were utilized throughout the study and will continue to be present within this section in an attempt to maintain confidentiality.

The four major themes will be described within the following section. Each theme will be described as it relates to the experiences of the participants. Following the description of the theme, the categories that substantiate the theme will be described. Quotes, paraphrased statements, and interpretations of the data will be expressed from each student, educator, and parent participant as they relate to the specific category and the overarching theme.

Theme 1: Who I Am

An analysis of the data led to the following synthesized explanation of this theme: Although there are stereotypes typically associated with being Black, being Black was
just a factor or a difference, furthermore, race does not define who these students are, yet their beliefs, families and interests shape the young men they have become.

The young men who were interviewed mentioned several factors regarding the impact of being Black and how their race helped to shape not only their perceptions of the world around them but also their personal belief systems, their views of their families and how their interests helped to mold the young men they have become. Teachers, parents, and students alike expressed views on race and the impact of being Black in a predominantly White community. The following categories were aggregated to provide supporting evidence for this theme: being Black, family, beliefs, race, self-description, and personality.

**Being Black.** Andrew mentioned that being Black was a positive aspect of his life and that it was an adjustment moving to a school that had a predominantly White student body and faculty. Andrew also stated that being Black in this school was important to him because it gave him the opportunity to become a role model within the school, providing him with the opportunity to breakdown stereotypes that may have existed on the part of other students who have not had exposure to many Black people. Andrew’s mom, Anna, stated that she was proud of the fact that Andrew embraced his African-American heritage and hoped that he would continue to take pride in the fact that he was Black. When discussing the impact of being Black in America, Anna said, “Black men and boys face unique challenges.” When discussing Andrew, his coach, Mr. A stated that although Andrew “feels some level of difference because of his race” he continued to take pride in that difference and was emerging as a talented runner on the team.
When asked if being Black impacted his life, Bobby responded, “Being Black does not have a huge impact on my life.” Although Bobby expressed pride when it came to describing his father’s African American lineage, he described being Black within this particular community as an “indifferent dash.” Bobby alluded to the fact that at some point in the path of his educational career there may have been some teachers who expected Bobby to underperform based on his heritage, however, Bobby explained, “Once a teacher gets to know who I am, they will understand that I am more than just a skin color.” Bobby’s mother, Barbara, echoed Bobby’s sentiments regarding his being Black when she stated, “being Black does not affect Bobby.” Mrs. B shared her thoughts regarding Bobby’s being Black when she stated, “Bobby has had to work hard as a young Black man to accomplish his goals.”

According to Calvin being Black was, “just a characteristic.” Regarding the impact that being Black has on others’ expectations for him Calvin stated, “Being Black is a factor in the expectations people have of you.” Recognizing that his height and stature also impact the way people view Calvin, he mentioned that being Black, along with his stature, causes him to standout in a largely White community. Calvin was 6’5” and close to 300 pounds. Cathy, Calvin’s mother, stated that Calvin was aware of his racial difference but did not like to talk about it. Within the community, Cathy mentioned that Calvin stood out based upon his stature and race. Mrs. C expressed views that coincided with Calvin’s perception, as well as his mother’s perception of him, by stating that race did play a role in the perception of people and because Calvin was large and Black, he could be perceived as threatening.
In a similar manner to Andrew, Bobby, and Calvin, Devin recognized that being Black was a part of who he was. Regarding the impact of being Black Devin explained, “Being Black affects your viewpoint and someone who is White can’t experience that viewpoint because they are not Black.” Defining someone according to skin color was an idea that Devin completely disagrees with when he stated, “being Black or any color should not define the type of person that you are.” Although being Black does not define Devin as a person, he recognized that being Black causes you to be viewed differently, especially in a town with a predominantly White population.

Devin’s mother, Debra, stated, “being Black means that you have to be perfect.” Debra talked about her husband having to dress in a suit and tie and conduct himself in the most professional manner in all situations because of certain expectations that have been placed on Black men and boys. Anna alluded to this concept earlier when she mentioned that life was difficult for Black males in American society. Debra continued to explain that because Black males have certain negative stereotypes typically associated with them, her husband had to exceed expectations just to be seen as an equal. Devin’s teacher, Mrs. D, mentioned that although she thought race played a factor in the perception people have of Black people, she hadn’t noticed Devin’s race impacting him.

Ezra was creative. He enjoyed being different and considered it a distinguishing characteristic of which he was extremely proud. Ezra described himself as and original and aspired to be someone who sets trends and pushes thinking forward. He reveled in his differences.

Ezra stated, “…being Black in an all White school has been a positive experience.” Being Black was not only a difference that Ezra was always aware of, but it
has impacted the way he was viewed by other people. Ezra described his frustration with being Black, “The most aggravating part is when people speak to me as if my identity is supposed to be tied to the color of my skin and that stereotypes that come along with them.” Ezra also discussed the fact that people would make assumptions based on his race. Edward, Ezra’s dad, echoed his sentiments by stating, “perceptions are often comingled with stereotypes.” Edward also stated that although race does not determine who you are, it might be a determining factor in shaping your personality. Mrs. E mentioned that she believed that race was a factor that determined the perception people have of Black students, and that being Black must be difficult.

The students never identified their white classmates as having an advantage based upon their race. McIntosh (1988) describes white privilege as… “the invisible packaging of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was meant to remain oblivious” (p. 94-95). Although white privilege has been established within environments similar to the one in which the research was conducted the students did not make mention of this concept during the interview process.

**Family.** References to family served as an integral part of each participant’s interview responses. Several of the students stated that their families were the foundational structure from which they were able to develop their value system. Andrew stated that he had a “close family relationship” with is sisters, mother, and father. When speaking about his father, Andrew stated, “I look up to my dad.” Learned values regarding hard work, determination, and work ethic came from the home according to Andrew’s mother, Anna. Anna went on to describe the relationship that Andrew had with his father by stating, “There isn’t anybody on earth he admires more than his dad.”
Mr. A alluded to the fact that the values that were instilled at home were readily apparent at school explaining, “You can tell that he has learned respect at home.”

Similarly to Andrew’s close relationship with his father, Bobby illustrated that he had a tremendous relationship with his mother by stating, “without my mom I would not be the person I am today.” Bobby went on to state that he has learned from his mom’s challenges in life and that he credits his mom with showing him how to be a good person. Barbara, Bobby’s mom, reciprocated his feelings explaining that Bobby meant the world to her and that she supported her son’s goals. “I motivated him to become the class president,” said Barbara, when speaking about what she has done to help her son achieve his goals. Mrs. B, Bobby’s school counselor, understood the relationship that Bobby had with his mother explaining, “Bobby has great respect for his mother.”

Calvin was close with his brother and he mentioned his “family is supportive.” Much of what Calvin had learned about success came from his parents. Through observation and discussions Calvin stated that he “learned valuable life lessons” from his parents. Cathy, Calvin’s mom, said that when it comes to family they believe in “celebrating our kids.” Calvin’s guidance counselor, Mrs. C, mentioned that she knew family support was important and that Calvin’s participation in the Jack and Jill program was important to his mother.

Regarding his family, Devin stated that he tried to, “Mimic his parent’s footsteps.” Not only did Devin mention having a close relationship with his sisters, but he also mentioned that he was extremely close with his parents and has learned respect and how to work hard by following their examples. Devin’s mom mentioned that Devin learned quite a bit from his dad, especially through experience of taking the family to
Haiti to complete a project where they worked with people who were less fortunate for a couple of weeks during the summer. Mrs. D, Devin’s teacher, mentioned that Devin would share personal stories with her about his family in an attempt to build a positive student-teacher relationship.

Similar to the other participants, Ezra came from a close family where he had been able to develop an especially close relationship with his mom. Ezra explained that he has learned so much from his mom because they have such similar personalities. When asked about the influence of his parents, Ezra stated that, “I have been influenced by my family . . . my parents are competitive and that has helped me to be competitive.” Edward, Ezra’s father, mentioned that his family, “walks in great favor within the community” and that his family has a standard of excellence by which they lived their lives based on faith and God. Mrs. E, Ezra’s teacher shared a story about Ezra wanting to cut his hair in class. Ezra wanted to cut his hair because he enjoyed entertaining the class and thought that cutting his hair would be a fun thing to do. After speaking with Ezra’s mother on the phone prior to the hair cutting Mrs. E. learned Ezra had his mother’s full support.

Race. Throughout the study race was mentioned numerous times and served as one of the more salient concepts within the responses from the participants. Race, as it was mentioned within the context of the interviews, not only encapsulated the Black experience but it also included the cultural differences between the participants and the community around them, as well as the development of each participant’s personal racial identity. A person’s racial identity was a conglomeration of factors that can include: skin
color, cultural aspects, social construction based upon person identification within a group, and life experiences.

Andrew struggled with his racial identity earlier in his life because of his multiracial background; his mother is an African American women and his father is White. It was not until Anna shared an article about President Obama that Andrew realized the importance of being Black, especially in a completely White community. Andrew mentioned, ”people makes assumptions about my race all the time”. Anna stated that although she is proud that Andrew is comfortable being Black, “I would hate the idea of my son being taught down to because of who he might be or because he is Black.” Anna continued, “He has never faced discrimination based on his race.” Mr. A, Andrew’s track coach, stated “racial differences are always a factor, but Andrew has been able to assimilate and feels as though he is a part of the group”.

Similar to Andrew, Bobby noticed an increased awareness of race when he entered the middle school. Bobby elaborated, “Although racism is not evident, there still exists ignorance and jokes made surrounding race.” When asked about race within the context of school Bobby responded, “…like in school, I feel its kind of an awkward topic because the teachers don’t want to talk about it in class where there are 20 White kids and one Black and Latino kid.” Although the topic is not readily discussed at school, Barbara eluded to the fact that “Bobby’s father’s side of the family have helped him to develop a strong Black racial identity.” Regarding race, Bobby’s school guidance counselor stated that race could have a negative or positive impact upon your life depending on the type of person you are.
“There is still racism in the world,” responded Calvin, when asked about race relations in the country. Calvin mentioned that he experienced racism, but that he did not allow it to affect him. Calvin mentioned that he would overhear kids make racist comments in the hall or say things to him that he considered to be insensitive. Although he endured these microaggressions he mentioned that he did not allow it to affect him. The underlying understanding Calvin mentioned was that race should not serve as a divisive concept utilized to separate people. Cathy stated with regard to her son, “because of his size and darkness of his skin, Calvin is keenly aware that he is the only Black person in the majority of situations.” Mrs. C, Calvin’s school counselor, mentioned that she was upset when she had initially judged Calvin based on his size and his race, but she mentioned that her judgment was derived from her own personal experience. Mrs. C was able to overcome her initial impressions by speaking and interacting with Calvin throughout the course of the school year. She mentioned that his personality and his work ethic made her realize that he was a great young man.

Devin identifies as multicultural, with his Dad being a Black man and his mother being a White woman. Devin mentioned that although race may impact a person’s perception, race had not had any impact on him academically. With regard to being multicultural, Debra explained, “Assumptions that are made about race can be upsetting”. She continued to explain that Devin has had to deal with a couple of instances where people have made racially insensitive comments regarding his race, and that race did impact the way people are treated. Devin usually did not address an instance of racial insensitivity; and he stated that he simply moved on and was not affected by it. Mrs. D stated that, “Devin’s race did not matter to me at all.”
Ezra possessed the strongest feelings and ideas regarding race and its impact stating, “People gather thoughts of what Black people are supposed to be through media and expect me to fit into those stereotypes.” Ezra continued, “White people determine who they are based upon their characteristics and interests, while White people determine who Black people are based upon their skin color and a set of accumulated stereotypes.” Being proud of his Black identity, Ezra would get upset when students made assumptions about his race and say things similar to, “you are the Whitest Black kid I know.” Edward explained that, “People form associations regarding race and fill in information with those associations.” Edward also highlighted that, “Cultural differences can lead to misinterpretations.” Mrs. E, Ezra’s English teacher, stated that she believes that Ezra was a positive role model for all students within the community based on his positive characteristics.

**Beliefs.** Each participant shared beliefs regarding a multitude of aspects of their lives. Within the following section, beliefs regarding the students’ value systems and who they are as young men will be explored and discussed based upon empirical evidence collected throughout the study.

Andrew incorporated life lessons within his belief system. He believed that you should, “not judge a book by its cover.” Andrew also believed that building relationships with people was as important as diversity and making a good impression. Anna agreed with Andrews’s beliefs explaining that values and beliefs have been passed on through the generations. Anna stated that her expectations for Andrews and his expectations for himself are similar. Mr. A referenced that even though Andrew can be reserved at times Andrew had a great deal of respect for his own natural abilities.
Bobby expressed an understanding of the importance of education and surrounding himself with good people. When asked about his friends, Bobby stated, “I am only friends with good people.” Bobby also expressed having a different value system that was consistent with a more mature, goal-oriented approach than his peers. Barbara explained that Bobby believed in himself and that he was able to develop his work ethic and determination from mirroring the hard work and determination exhibited by his parents. Mrs. B stated, “Bobby believes in himself and that he has developed a strong academic interest and is inclined to succeed in his academic pursuits.”

Calvin did not mention specific beliefs within the interview but, the researcher observed that although Calvin was quiet, reserved and observant, he possessed a self-confidence that was readily apparent based in his description of his athletic engagement and other outside of school interests. Although Cathy tried to instill values within Calvin to foster independence and a value of education, she felt as though these lessons may not have been fully actualized by Calvin based upon the fact that he was struggling in school. The impact of the Jack and Jill program on Calvin was instrumental in the development of his personality and his beliefs, as expressed by Cathy. Mrs. C concurred with Cathy’s statement by saying that the exposure to the Jack and Jill program, “…helps him feel grounded.”

Believing in himself and possessing a willingness to push himself were important aspects of Devin’s belief system. “The happiness of others is more important than personal achievement,” according to Devin. Devin believed in equality for all people. Debra echoes this sentiment stating that Devin is an extrovert and was always willing to help someone in need. Mrs. D mentioned that Devin’s upbringing in New York City may
have had a profound impact on his belief system; the exposure Devin had to all cultures within the city may have encouraged him to be more open minded moving forward throughout his life.

Similar to the other participants, Ezra believed that people are important and that socializing and building relationships was an important aspect of his belief system. Ezra explained, “Every person matters, you never know what type of influence you can have on one person.” Edward hoped that Ezra would continue to include some type of spiritual identity within his belief system. Edward and Ezra agreed that the concept of who they are was distinctly defined through God and not on a socialized construction of what they should be. Mrs. E described Ezra as having a positive personality and being a “people person”.

**Interests, Self-Description, Personality.** Interests, self-description, and personality, provide a context for understanding how these young men are situated in their particular environments. Andrew was a modest self-confident young man who tried to consistently exceed expectations. When asked about who he was as a person, Andrew responded, “I try to stay true to myself and who I am, but I am always willing to adapt to my environment.” Andrew expressed having interests that he thought were typical for high school teenagers such as video games and working out. Anna described Andrew as self-confident, hard working, intelligent, curious, conscientious, and as having a genuine interest in people. Andrew’s track coach shared the same sentiments as his mother, describing Andrew as a hard working, respectful young man who was capable of producing results both academically and athletically.
Bobby described himself as an intelligent, goal-oriented person who does well in school and enjoyed helping people. Some of his interests included music, student government, and the honor society. Academically, Bobby explained, “I do well academically and I am an advanced learner.” Agreeing with the statements made by her son, Barbara described Bobby as a young man who was “well-liked by his peers,” “always willing to help others”, and someone who “has high expectations for himself.” Bobby’s guidance counselor stated, “Bobby has an outstanding work ethic, and expresses a commitment to his education.” She continued to describe Bobby as a natural leader who served as a role model for all students, but especially for Black students.

Calvin considered himself a silent observer who was capable of understanding the emotions of other people. Although Calvin had several interests including, video games, music, dance, and athletics; he says that he had difficulty, “fitting in,” due to his stature and his race. Calvin considered himself awkward and self-conscious at times. Cathy also mentioned that Calvin was self-conscious about his height. Being mature and naturally inclined toward physical activities was something that Cathy has always seen in Calvin. Mrs. C described Calvin as a young man who is gifted both as a musician and as an athlete, and as a student who sometimes struggled to complete assignments on time. Calvin, along with his mother and Mrs. C, all stated that Calvin had faced some academic challenges this year. Calvin stated that his change in study habits had affected him tremendously this year. Calvin did not, however, attribute his lack of success to his racial background.

An extrovert with self-confidence, who was not affected by what people think of him, was how Devin described himself. Regarding his interests, Devin enjoyed spending
time with his family, making music, and playing soccer. Having done well academically, Devin took pride in being unique. Devin and Debra both believed that Devin was a social human being who was passionate about his interests. His confidences, coupled with his academic ability, have enabled him to do well in high school. Mrs. D describes Devin as a wonderful student, who was genuinely interested in learning and improving.

Having interests that include music, athletics, and video production, Ezra described himself as a confident, athletic, energetic person, who was independent. Ezra described himself as a B student, but says that he was capable of achieving at a higher level. Ezra’s father, Edward, described him as an intelligent, confident, caring young man who has a “nuanced style of seeing the world.” Regarding school, Edward mentioned that Ezra was more than capable of doing well but does not want to, “…play the game of school.” Mrs. E stated that Ezra was a, “good, diligent student,” who was able to develop a healthy student-teacher relationship with her throughout the year.

In summary, the first theme related the commonalities that all of the participants had regarding the categories of being Black, race, family, self-description, personality and their personal belief system. Participants illustrated the fact that although they may have faced adversity based upon stereotypes, they did not allow their race to define who they were; they define themselves based upon their personalities, beliefs, and family values. This particular theme was directly related to the first research question in which the perceptions and experiences of these Black male students were explored and understood.
Theme 2: My World

For these students, the local community, school community, teachers, and friends have provided an environment that is conducive to academic success and personal growth where people have attempted to understand and accept personal differences. Despite experiencing the existence of microaggressions students reported having positive experiences over all. All of the participants spoke about the school and the impact the school community had on their lives, perceptions, and experiences. Friendships, personal growth, and academic success were also common concepts throughout the development of this particular theme. The following categories are explained to provide substantial evidence as it related to the theme: community, school, students, teachers, and friends.

Community. Although moving was a significant change for Andrew, he described his new community as a great place that was very supportive and friendly. Coming from a culturally diverse community to one that lacked racial and ethnic diversity was a significant change for Andrew. Anna described the new community as an accepting place, which she felt, embraced her and her son. Being a part of the community was a “positive experience,” according to Anna. Andrew’s track coach described the community as having high expectations for all members.

When discussing the community, Bobby noted that it was an affluent town where the adults were very helpful. Much like Andrew, he also mentioned that the community was homogenous and lacked racial/ethnic diversity. Bobby continued by stating, “Everyone comes from a married household with perfect expenses and two trips a year; kids take a lot of things for granted.” Bobby’s mother also included that the community, although friendly, had a distinct split between the working class and upper class. Bobby
and Barbara also stated the community members were competitive. Bobby mentioned that the competitive nature of the community created an environment conducive for success; it motivated him to succeed.

Calvin also articulated that there was a lack of diversity within the community based upon racial/ethnic status. Calvin did mention, however, that the community was a strong one where people supported each other as indicated in a local magazine produced each month highlighting community activities. Cathy stated that she had been a member of the community for her entire life and believed it provided Calvin with exposure to a different lifestyle.

Devin described the environment succinctly, stating, “the community is competitive, homogeneously populated, friendly and has a focus on wealth.” Devin also mentioned that many people within the community are unaware of events that occurred outside of the locale. Debra explained that it was homogeneously populated and that everyone in the community appeared to have similar characteristic and the same common goals.

Ezra described the community as friendly, supportive, competitive, and successful. Edward continued to describe the community, noting its competiveness, but also mentioned the fact that the residents had embraced his family. He attributed this sense of inclusion to the fact that his family was actively involved with many local activities, which contributed to the support shown to his family.

**School.** Describing the school as a small and accepting place, Andrew also noted that he felt as though he stood out among the student body and felt as though non-Whites were simply viewed differently. Anna described the school saying, “It is really a quality
place, I just can’t say enough good things.” Mr. A said that the school environment has progressively gotten better with regard to acceptance and promotion of positive race relations. Mr. A attributed the improvement in race relations within the school to the increase in Black role models, cultural sensitivity training, and an increase in knowledge with respect to race.

Bobby also stated that the school environment was competitive yet friendly, he affirmed that it provided him with the opportunities to receive a rigorous education. Stating that the school personnel wanted academic success for all students, Barbara agreed with the statements made by Bobby about the school. Mrs. B stated that the school attempted to “Create life-long learners with transferable skills.”

Calvin stated that although he does not believe that he does well in school, he realized that the school was very accepting and has high academic standards, which may create a competitive environment. Believing the school does well with academics, Cathy mentioned that she thinks the school may have struggled with administering discipline based on a minute number of occasions where students were not penalized for misbehavior.

Devin’s statements were in agreement with the other participants, pertaining to a culture of working for grades and competitiveness for high achievement within the school. Devin mentioned that competitiveness caused undue stress on students and created an environment where students begin to focus on themselves regarding educational achievement. Devin described the school as a great experience. Debra stated that the school had a lack of diversity and that students faced abundant pressure to be
successful and achieve grades that were commensurate with the school’s academic standards.

Ezra mentioned that the school was supportive and he does try hard in school. He also mentioned the competitive environment that existed within the school. Edward illustrated that the school was a competitive place where students who were willing to play the game of school were rewarded. Although this caused stress among the student body, Ezra mentioned the achievement of grades as the ultimate goal promoted by the school.

**Students.** Overall, participants mentioned that students within the school were accepting and friendly. Andrew stated that in his school, “making friends is easy.” Ezra also said that, “some students are supportive, tolerant, and accepting.” Edward mentioned that the school provided students with the opportunity to interact socially. Cathy described the students who participated in musical programs as “wonderful students”. Mrs. D agreed, “Acceptance of racial differences is taught within the school.”

While the students within the student body were accepting and friendly, there was a portion of the student body that was be ignorant and intolerant. Bobby stated that, “the majority of students are ignorant socially.” Calvin mentioned that sometimes students would say things in ignorance, not realizing that they could be potentially hurtful. Ezra said, “Some of the students are ignorant and close minded.” Bobby observed that some students made racially insensitive remarks. Andrew explained that although he has had several positive experiences, he realized that people might have differing expectations because he was black. All of the students mentioned the existence of microaggressions that began to occur in middle school.
All students stated that an increased awareness of racial differences occurred starting in middle school. Andrew said, “Students did not notice that I was Black until I got to middle school.” Bobby stated that, “Students were more aware of differences in middle school.” Devin stated that in elementary school that he was just another one of the kids.

Debra mentioned that exclusive groups known as cliques, existed within the school. Although all of the students spoke about the existence of groups of students who formed exclusive groups around common characteristics, all of the students mentioned that they were so accustomed to the presence of these groups that they minimized any impact the groups had upon their daily lives.

Teachers. Describing the teachers as supportive, qualified, and willing to help them succeed, the participants talked about being able to develop effective student-teacher relationships. Andrew poignantly explained, “I think that the relationship between the student and the teacher can affect how you do in the class.” Bobby shared the same sentiment, “In high school it helps to have teachers who are really knowledgeable and willing to help.” Calvin mentioned, “I am close with most of the faculty in the school.” Devin stated, “I am close with a lot of the teachers and guidance counselors.” Ezra remarked, “I do like the relationships that I’ve formed with my teachers.”

All of the participants reported that the teachers were qualified, supportive and willing to work with students who needed help. Each of the teachers had high expectations for the participants within their particular class. Although the idea of white privilege exists, the educators within the following study never mentioned that existence
of white privilege or any of the white students having an advantage over the Black students based upon their race.

**Friends.** The participants stated that their friends played an important role in their lives and were an integral part of their social development as it related to school. Andrew and Bobby recognized the importance of building relationships and developing friendships, however, they both agreed that school was vastly more important than friendships. Andrew stated that, “school is more important than friends.” Bobby described, “Relationships have suffered when academic values are not shared.” Bobby shared that students who did not have educational goals similar to his own would soon no longer find themselves in his company.

The other three participants shared a different value system regarding academics and friendships. While realizing the importance of academics, they stated that social interactions were prevalent regarding their school experience. Calvin stated that his friends shared similar interests and that some of his study habits had changed because he was spending more time with his friends. Devin mentioned, “Being able to socialize is more important than getting straight A’s and your social affiliation is much more important to me than academics.” Ezra commented, “Social interaction is more important than achievement.”

In summary, the community, school, teachers, students, and friends had a tremendous impact on the participants’ perceptions and experiences. Although described as a competitive environment, the school as well as the community, were described as supportive and representative of a culture that provided a positive environment for students to develop. Teachers worked to provide a supportive environment where
effective student-teacher relationships were cultivated. The majority of the students within the school were friendly and supportive, although some students expressed ignorant views that were not welcomed by the participants. The students reported a delicate balance between friendships and academics.

This theme, as well as theme one, directly related to research question number two that addressed the perceptions of educators regarding the experiences of the Black male participants. Through the process of providing a description of effective student-teacher relationships, school environments, friendships and student interactions, insight was provided into the understanding of the perceptions of educators regarding the experiences of these students.

**Theme 3: Who I Want To Be**

Theme three includes the factors that impacted the definition of the participant’s idea of individually defined success. The students reported that their future plans, their locus of control, and how the influence of their parents impacted their ideas of success. This theme will explain each participant’s idea and development of his personal version of success. The future plans of the participants will also be described in relation to their hopes and dreams. The idea that a locus of control exists, which enable a person to identify what is responsible for driving his life forward and making choices, will be explored. This theme includes the following categories: locus of control, individually defined success, and future plans.

**Locus of Control.** Andrew believed that being positive and not stressing about things he cannot control would allow him to achieve his goals. He stated, “I am
responsible for my life.” Andrew explained that his teachers and his parents have had an impact on his decision-making as well.

Bobby believed that his parents would have a major influence over what happens within his future. Bobby mentioned that he can work hard to achieve, but at this point in his life, his parents have complete control over the immediate outcome.

Calvin believed that while his parents may impact his decision-making, he said, “Your life is up to you.” Calvin noted that there are many choices you have to make for yourself and that those decisions can only be made alone.

Devin believed that the choices that help to determine your life are impacted by several factors. He explained that parents and friends have a major influence over your life decisions, but that ultimately the decision has to be made by you.

Ezra believed that he was in control of how his life turns out. Although he recognized that parents play a role in life choices, he believed that he was a trailblazer and wanted to carve his own path. Ultimately, Ezra believed that God would determine how his life turns out.

**Success.** Family influence and his own understanding of his goals helped Andrew define success. Success for Andrew was defined as achieving his own accomplishments, finding a job, and achieving his goals. Anna believed the success of others has impacted Andrew’s concept of success. She also believed he had a strong foundation to be successful within his life. Mr. A reflected Andrew’s ideas when he stated that success could be a direct result of hard work.

For Bobby, his parents directly impacted his idea of success. He stated that he could measure his success based upon the fact that he would like to achieve more than his
parents. “Having a job you love, and being financially sound within a good marriage,”
was Bobby’s idea of success. Barbara believed that Bobby had the work ethic required to
be successful and that the impact of what she and Bobby’s father had done would help
him in the future. Along with Barbara, Mrs. B believed that Bobby had what was
required to be successful.

Making money, having a job, and pursuing your own interests personally defined
success for Calvin. Cathy mentioned that success was not all about money. Calvin was
looking forward to pursuing a career and taking care of a future family someday.

Family, happiness, and support were the three pillars for the foundation of success
as described by Devin. According to Devin, shifting the focus away from money and
being passionate about what you do will help you to achieve success. Devin said that his
parents and the charity work he engaged in have had a tremendous impact on his concept
of success. Devin’s mom, Debra stated that she wanted Devin to have a fulfilling life
where he can be happy and satisfied. Debra and Devin’s ideas of success coincided with
one another. Mrs. D, mentioned that Devin was a successful student who was willing to
work hard to achieve.

Success was being happy, according to Ezra. Ezra stated that in order to achieve
success, sometimes time, money, and relationships have to be sacrificed. While being
impacted by his parents and their concept of success, Ezra mentioned that living within a
community full of people who have money, who might not be particularly happy, has
helped to shape his concept of success. Edward would like Ezra to have a life guided by
spirituality that would foster a positive change in the world.
**Future Plans.** Andrew’s future plans included going to college, finding a job, and supporting his family. This pattern was similar to what his father had done. Anna truly believed that college would open doors for Andrew and enable him to find something in which he was interested. More importantly, Anna wanted him to be happy and successful in whatever field he chose.

Bobby wanted to graduate as the class president, attend Stanford University and pursue a medical degree. Barbara would also like for Bobby to have the opportunity to attend Stanford University. Barbara believed that Bobby was capable of achieving his goals.

Calvin planned to attend college and develop a career where he will be financially able to comfortably support a family. Cathy hoped that Calvin chose to do something with his life that he loves.

Devin would like to pursue a career in music. Devin was also trying to develop a way to help people within the community. Debra believed in genuine opportunities where she and her family can help the community. She hoped that Devin could continue to give back while pursuing an interest that will lead to his eventual happiness.

Following the successful pursuit of his college degree, Ezra would like to pursue a career in the music industry. Edward is hopeful that Ezra will find freedom and success. Edward also believed that Ezra will find success through music.

In summary, this theme helps identify the ideas and the influences that impacted each participant’s idea of success, future plans, and his ability to control the direction of his life. Reflecting on the influences of each of the aforementioned aspects of their lives,
parents, teachers and experiences within their respective communities have helped to
fortify, change, and impact their decisions for the future.

This particular theme, along with themes one and two, address research question
number three as pertains to the perceptions of the parents of each of the participants as
they relate to the Black male students experiences. Providing context for understanding
the perceptions of the parents as they relate to the experiences of the participants was
instrumental in developing an expansive, holistic interpretation of the data presented
within this section.

**Theme 4: My Inspiration**

Although role models may not have been clearly identified by each participant,
the existence of someone who positively impacted their lives was readily apparent. This
particular theme illustrates common experiences of each participant within the research
study. Although each participant did not directly or specifically identify a role model,
each of the students shared information about a person whom he admired and has sought
guidance from within his life.

**Andrew.** Identifying his father as a role model, Andrew described a relationship
that was highlighted by mutual respect and understanding. Regarding his father Andrew,
“I consider my dad a mentor and a problem solver.” Andrew continued to expand upon
why he considered his father a role model, “My father has provided a good life for my
family and he is always there when I need to talk to someone.” Embodying the qualities
that Andrew hopes to someday emulate, his father is someone who he sincerely admired,
and he hoped to follow in his father’s footsteps.
Bobby. “My mother has had the greatest impact on my life,” stated Bobby when describing the relationship he had with his mother. Bobby continued to point out that everything he has accomplished within his life has been with his mom as a motivating factor. Regarding his moral development, Bobby said, “My mom showed me how to be a good person.” Bobby mentioned that the importance of education within his life is a direct result of the influence that his mother has had on him.

Calvin. Calvin’s grandfather served as a role model throughout the majority of Calvin’s life. Calvin mentioned that his grandfather’s intelligence, work ethic, perseverance, and hard work were the reasons he admired him.

Devin. Devin admired his soccer coach, who has served as an informal mentor to Devin since he started playing soccer in high school. Devin mentioned that his soccer coach was strict and demanded the best from his students. His coach was also a “good person” as well. Devin shared a story about how his soccer coach was willing to drive him home when he saw Devin walking home in the rain after practice one day. The coach was always willing to do whatever was necessary to help his players.

Ezra. Ezra indicated that his youth pastor was one of his role models. He mentioned this his youth pastor was, “always positive,” which was a quality Ezra admired in him. His pastor provided him with guidance regarding decisions he faced in life, while at the same time serving as a mentor for Ezra.

In summary, this theme illustrates the importance of a singular impactful figure in the lives of each participant, someone who has helped guide them on their life’s journey. Each participant was able to share a story about a person who not only had a tremendous impact, but was also invested in the outcome of his life.
All four themes serve to provide a voice for each participant to express his story as a Black male student who attended a predominantly White high school. The aforementioned themes were meant to provide a forum for Black males, their parents, and teachers to express their perspectives.

**Chapter Summary**

This purpose of this research was to understand the perceptions of Black male students regarding their social, academic, and personal experiences within a predominantly White, high performing secondary school. The data presented within this chapter helped illustrate the perceptions related to the students from the perspectives of the students, educators, and a parent member.

The chapter began with an in-depth description of the two school districts where the research study occurred. Following the overview of the districts, the researcher presented individual student profiles, which included a description of the student, parent, and educator that comprised each case. A description of the coding methods, coding procedures, and a discussion of the development of themes followed each case profile. The analysis of the themes and the direct relation to the research questions was included following the description of each theme and the categories that comprised the theme. The following four themes were derived from the data analysis: (a) Who I am; (b) My world; (c) Who I want to be; (d) My inspiration.
Chapter five will summarize and provide conclusions pertaining to the research study. The following sections will be discussed throughout the chapter: (a) summary of the research process, (b) summary of findings, (c) discussion of findings, (d) theory and related literature, (e) implications of the research, (f) recommendations from this research, (g) trustworthiness, (h) suggestions for future research, and (i) conclusion.

Summary of the Research Process

The purpose of this qualitative research project was to capture the essence of the Black male student experience related to their academic, social, and personal lives in two predominantly White, high performing secondary schools. Additionally, the greatest achievement gap between races and gender is the gap between White males and Black males on standardized state test scores. Understanding the experiences of Black male students who co-exist within an environment where research has shown that White students typically out perform Black students was an underlying aspect that was explored throughout the study.

Understanding the achievement gap and the disparity between Black and White students is paramount (Ford, 2010). Understanding the experiences of Black students who exist in the same environments as their White counterparts could provide insight into their lives. The focus of the research was on the student experience as perceived by the student, educator, and parental perspective. The research questions that provided the basis for the interpretation of data included:
1. What are the perceptions held by Black students regarding their academic, social, and personal experiences within a predominantly White, high performing secondary school?

2. What are the perceptions held by the educators of Black students regarding their experience within a predominantly White, high performing secondary school?

3. What are the perceptions held by the parents/guardians of Black students regarding their experience within a predominantly White, high performing secondary school?

Answers to the research questions were derived by utilizing a multiple case study design outlined by Merriam (2009). Each case served to provide individualized experiences and perspectives. There were five cases. Each case consisted of a student, an educator, and a parent member. Semi-structured interview protocols were designed. A total number of 13 face-to-face interviews were conducted. Additionally, the researcher also collected two responses to the educator interview protocol via e-mail. Acquiring data from each student, parent, and educator aided in the triangulation of information, which provided consistency and substantiation regarding the experiences shared by the students. Each participant not only completed an interview but also completed a demographic survey, which provided detailed information regarding age, educational status, race and additional information pertaining to the study.

Strict confidentiality was maintained, as per the Institutional Review Board mandates, throughout the entire study. According to Yin (2003), participants in a multiple case study design should present diverse experiences. Every effort was made to
acquire participants with diverse experiences, while at the same time meeting the required criteria of the study. Participants were solicited from two different school districts following an exhaustive and detailed selection process. Each of the five student participants volunteered to participate in the study and were provided with an understanding that he could withdraw from the study or decline to participate at anytime. Selecting a parent member and an educator to participate on his behalf enabled each student to exhibit active participation in the formulation of the selection process. Although each of the participants was a Black male who attended a predominantly White secondary school, they all possessed distinctly similar and dissimilar qualities.

Data from the interviews and the demographic survey were collected and analyzed using Hyper-RESEARCH (Salliard, 2011). Several pre-coding, initial-coding, and theme development strategies were implemented and utilized based upon the framework outlined by Corbin and Strauss (2015). The process of theme development included the establishment of initial codes that were then collapsed into categories. The categories were collapsed and organized into themes. Data analysis resulted in the following themes:

1. Who I am  
2. My world  
3. Who I want to be  
4. My inspiration

In the following sections of the chapter, the themes will not only be discussed with regard to the research questions, but will also be situated within the context of literature relating to the overall topic.
Summary of Findings

Due to the dynamic nature of the study and the responses collected from the participants, information summarized within the following sections pertained to each of the research questions holistically. Because the main focus of the study was the experiences of the students, data gathered from students pertained to all research questions. The supplemental data gathered from the educators and parent members substantiate the claims of the students, while also addressing the research questions. The following sections are a summary of the findings thematically as they pertained to all research questions.

Theme 1: Who I Am. Students participants provided insights into their own experiences situated within a predominantly White, high performing secondary school by establishing their identity based upon the following categories: (a) being Black, (b) family, (c) race, (d) beliefs, (e) interests, (f) self-description, and (g) personality. Although the students expressed a multitude of beliefs and descriptions of themselves including their personalities, there were commonalities that existed which enabled the development of this theme.

Being Black was an aspect of their lives that all of the students were proud of. They learned about what it meant to be Black and did not allow outside influences such as media and stereotypes to impact their conception of what it was to be Black. All of the participants characterized being Black as a portion of who they were, not the definitive factor in the conception of themselves.

Family was an integral component in the lives of the participants. Although each of the students expressed having varied relationships with family members, they all
mentioned that family was a source of support and learning, and that family enabled them to experience success in their lives based upon support they were given.

Race was a prevalent concept throughout the interview process. All students mentioned the impact of race or the lack thereof, regarding personal and school experiences. Students were able to identify that typically, within the community, they were the only Black students in the majority of situations and mentioned that they were cognizant of the difference even if the students around them did not outwardly recognize any differences.

Although each of the participants expressed a number of beliefs regarding a varying number of issues, each of the students possessed strong beliefs. Among the shared beliefs, the belief that a person’s race or culture should never play a role in the evaluation of a person’s character was most prominent among the participants. The participants also unilaterally expressed the fact that school was important and doing well was integral to their future success.

Regarding self-description, interest, and personality, each participant expressed having distinctive characteristics regarding those three concepts. By expressing interest in helping people and building relationships between classmates, friends, and teachers, each of the participants recognized that he could achieve his dreams through education.

**Theme 2: My World.** Providing insight into personal, social, and academic experiences, the participants within the study provided data regarding the environment in which they lived that included: (a) community, (b) students, (c) friends, and (d) teachers. Students were able to explain the communities in which they functioned, while
discussing the simultaneous impact of the relationships they had developed with peers and teachers.

All participants were keenly aware of the existing racial demographic within the communities in which they resided. The students made note that the communities were homogenous. Competitiveness, coupled with a general friendliness, was how the students described their respective communities. Regarding the competitive nature within the community, students clearly stated the fact that the environment was beneficial to those who could compete, and conversely detrimental for those who preferred the absence of competition.

Students within the school were described by the participants as having friendly dispositions. Although microaggressions occurred and racially charged comments had been experienced by a number of the participants within the study, the majority of the interactions within the study body were positive. Each participant spoke of his to ability to develop friendships based upon the friendliness of the students around him.

Within the student body, the participants were able to develop friendships with others inside and outside of the classroom environment. The students mentioned that their friends had a significant impact upon their lives. Each student spoke about not only having a specific group of friends, but also mentioned that they spent a substantial amount of time with their friends. The development of social groups that would deny other peers based on status or interests was mentioned several times throughout the interview process.

Based upon the perspective of the students, teachers played an integral role in the development of each student’s academic and personal life. Each student mentioned
developing effective student-teacher relationships with several faculty members within his respective school building. Students mentioned that teachers would always be willing to speak with them regarding an academic or a personal concern. Cognizant of the fact that the disposition of teachers may have impacted their performance, the students appreciated each teacher’s willingness to assist them academically.

**Theme 3: Who I Want To Be.** The third theme can be characterized by each student’s individually defined conceptualization of success and the factors that influenced the creation of that ideology. The categories that enabled the researcher to develop this theme included: (a) success, (b) future plans, and (c) locus of control. Focusing on their goals and what type of young men they wanted to become, the students described their ideas of success as they related to their future plans and their locus of control.

Individually defined success was tremendously influenced by each of the participant’s parents. In two of the cases, participants based their beliefs about success and their capabilities for achieving success solely on their parents. Three of the students shared the idea of happiness and living a fulfilled life as the two central components of a successful life. All students stated that finding a job and pursing their own interests were characteristics of success.

Regarding their future plans, students shared goals and aspirations that included attending college, pursing a career, and starting a family. Although some of the students have future plans that were more individualized and detailed, all of the students understood that college was a useful tool to be capitalized upon in order to achieve future goals.
Students readily identified that they were the driving factor in the determination of their lives. Although family, friends, and teachers may have influence over their lives, students explained that they were ultimately responsible for making the decisions that would help to shape and define their lives.

**Theme 4: My Inspiration.** Theme four illustrates the inspirational figures within the lives of each of the student participants. Although not always readily identified as role models, these people played integral roles in the development of these young men. The close relationships that each one of the young men developed with a particular inspirational figure served as the guiding force behind the decisions and choices made by these young Black males.

Mothers, fathers, pastors, coaches, and grandfathers were among the inspirational figures identified by the student participants. Considering the vast range of inspirational figures that were selected, the participants chose to focus on characteristics of the figure, as opposed to the positions of these individuals within or outside of their families.

**Discussion of Findings**

**Theory and Related Literature**

**Self-Efficacy Theory.** Bandura (1993) explained the impact of how one feels about oneself (self-efficacy) predicated upon the experiences (vicarious experiences), verbal cues (verbal persuasion), performance (performance accomplishments), and emotional (emotional arousal) interactions with people within their particular environment.

Students within the research study addressed four different components of Bandura’s (1977) self-efficacy theory. Three of the students within the study spoke about
the impact that the vicarious experiences of their White friends and classmates had upon them. White students within the school shared experiences with the Black male students that changed the thinking and behavior of the Black students. Three Black students mentioned their White classmates sharing some of the negative experiences they had with other Black students. These experiences caused the White students to develop negative expectations for Black students. Some of the negative experiences the White students shared with the Black students subsequently motivated the Black students to break the racial stereotypes that were apparent through the stories shared by White students.

Subsequently, these Black students strived to achieve academically while at the same time serving as exemplary examples of how Black students should conduct themselves inside and outside of school. The students immersed themselves in community and school activities. Students also attempted to provide knowledge and understanding to some of their White classmates regarding their racial background and heritage.

Additionally, all of the students within the study noted that some of their White classmates and friends experienced an atmosphere of competition that was shared vicariously with the Black students. The Black student participants would have the opportunity to watch other individuals compete in difficult classes. These experiences observed by the Black students caused them to adapt to the competitive environment in order to succeed. Bandura (1977) stipulated that one’s own self-efficacy could benefit from watching others succeed in completing a difficult task. This was a benefit to the Black participants of this study.

Each student shared a story of overcoming a personal, academic, or physical challenge. From these challenges that were overcome, the Black students were able to
develop self-confidence. Bandura (1977) states that successful attempts at a challenging task will create increased self-efficacy within that person. The educators within the study also mentioned the ability of each of the Black male student to perform either academically or athletically. Parent members shared a similar belief held by the educators that supported their son’s accomplishments.

Verbal cues of encouragement for each male interviewed from both the parent members and the educators were readily apparent within the interview data collected. Parents were supportive and always encouraged students to achieve academically by sharing their thoughts and beliefs with the students. The majority of educators mentioned motivating their students as one of the key components of their teaching styles. Bandura (1977) espoused the belief that positive reinforcement and motivation through verbal cues leads to positive outcomes for the students.

Regarding emotional arousal and the role it plays within the formulation of self-efficacy, Bandura stated that self-efficacy may be increased if students feel less vulnerable and are learning in a safe environment. Parents and educators alike explained that the school districts were located in safe communities; while the educators continued to explain that they employed classroom practices based upon mutual respect where students felt safe.

Noguera (2009), Davis (2003), and Bandura (1993) established the fact that possessing a positive self-efficacy while experiencing an environment where the teacher possesses the same level of positive self-efficacy is important not only for developing effective student-teacher relationships but also for developing an environment that is
conducive to academic success. This is exemplified by Andrew who said, “When you feel like the teacher likes you, you have a better chance of doing well in the class.”

**Critical Race Theory.** Critical Race Theory was founded on the following four tenants: (a) racism is ordinary, (b) white over color ascendency, (c) social construction of race, and (d) unique voice of color (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). All four components of Critical Race Theory are present at varying levels within the results of this research study.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) elaborated upon the idea that racism is a normal function of our society, stating that the original idea of race and property have served to define the development of school districts where White schools provided every opportunity for students to succeed, while Black communities underserved children. The students, parents, and teachers within the study all mentioned the excellent quality of the education that their students were receiving, citing the standard of excellence and the qualifications of the teachers as the two components that created an environment for educational success.

White over color ascendency (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001) is a component of Critical Race Theory that several of the students were able to describe during the interview process. White over color ascendency indicates that although major forms of racism are addressed through policy and law changes, subtle racism continues. Participants spoke about getting along with the majority of the other students within their respective schools and communities. At the same time, four of the students mentioned two or three instances where subtle racist comments were made during conversations.
With regard to race, all participants stated that although they realized that race was socially constructed, they did not allow the social construction of what it meant to be a Black male in a White community made them think less of themselves. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) identified the need for those in power to place various people into categories that serve to benefit those in power. While this concept is described in the society at large, all teachers and educators in both communities mentioned that based upon personality and work ethic, the students within the study were able to transcend socially constructed ideas of race based upon their individual characteristics by having conversations and interactions with individuals, enabling people to understand who they were as students.

The component of Critical Race Theory that was most relevant regarding this research study was the aspect of providing a unique voice to the students of color. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) explained that by providing students of color with a unique voice, they have the opportunity to not only share their experiences, but to build upon the culture they have created while providing the impetus for authorities to reflect on their existence holistically. Stories that were shared by the participants within the research study were all unique to their own experiences. Students shared stories with the promise that the information they were providing to the researcher would be utilized somehow to improve their condition or that of similar students.

**Scholar Identity Model.** A construct that illustrates nine characteristics of success for young Black male students, the Scholar Identity Model served as the basis for this research study (Whiting, 2006). The nine characteristics outlined by Whiting (2006) include: (a) masculinity, (b) racial identity, (c) academic self-confidence (d) need for
achievement, (e) self-awareness, (f) internal locus of control, (g) willingness to make sacrifices, (h) future orientation, and (i) self-efficacy.

Although Whiting (2006) elaborated that Black males with a scholar identity associate education with masculinity, the student participants had contrasting views when considering the role of education and its relationship to masculinity. Two of the students cited masculinity and education as two mutually exclusive ideas. Three of the participants stated that education is an integral aspect to being a man. Interestingly, the two students who mentioned that education was not a part of masculinity were the youngest two participants within the study. Their level of maturity may not have been fully realized yet, which could potentially have impacted their conception of what it means to be a man within the context of education.

Students within the study reported possessing pride regarding their racial identity. Having had conversations with their parents about race and racial identity, the students sought to understand their race and the role it played in their lives. Whiting (2006) offered that having a positive racial identity is integral to the development of young Black males, however, to achieve a healthy identity as a Black male, students must understand that they need to constantly adapt to their environment while simultaneously overcoming negative ideas commonly associated with their race. The Black students within the study received support both from their homes, as well as their respective academic environments, which enabled the students to develop both a healthy, and a positive, racial identity as young Black men.

According to Whiting (2006) Black males who have a positive scholar identity believe they can achieve in an academic setting. When asked about academics, all of the
students mentioned they had the capability of being successful in school, despite the fact that one student was still struggling in his classes, attaining a C average GPA. Teachers and parents alike echoed the same sentiment, believing that the students could achieve academically. The grades of the students also reflected this belief, with all but one of the participants having earned a B or higher average in their classes.

There were contrasting findings regarding the need for achievement, as compared to the need for socialization, among the participants. Whiting (2006) stated that students who have a positive scholar identity recognize that the need for achievement in scholarship takes priority over developing friendships when scholarly accomplishments are the focus. Two out of the five student members agreed with this ideology, while the other three participants believed that social interactions were as important as their educational endeavors. The three students who mentioned that social interactions were as important also mentioned that they realized that in order to achieve their goals and dreams they were going to have to focus on the educational portion of their schooling versus the social interaction aspect. As developing young men in high school, the importance of social interactions were apparent as the researcher discussed the participant’s daily lives. The scholar identity within the three young men may not have had the chance to fully form based upon their development as adolescents. Much of the scholar identity research has been conducted with students of the color within the gifted population. The application of the theory to the current research provided an explanation for students of color within a high performing academic environment.

When asked who determines how their life turns out, the students had various responses. All students responded that while there were several factors that contributed
to their life decisions, ultimately, “what happens in life is determined by the decisions you make.” Whiting (2006) posits that students who take responsibility for their actions and realize that the determination on their lives is based upon the decisions that they make are more inclined to have a positive scholar identity.

Willingness to make sacrifices was another characteristic Whiting (2006) identified as a contributor to a positive scholar identity. When asked about what they would do to achieve their goals, all of the students mentioned they would be willing to make sacrifices to achieve their goals, if necessary.

Finally, students spoke about their future plans and exhibited positive self-efficacy, as described earlier in this chapter. Whiting (2006), along with Dweck (1999), readily identified the importance of self-efficacy and the impact that it has on student motivation and educational achievement.

**Stereotype Threat.** Steele and Aronson (1995) explained stereotype threat as a pervasive threat that occurs when teachers, administrators, and employees within education expect less or possess negative predispositions toward the academic abilities of students based upon their race. Coupled with accumulated stereotypes, these lower expectations may result in a self-fulfilling prophecy for students. Teachers within the study did not mention possessing any bias toward the Black male students, stating that they held the same standard of excellence for all students regardless of color. Students mentioned that although they hoped their teachers would not view them differently based on race, they did realize that at times throughout their educational career some educators appeared to expect less from them based upon their racial background. Students and
parents alike described the teachers within the high school as being hard working and qualified.

**Educational Perceptions of Black Males.** Ford and Harris (1996) conducted a study in which they assessed the attitudes of 148 Black students regarding their educational experiences. Findings from the accumulated data indicated that a contrasting relationship between Black student attitude and Black student achievement existed. Ford and Harris (1996) discovered that students wanted to do well academically, despite the fact that their grades were suffering. Two of the students within the current study stated to the researcher that they desired to do well academically, and thought they could achieve at a higher level, although they admitted their grades were not where they wanted them to be. Within the research conducted by Ford and Harris (1996) where students were evaluated from three different levels of achievements, all students desired to do well academically. Ford and Harris’ study, as well as the present research project, support the concept that Black students want to achieve academically.

Kincaid and Yin (2011) conducted a qualitative study with 30 Black male students in which one of the themes that emerged was the fact that academic achievement was positively influenced by strong human support systems. Each participant within the current research study mentioned having a strong human support system, whether it consisted of several family members or a single-family member. Students felt supported and attributed their success to the individuals on whom they could rely.

**Understanding Black Males.** Harper and Davis III (2012) conducted a study that was designed to help understand the educational perceptions held by Black males regarding their education. One of the themes that emerged was the recognition of
educational inequities, as well as students having the belief that education is the great equalizer (Harper & Davis III, 2012). Similarly to students who participated within the aforementioned research study, the five Black students who were interviewed in the present study stated that education was their path to success in life and that they would utilize their educational opportunities to better their lives.

Ogbu (1987) stated that Black students could not acquire an attitude geared toward educational achievement because, historically, educational success has been synonymous with White culture. Mickelson (1990) provided an opposing ideology stating that not only did a student’s attitude toward educational success consist of a multitude of factors, but that Black students are capable of having positive attitudes toward schooling. Each of the students in the present study had a positive attitude toward school and believed in his ability to achieve academically. Each student spoke about the culture of educational success that was created within their school building irrespective of race.

**Racial Identity.** Nigrescence theory (Vandiver, 2001) establishes the fact that the development of racial identity is a multiple step process in which racial salience (importance of one’s own race) and racial valiance (positive or negative connotations one holds regarding their racial identity) can vary at different stages. Vandiver (2001) discussed the final stage (internalization) as when the Black person identifies as a Black nationalist, a biculturalist, or a multiculturalist. A Black nationalist is a person who identifies solely as a Black person who possesses one black culture. A bi-culturalist is a Black person who is cognizant of, and believes in the fact, that he or she can exist and exhibit behaviors consistent with Black culture and an additional culture. A
multiculturalist is a Black individual who identifies with Black culture but simultaneously develops characteristics consistent with several other cultures (Vandiver, 2001). Each student who participated in this research study stated that being Black was only a part of who he was, stating that he was defined by values consistent with several distinct cultures including their family, school, sports, or music culture. Therefore, each of the participants within the study identified as multiculturalist emphasized by the fact that who they are was developed based upon a multitude of factors.

**Deficit Thinking.** Deficit thinking ideology stipulates that the value or the devaluation of Black students within our current educational system is based upon the premise that students of color bring deficits to the classroom that must be overcome, instead of valuing the experiences and the skills students actually possess (Wright, 2001). This ideology limits educational opportunities for Black students. Ford, Moore, and Scott (2011), state that deficit thinking by educators and policymakers can severely impact the educational opportunities that are afforded to Black students. Although the five study participants reported isolated incidences where deficit thinking might have been present, the students, parents, and educators confirmed the fact that the teachers and policy makers within the two districts provided tremendous educational opportunities for all students. The results of this study indicate that a deficit model was not in place at either school setting.

**Prejudice.** Ford (2013) established the fact that prejudice can occur at the institutional level, as well as the personal level. Ford et al. (2013) illustrated that prejudice can come in the form of microaggressions, which are characterized by verbal or non-verbal attacks on non-white students. Students within the present study did not
speak of blatant racism that was readily recognizable to the public, however, they did mention the student body possessing a certain level of ignorance regarding racial and ethnic sensitivity. There were six occasions where students made comments that were racially offensive to the participants. The students mentioned that their peers who made these comments simply lacked knowledge and understanding. Initially these microaggressions caused frustration and anger among some participants. The participants each created coping mechanisms to deal with microaggressions and would occasionally use the microaggressions to educate students who did not understand that they were making insensitive comments.

Implications of the Research

The purpose of this research study was to provide insight into the social, personal and academic experiences of Black students who attended two predominantly White, high performing secondary schools. The perspectives of the students were of primary concern. Additional information was collected from the parents and teachers regarding the experiences of these Black male students in an attempt to substantiate the perspective of the students, while providing multiple sources of information regarding the consistency of the findings. Research regarding Black students has been dominated by the examination of their experiences in low performing schools or schools where the students are homogenously grouped (Davis, 2003, 2009). The disparity between the standardized test scores of White male and Black male students in the general population is alarming (Ford, 2013). This study attempted to capture the experience of Black male students who were situated in an environment where academic excellence was the standard.
The following section provides implications for educators, students, and teachers regarding the interpretations of the data collected throughout the study. The “educators” for whom the results of this study are relevant represent all school personnel, staff, and administrators within an educational environment.

**Implications for Educators**

The themes that emerged from the study include several implications regarding educators, their methods, and their perceptions of Black students. Throughout the study, the participants were able to identify important interactions that occurred between themselves and their teachers. Students spoke about the fact that building positive relationships with teachers truly helped foster an environment that was not only safe, but also conducive for learning. Students emphatically believed that they were more than someone’s socially constructed conception of race. Coinciding with student sentiment, teachers regarded these students as dynamic human beings who should be treated with respect and care. Parent members shared the same sentiments regarding the values that they expected their students to experience within the school system, while at the same time providing an environment where students could experience growth.

**Education starts with building relationships.** Throughout the study, students made reference to the effective student-teacher relationships they were able to develop with teachers. Andrew stated, “I think that the relationship between the student and the teacher can affect how you do in the class.” Devin responded, “I am close with a lot of the teachers and guidance counselors.” Developing these relationships with students enables teachers to be more effective, according to students. It should also be noted that these relationships were formed between Black males and White male and female
educators. Students were positively impacted by their abilities to form relationships with teachers.

For Black students, especially those Black students attending a predominantly White school, having a relationship with the teacher where they felt accepted, respected, and safe was paramount. When asked about the importance of developing effective student teacher relationships, Mrs. B responded, “The key for teachers is developing bonds and relationships that are centered in people.” Mrs. D, reiterated that same sentiment stating, “Teaching is all about relationships.”

Relationship building is important for everyone. According to the teachers and students within the study, relationship building helped to establish rapport and created an environment where students felt as though they were valued. Research has shown that when Black students exist in an environment where they are valued and feel safe, their ability to succeed increased exponentially (Ford, 2010; Ford, Harris, Tyson, & Trotman, 2002; Ford, Moore & Scott, 2011; Wright 2009).

**Students are dynamic.** Students reported that they had diversified interests regarding school and outside activities. Explaining that they were not simply Black students, their responses communicated that they wanted to be judged based on their work ethic, performance, and ability to succeed and not solely on the color of their skin. Regarding this idea Mrs. B stated, “Each student that we have is different, we need to meet them where they are.” Mrs. E commented that teachers need to find out about the whole child, “There are experiences that students have outside of the classroom that may impact student performance.”
Understanding that students are dynamic and have different learning styles, the teachers believed that all students should be valued for what they bring to the classroom. Ezra commented regarding interacting with humans and their dynamic nature, “Every person matters. You never know what type of influence that you can have on one person.” Debra understood the impact that teaching can have on students stating, “Learning has been marginalized, and the way concepts are taught now will impact students’ ability to think critically.” Students are eager to learn and believe in their abilities to do so; educators understand that each student is different and needs to be helped from wherever he is, to where he needs to be.

**Implications for students**

Information provided from this study is meaningful for students moving forward. The dynamic environment described by the participants within the study captured the necessity for cultural awareness and social interactions, allowing students to define who they are based upon what they believe.

**Cultural awareness is needed.** Several students mentioned that although their peers were friendly, there existed a level of ignorance within the student body that caused some students to make insensitive remarks regarding culture and race. Bobby stated, “Although racism is not evident, there still exists ignorance and jokes surrounding race.” Bobby continued to explain the lack of cultural awareness within the schools commenting, “Aside from Martin Luther King, embracing race and cultures are not discussed in school.” On the subject of race and cultural awareness, Edward mentioned, “…cultural differences can lead to misinterpretations…people form associations based on race and fill in information with those associations.” Edward continued to explain that
when people do not understand other people’s differences, they begin to falsely associate what they think they know about that person’s race with a particular person. Mrs. C commented, “We give attributes to people based on their race.” Mrs. C continued saying that giving attributes to people based on race was troublesome.

During a recent presentation Dr. Ford said, “The more we know, the less we make up and consequently the less we know, the more we make up” (Ford, 2013). Cultural awareness is an issue that needs to be addressed for all students. Students enter school each day, exemplifying differences in race, beliefs, and cultural identities. Understanding one another provides the opportunity to reduce the fear we have of one another when we do not know about an individual. Ezra mentioned, “Trying to change someone’s opinion of who I am based on my race is like trying to change a salt water ocean into a freshwater ocean.” This means that changing the mindset of someone who has ill-conceived notions regarding Ezra’s race is a task that may ostensibly seem impossible. Mrs. E mentioned that in recent years the high school has focused on including more African-American pieces of literature within the curriculum. The development of cultural awareness could bring much needed change to the school environment and could tremendously impact students of color in a positive manner.

**Student Advocacy is paramount.** Getting involved in students groups and activities, both in and out of school, could also have a tremendous impact according to the students within the study. Regarding getting involved, Bobby mentioned that he took pride in his achievements, and that striking a balance between his social life and academics helped him maintain an active role in the school community. Pertaining to race and student involvement, Mrs. B commented, “It is more about how a kid presents
himself to other students that impacts their perception.” Mrs. B was explaining that how students react to another student within the high school had a greater impact based upon that student’s personality and general disposition, compared to any other aspects of a student’s existence. Mrs. D spoke of creating a sense of independence within students so that they would be able to advocate for themselves beyond high school.

Students spoke about having a voice and the importance of sharing their stories to help enlighten others. Students mentioned getting involved in student groups and actively engaging within the school as a means of providing an outlet for social interaction. Students were confident that as much as the environment helped to shape them, they wanted to shape the environment in which they existed.

**Defining yourself is more important than how you are defined by others.**

Students spoke of self-confidence and their ability to choose their own paths regarding their life choices. They also spoke about that fact that they would not allow others to define them simply based on their skin color. Ezra mentioned, “I don’t want to fit any stereotypes…I want to be an original…I do not want to be defined by the color of my skin.” Devin stated that he was generally confident and that he took pride in being unique. Calvin mentioned that his self-confidence came from his work ethic. Ezra’s father Edward mentioned that who you are should be developed based on your faith and family and consequently not based on outside influences.

**Implications for Parents**

Themes emerged from the study that support current research emphasizing the importance of the existence of a strong familial support system regarding the promotion of successful educational experiences for Black male students. Black male student
participants provided accounts of receiving support from home regarding their personal and educational interests. Students also spoke about the fact that much of what they understood about their own culture and their personal conception of positive racial identity came from home.

**Strong positive support systems are the key for Black student success.** The consistent expression of family support was readily apparent throughout the interview process. Participants spoke of conversations with family members, time spent with one another, and close relationships with multiple members within their family. Andrew spoke about how close he was with his sisters and how they provided him with moral and emotional support. Bobby and his mother both shared a relationship that enabled Bobby to accomplish what he has within his life. Calvin stated that, “…I have learned from my parents and my family has always been supportive.” Devin mentions, “My mom is very supportive and my parents usually lead by example.” Ezra commented that his family was close and stated that he believed family had a tremendous impact on his life.

**Positive identity is developed inside the home.** The impact of identity development through conversations and interactions at home were readily apparent as participants shared stories of how they came to be the young men they were, during the study. Of the number of lessons that Andrew was able to learn from the home, he mentioned that learning how to be a good person was the most important lesson he learned from his father and mother. His mother had a tremendous impact on his racial identification when she provided him with an article to read about President Obama in which Bobby was able to enhance his sense of his identity as a Black male and related some of his own experiences to those of President Obama. Bobby mentioned
conversations that he had with his father regarding his African-American heritage, and the impact that had on him as a young Black man. As a young man, Ezra is a direct reflection of both of his parents coupled with his own pioneering style of living his own life. Impactful identify forming conversations and interactions often occurred within the home, making the home an integral part of identity formulation for the Black males who participated within the study.

**Recommendations from this Research**

The following section highlights the recommendations provided by the researcher as they relate to the implications for all stakeholders impacted by the study. Table five illustrates the recommendations for students, parents, and teachers based on the implications that emerged from the data.

Table 5

*Recommendations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Implication</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Defining yourself is more important than how you are defined by others.</td>
<td>1. Talk with your family about common beliefs, shared values, and characteristics you hope to embody.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Conduct research into family lineage to understand your personal history. Decide who you want to be and align your core values with personal expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Student advocacy is paramount.</td>
<td>1. Join a local student advocacy group where conversations about how to develop positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stakeholder | Implication | Recommendation
--- | --- | ---
Student | Cultural awareness | 1. Learn by speaking with your family and friends about your particular culture. 2. Seek out opportunities to speak with your classmates about culture. Serve as a role model for your particular cultural heritage.
Parent | Strong support | 1. Provide a nurturing environment where expectations are understood and support is constant, as well as consistent. 2. Talk with your son about school and racial identity; take a particular interest in his academic success and personal happiness.
Parent | Identity is | 1. Have conversations about multiple identities your son may be experiencing. 2. Help your son to identify a role model by involving him in community or student programs that focus on mentorship.
Educator | Each student is | 1. Allow students to showcase their individual skills and talents as they relate to the curriculum.

advocacy skills can be fostered.

2. Speak with your teachers about your educational needs, which will aid in the development of your academic success.
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<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Implication</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educator</td>
<td>Education starts</td>
<td>1. Develop effective student-teacher relationships with building relationships. by interacting with students in an effort to understand who they are and what skills and specific attributes they bring to the classroom. 2. Develop relationships with students highlighted with mutual respect, high expectations, and student centered learning and development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Consider culture, learning style, personality, and ability when designing assignments and curriculum projects.</td>
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**Trustworthiness**

This study was designed to provide insight into the experiences of Black male students who attend predominately White, high performing secondary schools. The goal was to substantiate the experiences of students from their perspectives, while at the same time include supplementary information from their parents and teachers.

The rigor involved within qualitative research has been challenged for lacking substantiation regarding the claims that can derive from it (Krefting, 1991). To ensure the integrity of a quantitative study certain criteria have been established including (a) internal validity, (b) external validity, (c) reliability, and (d) objectivity (1991). The nature of qualitative research is entirely different and cannot be judged based on similar criteria. Krefting provides a summary of Guba’s research that stipulates four components...
involved in the assessment of rigor in qualitative research: (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) confirmability. Her work is based on that of Lincoln and Guba (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

**Credibility**

Credibility is defined by Krefting (1991) as the ability of researchers to provide a certain truth-value to their findings by employing multiple strategies by which the information collected is truly representative of the experience of the participant. Researcher bias, misinterpretation of data, lack of rapport between researcher and participant are just a few threats to credibility.

Within this research, the major issues regarding credibility involved the lack of prolonged and varied field experience along with the participants. In an attempt to alleviate this issue, the researcher created an interview protocol that was designed to elicit specific information regarding the experiences of Black male students from the perspectives of the student, his teacher, and a parent. Additionally, the researcher created an opportunity to address the issue of credibility by allowing the members he interviewed within the study to review and edit the interview transcript. This was done to insure that the information provided during the interview was accurate and the message that was conveyed by each participant was captured in its entirety.

**Transferability**

Krefting (1991) defines transferability as the ability of the study’s results to be applicable to a population with similar characteristics. Qualitative research is unique in the fact that occasionally individual participants in the study may provide experiences that are not transferable to other situations (Merriam, 2009). With this threat of non-
transferability readily apparent, Krefting (1991) suggested providing a dense description of the participants, while at the same time focusing on the data provided by the participants, without placing an emphasis on individual characteristics.

Merriam (2009) and Yin (2011) established the idea that because the data found within a multi case study design is entirely dependent upon the participants, that results may not be generalizable. Due to the nature of this research, the issue of transferability was addressed through an in-depth description of the environment, participants, and the results. Demographically, the students were selected from a school population that was comprised of 3% Black students. The experiences of the students who were situated within these two predominantly White, high performing secondary schools may not be transferrable to Black male students who are in other high schools. To alleviate the concerns of transferability, the researcher provided a dense description of all cases along with a thorough explanation of the methodology utilized and the selection process.

**Dependability**

Dependability, as outlined by Krefting (1991), relates to the consistency of the findings. The subjectivity involved in the analysis of data within qualitative research requires that the interpretation of data possess consistency (Creswell, 1998). Inconsistent analysis, lack of description of the coding process, and lack of sound methodological procedures are several of the threats to dependability (Krefting, 1991).

The researcher provided an extensive description of the research methods and procedures in an attempt to develop guidelines for future research. Methodological procedures were evaluated by a qualitative research expert and described extensively. Additionally, researcher bias was also a concern. The researcher is a Black male who
attended predominantly White schools throughout his middle school years. Based upon the researcher’s background, he was familiar with the research being conducted. In order to address his own thoughts, preferences, and experiences, the researcher provided a researcher biography where information that could create bias was disclosed to the reader. Triangulation of resources was utilized to compare and confirm information from students, parent, and teachers. Emergent themes were only included within the research if they could be substantiated by multiple participants.

**Confirmability**

According to Krefting (1991), confirmability is a construct within qualitative studies that suggests that a researcher could establish similar results to a research project if he or she was able to follow the same methodological procedures. Confirmability can be compromised within the study if the researcher fails to triangulate data by not utilizing multiple methods and/or sources. Additionally, confirmability may be threatened if the researcher does not provide reflexivity within the research project.

Confirmability, in response to the threat of failure to triangulate sources, was addressed by including the student participants, a selected parent/guardian, and a selected educator to provide multiple sources of information throughout the study. Data were collected from each participant within the study. Responses to the interviews were coded and analyzed, along with demographic surveys. Within each case the data collected from the student, educator, and parent/guardian were utilized to triangulate information. Comparing and contrasting the sources allowed the researcher to substantiate or strengthen the claims each student made about his particular experiences. Additionally, the researcher met with a qualitative expert who agreed to peer review his work. The
confirmability auditor found the themes and codes to be in 100% agreement, as stated in Appendix P.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

Allen (2004) and Goldsmith (2004) have explained that there has been a paucity of qualitative research studies examining the lived experience of Black male students who attend predominantly White, high performing secondary schools. Although the research is extremely timely and significant, especially considering the recent race relations within our country, there are several suggestions for future research that should be considered which include: (a) completion of a longitudinal research study, (b) further investigation into students who have two Black parents who were not of mixed race and (c) research into the relationships between Black students and White teachers in predominantly White, high performing secondary schools. Each of these suggestions for future research will be explained below.

Although ample time was provided to conduct a thorough investigation into the lives of Black students who attended predominantly White, high performing secondary schools, due to the nature and sensitivity of the subject matter, additional research that occurs over multiple years would provide valuable information that could be added to the current research base. While rapport was developed over several months between the researcher and each participant, the topic of race remains a sensitive issue and one that could require an in-depth relationship with the researcher for participants to feel comfortable enough to disclose their true feelings regarding their experiences. A longitudinal study could be conducted where the researcher follows the students from their middle school years, a critical time when participants reported that racial awareness
began, and follow the students throughout their entire high school careers and into college. Information from a longitudinal study would provide greater depth and scope regarding the experiences of Black males in these multiple educational environments.

All of the students within the research study identified as Black males, however four out of the five student participants were of mixed race, having only one Black parent. A similar study could be conducted with Black students who have two Black parents and attend a predominantly a White, high performing secondary school. The interesting dynamic between mixed race parents who were able to navigate the complexities of race within a school district dominated by one race, and parents of the same race in the same environment, may produce different results than those reported here.

One of the more prominent themes that emerged from the study was the profound relationships that were described between the Black male students and their White educators. Research has shown that effective student-teacher relationships promote educational success. With regard to Black students, it is vital to build strong student-teacher relationships that include individual respect for personal and cultural values. More research needs to be conducted regarding the dynamics between the Black male population and the White female teachers, who comprise 83% of all teachers across the country (NCES, 2013). With interactions between Black students and White teachers occurring daily, research may provide insight into the dynamics of the positive relationships that occur and may provide assistance to students and teachers who have relationships that are not resulting in educational success.
Conclusion

This study was effectively designed to capture the essence of the Black male’s social, academic, and personal experiences within a predominantly White, high performing secondary school. Providing a voice to these particular students was an integral component of the research. Research questions were designed to examine the experiences of the Black male students from their personal perspective, from their parents’ understandings, and from the standpoint of one of their educators. Providing insight into the lived experiences of the five student members provided rich and meaningful data that enabled the formulation of four themes.

Qualitative data analysis was performed on the data resulting from the 15 in person or online individual interviews, along with the 15 demographic surveys. The following themes emerged:

1. Who I am
2. My world
3. Who I want to be
4. My inspiration

Following the summary of themes and the discussion of findings, implications for educators, parents, and students were explained and elaborated upon. Trustworthiness along with suggestions for future research, concluded the chapter.

President Barack Obama once stated, “Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.” This research was completed to provide a voice to students who had previously not been heard. May this body of work aid to propel the movement
toward understanding and equality for Black and White students alike. I would like to thank each of the teachers who participated within the study, Mr. A, Mrs. B, Mrs. C, Mrs. D, and Mrs. E. Finally, it is with great honor and gratitude that I thank, Andrew and Anna, Bobby and Barbara, Calvin and Cathy, Devin and Debra, and Ezra and Edward. Without these human beings who willingly undertook the challenge of contributing to something beyond their individual interest, this work would not have been possible. Thank you.
REFERENCES


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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Student demographic Survey
Educational Experience Study – Student Demographic Survey

Instructions: Please answer the following questions as completely and as honestly as possible. If you are unsure of an answer you may leave it blank.

(1) Your current age ________

(2) Grade level Circle the grade level you are currently in:

9 10 11 12

(3) What kind of grades to you get in school?

_____ All As
_____ Mostly As and Bs
_____ Mostly Bs
_____ Mostly Bs and Cs
_____ Mostly Cs
_____ Mostly below C

(4) What types of academic interests do you have?

________________________________________________________________________

(5) What types of academic activities do you participate in: Please select all that apply:

_____Model UN
_____Amnesty International
_____National Honor Society
_____Math Honor Society
_____English Honor Society
_____Peer Tutoring
_____Book Club
_____Other (please list the organization(s)

________________________________________________________________________

(6) Racial background/ethnicity

(Optional—Check all that apply):

□ White
□ Latino
□ Black
□ Asian
□ Native American
□ Other (Specify): ____________________
(7) Do you participate in any clubs or organizations after school? Circle one: **YES** or **NO**
If so please list them below.

_______________________      _______________________
_______________________
_______________________

(8) Do you participate on any sports teams? If so please list them below.

_______________________      _______________________
_______________________
_______________________

(9) Have you ever participated in any community service or volunteer programs? Circle one: **YES** or **NO**
If so please list them below.

_______________________      _______________________
_______________________
_______________________

(10) Indicate the year that you began attending school within this District?

_______________________

(11) What is your favorite subject in school? ___________________

(12) Please describe what students are like within your school?

_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

(13) If your principal gave a speech about your school what kind of things do you think he or she would say?

_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

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Appendix B: Student Interview Protocol
Description: The questions contained within the qualitative semi-structure interview protocol are designed to elicit information from a Black male student that will inform the study. Each of the identified categories identified below is followed by potential questions to be asked during the interview process. Several of the questions were designed based upon the scholar identity model (Whiting, 2006).

Prompt to be read to the educator: Thank you for allowing me to ask you some questions. I want to know what you experiences of been like inside and outside of school. I will be asking you a series of questions that are designed to gather information regarding your educational experiences, race, and life experiences. Please answer all questions as honestly a completely as possible. Your participation within this interview is completely voluntary. You may decline to answer any question(s) at anytime. Your time and cooperation are sincerely appreciated.

GENERAL QUESTIONS
1.) Tell me about yourself
   Probes:
   • What kinds of things do you like to do?
   • Tell me about your family?
   • (if appropriate) Tell me about your brothers or sisters?
   • How long have you lived in <town>?

5.) How would you describe yourself?
   Probes:
   • What are you most proud of about yourself?
   • Is there anything that you would change about yourself?

2.) What kinds of activities do you like to do when you’re not in school?
   Probes
   • Do you have any hobbies? What are they?
   • How long have you been doing <hobby>?
   • What things outside of school interest you?
   • Do your friends share similar interest?
   • Tell me about your friends?
   • How long have you been friends with them?
   • Do you have a best friend?
   • What is he or she like?

3.) If there is one thing you could do for the rest of your life, what would it be?
   Probes
   • Why is this something you would choose?
   • How do you think you could do this?
• Do you think other people would support you?

4.) Can you describe one of your fondest memories from your childhood? Tell me what the experience was like and why you enjoyed it so much.
   Probes:
   • What did you like about the experience?
   • What happened before the experience?
   • What happened after the experience?
   • What if anything did you learn from the experience?

5.) Name the person who you have learned the most from outside of school? What did you learn? How has this person impacted your life?
   Probes:
   • How long have you known this person?
   • Where and how did you meet this person?
   • Can you describe this person?
   • What do you like most about this person?

Scholar Identity Model

Family
6.) Who are the people in your family?
   o Is there anyone in your family that you are especially close to?
   o Is there anyone in your family that you look up to and why?
   o Tell me about someone in your family that you think is successful and why do you think they are successful?

Community
7.) Tell me about the community you live in?
   • Are the people friendly?
   • How do you get along with your neighbors or people in the community
   • How does the community support each other?
   • How does the community support you?

School
8.) Tell me about your school?
   • Do you like it here?
   • What do you like about it?
   • Is there anything that you don’t like about it?
   • What kind of things do you like to do in school?
   • Are the students friendly here? If so how have they been friendly?
   • Do you like your teachers? Why do you feel this way about them?

Mentor
9.) Is there anyone in your life that you can look up to?
   • Is there anyone that shows you how to do things and helps you to be successful?
• What is that person like?
• Why do they help you?
• Do you appreciate the help that they provide for you?
• What do you like most about this person?

Masculinity
10.) What does it mean to be a man?
• Do you think being a man has anything to do with school?
• Describe what being a man has to do with being in school?
• Is there a man in your life that you consider a role model? Why
• What does he do? What does he believe? How does he achieve

Racial Identity
11.) What does it mean to be Black?
• How does it feel to be Black?
• Is being Black a good thing or a bad thing? Explain why?
• How does it feel to be Black in an all white school?
• What do you learn from home about being Black? Is being Black different in school versus being Black at home?
• How would you describe the race and ethnicity of students within your school?
• How do you think that other races are viewed in your school?
• Does your race or ethnicity play a role in determining the expectations that you have for yourself?
• How would you describe the race and ethnicity of students within your school?
• How do you think that other races are viewed in your school?

Academic Self-Confidence
12.) How do you feel when you are in school?
• How do you think you do academically? Why?
• Do you feel like the teachers have had before taught you a lot of what you need to know?

Achievement > Affiliation
13.) Can tell me some things that are important to you about school and can you tell me why they are important?
• Tell me more about these things
• If you had to prioritize the items you listed how would you rank them in order from greatest to least

Self-Awareness
14.) How do you think other people see you or perceive you?
• Does your view of yourself go along with the way people see you? Why or why not?
• How do you view yourself?
**Internal Locus of Control**
15.) Who and what do you think determines how your life turns out?
   - Who or what do you think is responsible for making decisions for you?
   - Tell me more about a time when you felt like something was out of your control? What did you do? How did you react?
   - Tell me about a time when you felt like something was in your control? What did you do? How did you react?

**Willing to Make Sacrifices**
16.) How can you become successful in life?
   - What do you think it takes to be successful
   - Do you think you have been given the opportunities to be successful?
   - Is it important to be successful to you?
   - What does success mean to you?

**Future Orientation**
17.) Describe your plans for the future?
   - What would you like to do after high school?
   - Where do you see yourself 5 years from now
   - How will you get to where you are now to where you want to be in 5 years?
   - What does the future represent to you?

**Self-Efficacy**
18.) How do you feel about yourself?
   - Do you believe in yourself? Why?
   - How have you developed belief in yourself?
   - If you do not believe in yourself why do you think you have a lack of belief?

**EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES**
19.) How do you feel about school?
   - What do you enjoy about school? Why?
   - What do you dislike school? Why?
   - How do you think the teachers in your school treat students?
   - How do you feel about your teachers?

20) What is your morning routine before you come to school?
   - When you wake up in the morning during a school day can you tell me what your thoughts are? Do you look forward to coming to school? If not, why?

21.) Do you think school is important? Why or why not?
22.) Can you describe a typical day in school? Can you describe your experiences in and outside of classes?

23.) What are your expectations when you first start to take a class with a new teacher?
   - What are your expectations based upon?
   - Do your expectations change over time? Why or why not?
   - What expectations do you think your teachers have when you begin to take the class?

24.) How do the students in your classes treat you?
   - What do you think this treatment is based on
   - How have you developed school relationships with teachers and students?
   - Was it easy to develop friends at this school? Why or why not?
   - How do you feel as though teachers treat you in this school?

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

25.) What does it mean to you to be successful in school? Please explain your answers using details and examples.

26.) How do you achieve success in school?

27.) Think of someone who has helped you to succeed in school and explain how they have helped you to succeed?

28.) What is the most important quality that someone has to have in order to be successful in school?

29.) How as your idea of success been affected by…
   - Other Students
   - Teachers
   - Parents
   - Friends
   - Outside influences
Appendix C: Educator Demographic Survey
Educational Experience Study – Educator Demographic Survey
Instructions: Please answer the following questions as completely and as honestly as possible. If you are unsure of an answer you may leave it blank

(1) Gender:
□ Female
□ Male

(2) Racial background/ethnicity
(Optional—Check one):
□ White
□ Latino
□ Black
□ Asian
□ Native American
□ Other (Specify): ____________________

(3) Age:
□ 21-29
□ 30-39
□ 40-49
□ 50-59
□ 60-69
□ 70+

(4) Highest level of education
□ Bachelor’s degree
□ Master’s degree
□ Sixth year degree
□ Doctoral degree

(5) Total number of years in education: ______________

(6) Total number of years teaching in your current school district: ______________

(7) Current position:
________________________________________________________________________
Please continue to the next page...

(8) Do you have any knowledge or training specific to multicultural education?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If so, can you describe the type of training (college course, professional development, online seminar, personal reading, etc.), approximate number of hours of training, and a brief description of the type of information gathered from the training.

______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Please answer the following questions as they pertain to the school in which you came to know and develop a relationship with the student participating in this study.

(9) Grade Level:

☐ Elementary School
☐ Middle School
☐ High School

(10) Type of school (Check all that apply):

☐ Public
☐ Private
☐ Parochial
☐ Magnet/Charter
☐ Other (Describe): ____________________________

(11) In what capacity do/did you know the student? Expand, if necessary:

☐ Advisor__________________________
☐ Coach __________________________
☐ Classroom teacher ________________
☐ Other____________________________
Appendix D: Educator Interview Protocol
Description: The questions contained within the qualitative semi-structure interview protocol are designed to elicit information from an educator (teacher, administrator, coach, counselor, etc.) that will inform the study. Each of the identified categories (philosophy, teaching style, and questions pertaining to the specific student) is followed by potential questions to be asked during the interview process.

Prompt to be read to the educator: I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate within this interview. I will be asking you a series of questions that are designed to elicit information regarding your teaching experiences as they relate to <student name>. Please answer all questions as honestly and completely as possible. Your participation within this interview is completely voluntary. You may decline to answer any question(s) at anytime. Your time and cooperation are sincerely appreciated.

PHILOSOPHY AND TEACHING STYLE
1.) Why did you become a teacher? What attracted you to the profession?

2.) What motivates you most about your job?

3.) What do you believe is important in education?

4.) How would you describe your classroom management style?

5.) Explain how you develop effective student teacher relationships.
   • How do you develop a trusting relationship with your students?

6.) Students enter our classrooms with different learning styles, different life experiences, and different stories.
   • How do you reach all of the kids?
   • What types of strategies do you use to incorporate all students within your class?

7.) What expectations do you have for students within your classroom?
   • Do those expectations differ depending upon the student?
   • What are your expectations based upon?

8.) Please describe a successful student within your classroom. (characteristics, quality of work, behavior)

9.) Please describe a student who does not experience success within your classroom. (Characteristics, quality of work, behavior)
   • What do you do to support these students?

QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO A SPECIFIC STUDENT
(Questions will be situated based on background of, i.e. nurse, counselor, teacher)
10.) How has/is <student name> doing in your class (sports program; question)?

11.) Can you illustrate some examples of <student name> work that he has completed in your class.
   - What stands out in your mind about the completion of those assignments?
   - How would you describe <student name> work ethic?

12.) How would you describe your student-teacher relationship you have with <student name>?
   - How do you think <student name> would describe his student-teacher relationship with you?
   - Why do you think they are similar?
   - Why do you think they are different?

13.) What was your initial perception of the student when <student name> first entered your class.
   - Has your perception changed?
   - If so how has it changed and why do you believe it has changed?
   - If your perception has remained the same how and why do you think it has remained the same?

14.) What are your expectations for <student name>?
   - What are your expectations for <student name> based on?
   - How has he responded to your expectations?
   - If he has or has not met your expectations why do you think could be the reason?

15.) Have your expectations changed over time for this young man?
   - If so, how have they changed and why have they changed?
   - Have your expectations remained the same?
   - If so why have they remained the same?

16.) What kind of impact do you think being one of the few Black students in your school and in your class has on him?
   - How do you think he feels about that?
   - Does he get along with the other students within the class?
   - Is there anything you have done in particular to address the issue (only if there is one)?

17.) Do you think race of ethnicity plays a role in the perception of human beings?
   - If so, how do you think it affects the perception of the person?
   - Do you think race or ethnicity plays a role in the perception of the student within your class?

If you believe it does, how does it play a role? How should this be addressed?
Appendix E: Parent Demographic Survey
Educational Experience Study – Parent/Guardian Demographic Survey
Instructions: Please answer the following questions as completely and as honestly as possible. If you are unsure of an answer you may leave it blank

(1) Your Gender: Female Male

(2) Your Age: _______________

(3) Your racial background/ethnicity (optional---circle all that apply)
Black Asian Latino White Native American Other: __________

(4) If applicable your spouse’s/partner’s racial background/ethnicity
Black Asian Latino White Native American Other: __________

(5) Your highest level of education (please check one)
___Some high school
___Some college
___Associate’s degree
___Master’s degree
___Doctoral degree

(6) Your occupation ________________________________

(7) What is your relationship to the student?
________________________________________

(8) What impact does education have on <participants name here> life?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

(9) How would you describe <participants name here> school?
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
Appendix F: Parent/Guardian Interview Protocol
Description: the questions contained within the qualitative semi-structure interview protocol are designed to elicit information from a parent/guardian that will inform the study. Each of the identified categories (general questions, role of education, perceptions, role of racial identity in education, educational success, and expectations) is followed by potential questions to be asked during the interview process.

Prompt to be read to the parent/guardian:
I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate within this interview. I will be asking you a series of questions that are designed to elicit information regarding your experiences as they relate to <student name>. Please answer all questions as honestly and completely as possible. Your participation within this interview is completely voluntary. You may decline to answer any question(s) at anytime. Your time and cooperation are sincerely appreciated.

General Questions
1.) Tell me about your son?
   • What are some of his interests?
   • Why makes you proud of your son?
   • What are some of his hopes and dreams?
   • Describe some of the hopes and dreams you have for your son?
   • Does your son share your hopes and dreams? If not why? If yes please describe?

Role of education
2.) Tell me about your son’s education?
   • What is most important to you regarding your son’s education?
   • What is your goal for your son’s educational attainment?
   • What is your son’s goal for his educational attainment?
   • What is your son’s plan for his education after high school?
3). Tell me about your son’s school?
   • Please describe some of the experiences that your son has encountered since entering the school?
   • Tell me about your son’s teachers?
   • Do they share the same expectations that you do for your son?
   • If you could change anything about your son’s school experience, what would it be and why?

Perceptions
4.) Does your son get along with other students within the community or classes?
   • When you and your family arrived where you embraced by the community and the school? If so, how? If not, why?
   • What are you perceptions of the school community?
   • What are your perceptions of the school?
- How would you describe your son’s teachers?
- Do you feel as though your son receives all of the educational support that he needs?

**Role Of Racial Identity in education**

5.) What impact does your son’s racial and ethnic identity play with regard to his educational experience?
- What does it mean to your son to be Black?
- Do you feel as though you son is treated differently because of his race? Why or why not?
- How does your son feel being one of the few Black students in the school district? If he has expressed concerns, what are they?
- Have you talked with you son about his racial identity? If so, can you describe some of the conversations?

**Educational Success**

6.) How would you describe educational success for your son?
- What values have you instilled in your son that reflects his attitude toward educational achievement?
- How would your son describe educational success for himself?
- What factors contribute to the educational success of your son?
- How do you think your personally educational achievement has affected the achievement attitude of your son?

**Expectations**

7.) What expectations do you think educators have for your son? Do these expectations coincide with the expectations that you have for your son?
- What factors do you think are involved in the development of expectations for your son regarding the educators

8.) Describe the relationship between the values you promote the value your son has and the value that your son’s school promotes?

9.) Based upon your knowledge of your son’s school experience do you believe that the students, educators, or administrators have developed different expectations based upon his racial identity? Why or why not?

10.) What are some challenges that your son has had to overcome in order to achieve educationally and how has he overcome them? Can you describe any sacrifices that you or your son has had to make in order to achieve educationally?
Appendix G: Superintendent Letter and Consent Form
January 2015

Dear <Superintendent’s name here>:

My name is Damien Holst, and I am certified educator and a student in the doctoral program for Instructional Leadership at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury, Connecticut. As a doctoral candidate I am responsible for designing and implementing a research study. Please accept this letter as my formal request for permission to conduct this research study in your school district. This research will be conducted during the Spring 2015 school semester.

The purpose of the study is to examine the educational experiences of Black male students by collecting demographic survey (10 minutes) and interview data (1 to 1.5 hours) from 1 to 3 students, a parent/guardian, and a teacher/mentor per student. All data will be collected outside of the school day. This study will highlight the positive aspects of the Black male experience within a non-minority environment that will serve to inform educators and influence educational practices for students who attend schools where they are the minority. The results of this research should be of value to the students, parents, and teachers of <school name here>.

This research study has been approved by the Western Connecticut Institutional Review Board. Protocol # ____________.

Participation within this study is completely voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time. Pseudonyms will be utilized throughout the research report to ensure the confidentiality of the district and school as well as the teachers, parent members, and students who participate within the study. Results of the study will be made available to you, should you be interested in receiving them.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. If you agree that this study can be conducted at <school name here> High School, please sign and return this form.

Sincerely,

Damien J. Holst
Cell Phone XXX-XXX-XXXX
E-mail: (XXXXXXXX)

________________________________________________________________________
Name (Please print)

________________________________________________________________________
Signature                                                                 Date

Dr. Marcia Delcourt
Faculty Advisor

(XXXXXXXX)
Appendix H: Principal Letter of Consent
Dear Dr. <principal’s name here>:

My name is Damien Holst, and I am certified educator and a student in the doctoral program for Instructional Leadership at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury, Connecticut. As a doctoral candidate I am responsible for designing and implementing a research study. Please accept this letter as my formal request for permission to conduct this research study in your school. This research will be conducted during the Spring 2015 school semester.

The purpose of the study is to examine the educational experiences of Black male students by collecting demographic survey (10 minutes) and interview data (1 to 1.5 hours) from 1 to 3 students, a parent/guardian, and a teacher/mentor per student. All data will be collected outside of the school day. This study will highlight the positive aspects of the Black male experience within a non-minority environment that will serve to inform educators and influence educational practices for students who attend schools where they are the minority. The results of this research should be of value to the students, parents, and teachers of <school name here>.

This research study has been approved by the Western Connecticut Institutional Review Board. Protocol # _____________.

Participation within this study is completely voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time. Pseudonyms will be utilized throughout the research report to ensure the confidentiality of the district and school as well as the teachers, parent members, and students who participate within the study. Results of the study will be made available to you, should you be interested in receiving them.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. If you agree that this study can be conducted at <school name here> High School, please sign and return this form.

Sincerely,

Damien J. Holst
Cell Phone XXX-XXX-XXXX
E-mail: (XXXXXXX) (XXXXXXX)

I agree that the study describe above can be conducted at <school name here>.

________________________________________________          _______________
Name (Please print)                                            Signature
________________________________________________          _______________
          Date
Appendix I: Parent/Guardian Letter/Consent and Student Letter/Assent Forms
Dear Parent/Guardian:

My name is Damien Holst, and I am certified educator and a student in the doctoral program for Instructional Leadership at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury, Connecticut. I would like to formally extend an invitation to you to allow your son to participate with my dissertation research study. I would like to examine the educational experiences of Black males.

In order to conduct my research, I am interested in acquiring volunteers to participate in one or two individual interviews along with the completion of a short demographic survey. During the interview your son will be asked about his experiences as a minority student in his educational environment. The demographic survey takes about 10 minutes to complete and the initial audio-recorded interview will be scheduled for approximately 1 to 1.5 hours. If additional information is needed, a follow-up interview may be requested. In addition, at least one parent/caregiver and one educator/mentor whom your son recommends will be asked to complete a demographic survey and participate in separate interviews. Each participant will be presented with a $25 gift certificate as a token of appreciation for his or her time.

The Institutional Review Board at Western Connecticut State University has approved this research. The results from this study will provide valuable information regarding the experiences of minority students in an attempt to enhance the educational achievement of these students through educational practices and policies. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and will have no adverse affect on your son in any way. If you do agree to have your son participate, he may decline to respond to a particular question and is free to withdraw from the study at any time. To maintain the confidentiality of the individual respondents, names will be changed in all reports of this research.

Any information obtained through this study will remain completely confidential. If you would like to discuss the study with me or have any questions, feel free to contact me via email (XXXXXXX) or phone (XXX-XXX-XXXX). Thank you for your interest in this research.

Sincerely,

Damien J. Holst, BSBA, MS

Marcia Delcourt, PhD, Faculty Advisor
WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY
Parental Consent Form for Minor Child’s Participation in Research Study

I, _______________________, the parent/legal guardian of _________________________
(printed name of parent or guardian) (printed name of minor child) acknowledge that the researcher has explained to me the purpose of this research study, identified any risks involved, and offered to answer any questions I may have about the nature of my child’s participation. I voluntarily consent to my child’s participation. I understand all information gathered during this study will be completely confidential and personal identifying information will not be reported. I give my permission for the named parent and educator (listed by my child on the Participant Assent Form) to be contacted by the researcher and to participate in separate interviews regarding my son’s experiences.

I understand that there is no risk involved within the study and I am free to decline to respond to a specific questions or to withdraw from the study at any time.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: ______________________________ Date: ____________

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January 2015

Dear Student name:

My name is Damien Holst, and I am certified educator and a student in the doctoral program for Instructional Leadership at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury, Connecticut. I would like to formally extend an invitation to you to participate with my dissertation research study. I would like to examine the educational experiences of Black males.

In order to conduct my research, I am interested in acquiring volunteers to participate in one or two individual interviews along with the completion of a short demographic survey. During the interview you will be asked about your experiences as a minority student in your educational environment. The initial interview will take approximately 1 to 1.5 hours and, with your permission, will be audio-recorded. If additional information is needed, a follow-up interview may be requested. In addition, at least one parent/guardian and one educator/mentor whom you recommend will be asked to complete a demographic survey and participate in separate interviews. Each participant will be presented with a $25 gift certificate as a token of appreciation for his or her time.

The Institutional Review Board at Western Connecticut State University has approved this research. The results from this study will provide valuable information regarding the experiences of minority students in an attempt to enhance the educational achievement of these students through educational practices and policies. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and will have no adverse affect on you in any way. If you do agree to participate, you may decline to respond to a particular question and are free to withdraw from the study at any time. To maintain the confidentiality of the individual respondents, names will be changed in all reports of this research.

Any information obtained through this study will remain completely confidential. If you would like to discuss the study with me or have any questions, feel free to contact me via email (XXXXXXXX) or phone (XXX-XXX-XXXX). Thank you for your interest in this research.

Sincerely,

Damien J. Holst, BSBA, MS
Marcia Delcourt, PhD, Faculty Advisor
WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY
Participant Assent Form for Research Study

I, ________________________, agree to voluntarily participate in the research study.  

(printed name of participant)

I understand all information gathered during the study will be completely confidential and names will be changed in all reported information. I acknowledge that the researcher has explained to me the purpose of this research study, identified any risks involved, and offered to answer any questions I may have about the nature of my participation.

As a minor under the age of 18 I understand that my participation in this study also requires the consent of my parent or guardian. I understand all information gathered during this study will be completely confidential. I understand this study involves completion of a demographic survey, an individual interview with me, which will be audio recorded, and a possible follow-up interview, which will also be audio recorded. I further understand that as a part of the study, I agree to allow a parent and one educator named below to participate in separate interviews.

Therefore, I give my assent for the researcher to contact my parent,

______________________________________________
Parent full name
at __________________________; and the following named educator, __________________________
(educator’s phone contact)

at __________________________. __________________________
(educator’s phone contact)

(educator’s e-mail address)
to arrange for interviews regarding my educational experiences.

I understand that there is no risk involved within the study and I am free to decline to respond to questions and to withdraw from the study at any time.

Signature of Participant: ____________________________ Date: __________
Appendix J: Educator Letter and Consent Form
Dear Educator:

My name is Damien Holst, and I am a certified educator and a student in the doctoral program for Instructional Leadership at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury, Connecticut. I would like to formally extend an invitation to participate with my dissertation research study. I would like to examine the educational experiences of Black male students.

<Child’s name here> has volunteered to participate in this study. He has recommended that you participate in a personal interview regarding his educational experiences. You will also be asked to complete a short demographic survey. A follow-up interview may need to be conducted if additional information is sought. Both interviews will be audio recorded. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and confidential. Participation or non-participation in this research will have no adverse effect on you or the student in any way. If you do agree to participate, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. Each participant will be presented with a 25 dollar gift certificate as a token of appreciation for their time.

The Institutional Review Board at Western Connecticut State University has approved this research. The results from this study will provide valuable information regarding the experiences of minority students in an attempt to enhance the educational achievement of these students through educational practices and policies.

Any information obtained through this study will remain completely confidential. If you would like to discuss the study with me or have any questions feel free to contact me via email (XXXXXXX) or phone (XXX-XXX-XXXX). If you agree to participate in this study, please sign the attached statement and return it to me as soon as possible. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Damien J. Holst, BSBA, MS

Marcy Delcourt, PhD, Faculty Advisor
WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY
Consent Form for Research Study—Educator Participant

I, ___________________________, agree to voluntarily participate in the research study.

(printed name of participant)

I understand all information gathered during the study will be completely confidential and any personal identifying information will not be reported. I acknowledge that the researcher has explained to me the purpose of this research study, identified any risks involved, and offered to answer any questions I may have about the nature of my participation.

I understand that <students name> has granted his written assent for me to participate in this study, which involves completing a demographic survey and at two individual interviews, which will all be audio recorded.

I understand that there is no risk involved within the study and I am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Signature of Educator Participant: ___________________________ Date: ______________
Appendix K: IRB Application and Approval
Human Subjects Research Application Coversheet
Western Connecticut State University Institutional Review Board

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Damien Holst
FACULTY SUPERVISOR: Marcia A. B. Delcourt
DEPARTMENT: Education & Educational Psychology
EMAIL/S: Supervisor – (XXXXXXXXXXXX)
Student – (XXXXXXXXXXXX)

PROJECT TITLE: Educating Black Males: An Examination of the Perceptions and Experiences of Black Male Students in Predominantly White High Performing Secondary Schools

Check any of the following that apply to this proposal:

- A. Proposal is an undergraduate student research project.
- B. Proposal is a graduate student research project.
- C. Proposal is WCSU faculty-developed research. If yes, indicate Funding Agency:
- D. Proposal is externally-developed research.

I. Purpose of IRB Review
The role of the WCSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) is to review all proposed research at WCSU or by WCSU faculty, staff or students to ensure that the research meets Federal standards for the safety and protection of any human subjects involved in the research. The WCSU IRB operates in compliance with the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Title 45 Part 46. WCSU’s IRB has registered approval (Federalwide Assurance/FWA) from the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP). To help the IRB fulfill its role, WCSU requires all researchers to submit their protocol for review and approval. Please refer to the Research Application Guide available at www.wcsu.edu/irb for complete instructions. The WCSU IRB is unlikely to reject an application without first discussing its concerns about the research with the investigator. However, applications may be deferred for review at another meeting if substantial issues are present. Researchers are encouraged to attend the IRB meeting of their review in order to address any concerns directly. Failure to submit complete materials by the published deadlines will delay review processes.

II. Application for IRB Review Checklist
Before submitting your research application for review by the IRB, you must ensure: Everyone involved has completed the Human Subjects Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program, accessible on our website http://www.wcsu.edu/irb/ or its equivalent (Appendix L).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IS THIS A NEW RESEARCH PROJECT?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If yes, are you applying for?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>application</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Exempt Review</td>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Expedited Review</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X Full Review</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COMMITTEE ACTION

X Approved through ___1415-85_______ review

Not approved; clarification/modification required

IRB Chair’s Approval: Date: Insert here
Appendix L: Parental Letter & Consent forms
January 2015

Dear Parent name or Guardian’s name:

My name is Damien Holst, and I am a certified educator and a student in the doctoral program for Instructional Leadership at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury, Connecticut. I would like to formally extend an invitation to you to participate with my dissertation research study. I would like to examine the educational experiences of Black male students.

Your son has volunteered to participate in this study. He has recommended that you participate in this study regarding his educational experiences. I am requesting that you complete a brief survey and an interview. The initial interview will take approximately one hour and will be tape-recorded. If additional information is needed a follow-up interview may be scheduled and audio recorded. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and confidential. Participation or non-participation in this research will have no adverse effect on you or your son in any way. If you do agree to participate, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

The Institutional Review Board at Western Connecticut State University has approved this research. The results from this study will provide valuable information regarding the experiences of minority students in an attempt to enhance the achievements of these students through educational practices and policies.

Any information obtained through this study will remain completely confidential. If you would like to discuss the study with me or have any questions feel free to contact me via email(XXXXXXXXXXXXX) or phone (XXX-XXX-XXXX). If you agree to participate in this study, please sign the attached statement and return it to me as soon as possible. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Damien J. Holst, BSBA, MS
Marcy Delcourt, PhD, Faculty Advisor

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WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY
Participant Consent Form for Research Study

I, __________________________________, agree to voluntarily participate in the research study.

(printed name of participant)

I understand all information gathered during the study will be completely confidential and any personal identifying information will not be reported. I acknowledge that the researcher has explained to me the purpose of this research study, identified any risks involved, and offered to answer any questions I may have about the nature of my participation.

I understand my son has granted his written assent for me to participate in this study, which involves completing a demographic survey and an individual interview, which will be audio recorded.

I understand that there is no risk involved within the study and I am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Signature of Participant: ___________________________ Date: ____________
Appendix M: Student Information Sheet
Student Information Sheet

Name: _______________________
email: _______________________

Parent/Guardian’s Name: ___________
e-mail: _______________________
cell phone: _______________________

Parent/Guardian’s Name: ___________
e-mail: _______________________
cell phone: _______________________


Appendix N: Guidance Counselor protocol for Doctoral Research Project
Guidance Counselor Protocol for Doctoral Research Project

Information:
I wanted to meet with you today to discuss the possibility of participating in a research project. There is a young African American teacher who is enrolled in a doctoral program at Western Connecticut State University who is interested in understanding your experience as an African American student. Before I explain the study, I would like to provide you with some information about Mr. Holst:

- Doctoral student at Western Connecticut State University
- Grew up in a single parent household and attended predominately white schools during his secondary education
- Entire family is in education (Mother was VP of a college; brother graduated from Yale University)
- Received an academic scholarship to attend the University of Florida
- Teaches math and social studies at ________________ Middle/High School
- Coached track and field at ________________ for 6 years
- Is one of four brothers

As a part of Mr. Holst’s doctoral program, he was responsible for selecting a topic that he was interested in for his dissertation research. Mr. Holst has selected to understand the educational experiences of African American students who attend predominately white high schools. Mr. Holst had a similar experience. He was one of four Black students in a high school of 1,500 students. These experiences helped to shape his education. Mr. Holst would like to take the opportunity to allow you to share your story with him so that he can enhance the learning experience of students in similar educational environments.

Here are some details regarding the study:

- All information will remain confidential (names, schools, and participant will be not be shared)
- Participation in this project is completely voluntary and you can withdraw at anytime.
- Mr. Holst would like to have a conversation with you where you will have the opportunity to share the story of your educational experience with him. Following that conversation Mr. Holst would like you to select an educator (guidance counselor, principal, teacher etc.) and a family member/guardian that he could speak with about your educational experiences as well.

Potential benefits of participation:
- Participation within this research will allow you to have the opportunity to share your story and express your opinions about your educational experience.
- Participating in this study would mean that you would have a positive and direct impact on the lives of students who are in similar educational environments.
  You will receive a $25 gift certificate for your participation within the study.
Appendix O: Code list
## Frequency of codes for Theme 1: Who I Am

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Initial Code for Each Participant</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being Black</td>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>adjusted to it</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>article changed perspective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>being black has been positive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>being black in a white school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>being black is different</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>being black is good</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>being black is important</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>being black provides insight</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>black racial identity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>friends recognize him as black</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>race shouldn’t determine expectations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Codes</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bobby</td>
<td>being black can help with programs and college</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>being black doesn’t impact me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>being black in this community is an indifferent dash</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>being black is a difference</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>being black is an inhibitor and a helper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>being black not that huge of an impact on my life</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>being black will end up being a challenge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I am sure at some point they were like oh he wont perform well he comes from the poorest family and he is African American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I would like to think that once a teacher knows me they would know who I am just beyond skin color</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>proud African American heritage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>teachers did a good job of keeping everyone the same</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Codes</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Calvin</td>
<td>being black a factor in expectations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>being black affects how other people see me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>being black changes peoples perspective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>being black changes teachers expectations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
being black makes me stand out 1
being black teachers see me differently 1
just a characteristic 1
Total Codes 7

being black affects your viewpoint and someone who is white can't experience that viewpoint because they are not black 1
being black can help or hinder you depending on where you are in the country 1
being black does effect how I view certain things 1
being black is a part of me 1
being black is not something I would hide or flaunt 1
being black or any color should not define a person 1
being black people should be equally affected by stereotyping or injustice 1
being black will impact how you see the world 1
being black you are not the same as every white kid in town 1
my race has not affected my academic performance 1
being black you are viewed differently 1
Total Codes 11

a black person stands out like a sore thumb 1
being black comes along with a lot of stereotypes 1
being black in an all white school has been positive 1
being black in our society is not necessarily a good thing 1
being black you get looked at differently in an area that is not black 1
bloodline from Africa 1
people would make assumptions because I am black 1
the most aggravating part is when people speak as if my identity is supposed to be tied to the color of my skin and the stereotypes that come along 1 4 2
they don’t see me as a normal person
they see me as something different
they would talk to me like they would assume that my identity was supposed to be tied to what in their mind was supposed to be a black person unless they have lived my life they are not going to understand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Codes</th>
<th>Being Black Total Codes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>51 15 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Andrew</th>
<th>close relationships with sisters</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>close with family</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dad close</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dad conversations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dad good life</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dad job in the city</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dad people person</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dad supportive</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I look up to my dad</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>learned a lot from home</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Codes</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calvin</th>
<th>close with brother</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dad action oriented</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>family is supportive</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>learned from parents regarding success</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>learned lessons from parents</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mom more observant</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>worried about how he was treated</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Codes</td>
<td>7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Devin</th>
<th>mom cares about what I do</th>
<th>1</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mom very supportive</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>parents lead by example</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>parents supportive and respectful</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>parents taught us appreciation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>parents mimicked their footsteps</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>parents work hard</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>really close relationships with my parents</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Codes</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Ezra          | family is close                 | 1 |

214
influenced by family 1
learned from mom similar personalities 1 2 1
mom is emotional and creative dad is logical 1 0
my parents are so competitive 1 1
two older brothers 1 1
Total Codes 6 6
Family Total Codes 33 10 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beliefs</th>
<th>Andrew</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>appearance doesn’t define someone 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>applies lesson to life 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>building relationships 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>diversity is important 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>making a good first impression 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>masculinity 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>masculinity does not involve school 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not judging a book by its cover 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>positive values should be shared 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>school is important 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>school is more important than friends 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Codes 11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bobby</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>academics more important than social life 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>being a man and education exclusive 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>being black shouldn’t impact teachers perceptions 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m only friends with good people 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school is paramount 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schoolwork comes first 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wants voice to be heard 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Codes 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Devin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>being able to socialize and interact is more important than getting straight As for years 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>happiness of others more important than personal achievement 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am happy in my life now 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have high expectations of myself and willingness to push myself 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would say I’m viewed the same as everyone else 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>socioeconomic equality important 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your social affiliation to me is much 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
more important than academic Total Codes 7

| Ezra | capability to be an all star student but get b's | 1 |
|      | change in self being more mindful | 1 |
|      | every person matters and you never know what type of influence that you can have on one person | 1 |
|      | ignorance is due to lack of knowledge and perspective | 1 |
|      | music and sports helped manage time | 1 |
|      | negative expectations are a challenge to me | 1 |
|      | no real role models I want to be original | 1 |
|      | social interaction more important than achievement | 1 |
|      | we feel the need to put people in boxes where you are from shouldn’t play a role | 1 |
|      | Total Codes 10 | 16 | 2 |
|      | Total Beliefs Codes 35 | 51 | 39 |

| Race | Andrew | assumptions about race | 1 |
|      |        | struggled with racial identity | 1 |
|      |        | unique | 1 |
|      |        | Total Codes 3 | 1 |

<p>| Bobby | aside from Martin Luther King embracing culture is not discussed in school | 1 |
|       | awareness of race increased in middle school | 1 |
|       | I’m sure at some point in my experience through school there is a teacher that probably expected less of me because of my background ignorance and jokes made surrounding race | 1 |
|       | like in school I feel its kind of an awkward topic because the teachers don’t want to talk about it in class where there are 20 white kids and one back and one Latino kid | 1 |
|       | race doesn’t impact my own expectations | 1 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race Codes</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>race is just a difference</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>race is not a defining factor here</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>race is more evident in middle school</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>racism is not evident</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>still racism in society</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>was not a factor in elementary school</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Codes</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calvin</th>
<th>Race Codes</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>there is still racism in the world</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>experienced racism doesn’t affect him</td>
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<tr>
<td>mom experienced racism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perception from others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>race shouldn’t separate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>social media contributes to racism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Codes</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Ezra</th>
<th>Race Codes</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>all black people are not the same</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>gather thoughts of what black people are supposed to be through media and expect me to fit into those stereotypes</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>human nature to categorize people</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>I don’t want to fit stereotypes</td>
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<td>lack of racial mindfulness</td>
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<td>people are typically ignorant</td>
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<tr>
<td>people have stereotypes and unaware of their own racism</td>
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<tr>
<td>quote on trying to change racist mindsets ocean</td>
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<tr>
<td>stereotypes are a vicious cycle</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>when younger race was not a factor</td>
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<tr>
<td>white people see themselves as ordinary people</td>
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<tr>
<td>why would the color of my skin have any impact on the way I talk or act</td>
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<td>assumptions based on race</td>
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<td>being white is being a person being black is being a black person</td>
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<td>numb to racist comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>they would look at each other they were white people and they would think oh this is a person</td>
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<td>you are so white you are not even black</td>
<td>7 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>you are the whitest black kid I know</td>
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<td>--------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bobby</td>
<td>I do excellent in school</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have very good character</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am an intelligent person</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am very communicative</td>
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<tr>
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<td>we are just normal people</td>
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<tr>
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<td>does not believe in himself as a writer</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>I see myself as a supporting role</td>
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<tr>
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<td>I’m a big guy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>insight into actions of others</td>
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<td>logical guy</td>
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<td>I’m definitely less confident than I would let off</td>
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<td>I’ve done well academically</td>
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<td>pride in being unique</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I am very competitive</td>
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<td>independent person</td>
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<td>people like that I am different</td>
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<td>people see me as a nice positive person</td>
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<td>Bobby</td>
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<td>willingness to sacrifice</td>
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<td>I really like helping people</td>
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<td>I still like to be in charge</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>I don’t really like putting things into my own words</td>
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<td>prefers talking to adults vs. students</td>
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<td>personality differs</td>
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<tr>
<td>show off talents but fit in too</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>willingness to sacrifice for others</td>
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<tr>
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<td>extrovert</td>
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<td>TOTAL THEME CODES</td>
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<td>Category</td>
<td>Initial Code for Each Participant</td>
<td>Student</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Community  | Andrew: community would support
            friendly
            great community
            normal people                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 1       | 1      |         |
|            | Bobby: a portion of the kids are more down to earth
            adults in the community helpful
            adults in town are very good
            affluent community
            differences exist but still talk
            everyone comes from a married household with perfect expenses and two trips a year and kids take a lot of things for granted so they do not know the value of things
            things are taken for granted
            this little bubble as mom describes it
            everything’s perfect                                                                                                                                                                                            | 1       | 1      |         |
|            | Calvin: lack of diversity
            magazine supports community
            strong community relationship                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 1       | 1      |         |
|            | Devin: community focuses on wealth
            doing well socially
            everyone is the same here
            friendly and extremely competitive
            homogeneous
            juxtaposed elements friendliness and competitiveness
            people are competitive
            people are ignorant to what happens outside of the bubble of the community
            people are friendly                                                                                                                                                                                  | 1       | 1      |         |
|            | Ezra: been here my whole life
            community is kind and supportive
            people are competitive in all aspects of life here
            people are successful and wealthy
            some people will mask their emotions and talk behind one another’s back                                                                                                                                 | 1       | 8      | 1       |
|            |                                                                                      | 1       | 10     | 1       |
|            |                                                                                          | 1       | 2      | 2       |
|            |                                                                                          | 1       | 2      | 2       |
| School | Andrew | academic success depends on class | 1 |
|        |        | life lesson | 1 |
|        |        | slightly above mediocre | 1 |
|        |        | big change | 1 |
|        |        | big change in size and diversity | 1 |
|        |        | classes and friends | 1 |
|        |        | different | 1 |
|        |        | different atmosphere | 1 |
|        |        | easy to connect with people | 1 |
|        |        | known as Black in school | 1 |
|        |        | non-whites are outsiders | 1 |
|        |        | non-whites are viewed as different | 1 |
|        |        | primarily white | 1 |
|        |        | simplicity and familiarity | 1 |
|        |        | small accepting place | 1 |
|        |        | stand out | 1 |
|        |        | stood out | 1 |
|        |        | Total Codes | 17 |
|        | Bobby | class president multiple grades | 1 |
|        |        | school with academic excellence | 1 |
|        |        | the academics are flawless | 1 |
|        |        | Total Codes | 3 |
|        | Calvin | academics are not exactly fun for me | 1 |
|        |        | a lot of my teachers like me | 1 |
|        |        | bullying | 1 |
|        |        | doesn’t do well in school | 1 |
|        |        | few people really know me | 1 |
|        |        | grandpa role model | 1 |
|        |        | high academic standards | 1 |
|        |        | I can hang out with friends | 1 |
|        |        | I like learning | 1 |
|        |        | I’m close with most of the faculty in the school | 1 |
|        |        | math and science favorite subjects | 1 |
|        |        | morning show run by the students | 1 |
|        |        | my school is very accepting | 1 |
|        |        | some habits have changed | 1 |
|        |        | teachers did have high expectations | 1 |
|        |        | works hard take difficult classes | 1 |
|        |        | Total Codes | 16 |
|        | Devin | culture of fighting for grades | 1 |
hard for some to break out of a group 1
if caught on the wrong side it could be devastating 1
it’s a very competitive environment 1
love my experience here but I hate seeing other people struggle with it 1
school has been like a great experience 1
special case based on involvement 1
the rates of depression in our high school related to academics are insane 1
very cliquey 1
Total Codes 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Ezra</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ezra</td>
<td></td>
<td>human interaction important in education</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I do try hard in school</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I want to work hard and prove myself despite other expectations</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>people subconsciously make assumptions based on my race</td>
<td>1 5 8</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>school is supportive of each other</td>
<td>1 7 2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>school should be about critical and creative thinking and solving problems</td>
<td>1 9 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>schools are programmed for a certain type of brain</td>
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<th>Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
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<td>accepting</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>making friends is easy</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Bobby</th>
<th>Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bobby</td>
<td></td>
<td>majority of students are ignorant socially</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>people aren’t openly friendly</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>students friendly but not bright</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>student groups are cliques</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>the worst students have the worst values</td>
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<th>Code</th>
<th>Calvin</th>
<th>Code</th>
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<tr>
<td>Calvin</td>
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<td>some students can be potentially hurtful</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>they are mostly white so they don’t know</td>
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<table>
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<th>Code</th>
<th>Devin</th>
<th>Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Devin</td>
<td></td>
<td>very cliquey</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>if caught on the wrong side it could be devastating</td>
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<tr>
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|          |      | 3 1 |
some of the students are ignorant and close

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<td></td>
<td>students are supportive tolerant and accepting</td>
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<td>7</td>
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Friends

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<tr>
<th>Andrew</th>
<th>friends with many close with few</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>friends are average teenagers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>friends are best friends</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>friends same type</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>friends typical high schoolers</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>long term friends</td>
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<tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bobby</th>
<th>first group</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have a lot of friends</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>relationships suffered when academic values are not shared</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>second group</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>third group</td>
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<td>Total Codes</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Devin</th>
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<tr>
<th>Ezra</th>
<th>social interaction more important than achievement</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Andrew</th>
<th>get teachers to like me</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I think that the relationship between the student and the teacher can affect how you do in class</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no mistreatment of students</td>
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<td></td>
<td>student teacher relationships helps positive</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bobby</th>
<th>in high school it helps to have teachers who are really knowledgeable and willing to help</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>some teachers are excellent</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>some teachers could help students more</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>teaching becomes paramount in harder classes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Codes</td>
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<td>4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Calvin    | teachers did have high expectations             | 1 |

223
| Devin          | I’m close with most of the faculty in the school | 1 |
|               | a lot of my teachers like me | 1 |
|               | Total Codes | 3 |
| close with a lot of teachers and guidance counselors | 1 |
| soccer coach is a role model | 1 |
| teachers add to competitive environment | 1 |
| teachers friendly supportive understanding | 1 |
| teachers provide support and are easy to talk to | 1 |
| always willing to help | 1 |
| teachers push students to achieve | 1 |
| Total Codes | 6 |

| Ezra          | I do like the relationships that I’ve formed with my teachers | 1 |
|               | some teachers do not care about student success | 1 |
|               | teachers are nice and willing to work with you | 1 |
|               | teachers are willing to talk and maintain good student teacher relationships | 1 |
|               | teachers important for them to want students to succeed | 1 |
|               | teachers may not expect much from me | 1 |
|               | Total | 6 |
|               | Total teacher codes | 24 18 24 |
|               | Total Theme Codes | 129 91 71 |
Frequency of code for Theme 3: Who I Want To Be

<table>
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<th>Initial Code for Each Participant</th>
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<th>Parent</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Success</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>chasing success</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>do anything to achieve my goals</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>family influences success</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>finding an occupation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>satisfied with accomplishments</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>success in school</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Codes</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Having a job you love being</td>
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<td></td>
<td>financially sound and good marriage</td>
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<td></td>
<td>parents impact conception of success</td>
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<td></td>
<td>trying to achieve more than my parents</td>
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<td>cant always do what we want</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>keeping up the school</td>
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<td></td>
<td>pursuing your interests</td>
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<td>success and happiness may not go together</td>
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<td></td>
<td>success is making money</td>
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<td></td>
<td>success school job family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Devin</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>passionate about your job don’t focus on money</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>success is about happiness</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ezra</td>
<td>idea of success developed from living in the community</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>success is being happy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>time money and relationships have to be sacrificed for success</td>
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**Locus of Control**

<p>| Andrew | being positive | 1 | |
| | I focus on what I can control | 1 | |</p>
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<tr>
<td>life is up to you</td>
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<tr>
<td>parents and friends also affect your life</td>
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<tr>
<td>you can do a lot to affect your life</td>
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<td>I am in control</td>
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<td>I think God determines how my life turns out</td>
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<th>Devin</th>
<th>Ezra</th>
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<td>I look up to my dad</td>
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<td>mom motivator</td>
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<td>provides guidance and invests in our lives</td>
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Appendix P: Audit Trail
Qualitative Audit for Mr. Damien J. Holst

An audit of Mr. Damien Holst’s qualitative research study was concluded on February 2, 2016, by Melissa Natale-Abramo, Ed. D. Mr. Holst met with Dr. Abramo to review and explain his research study, including the literature review, research questions, data collection, analysis and conclusions. This involved a particularly detailed explanation of his coding process, organization of data, emergence of themes and sub-themes, as well as the nuances of such a thorough analysis process. Dr. Abramo examined the latest dissertation draft, code-books and appendices, and reviewed numerous parts of the qualitative data from the researcher and interviews. All coding appeared to be accurate with 100% agreement between the researcher and the auditor.

Mr. Holst explained his coding process, including questioning, constant and theoretical comparison, pre-coding, coding and recoding, his use of Hyper-research, the collapsing of codes, the emergence of themes, and the development of thematic statements. Mr. Holst also provided all documents generated throughout that process. The auditor was able to clearly see how themes and categories emerged and arrived at the same conclusions after a review of data. The auditor also agreed with the use of thematic statements as a way to organize emergent themes and present data, to effectively express key ideas and emotions which encapsulated the experience of Black male students, the educators’ perceptions, as well as the perceptions of parent members. The data acquired from the interview process provided the information necessary to answer the research questions. The conclusions and implications of this study were discussed, and this audit was completed successfully.
Melissa Natale-Abramo, Ed. D.  
Auditor

Damien J. Holst  
Researcher