SELECTION PROCESS FOR THIRD AND FOURTH GRADE

AFRICAN AMERICAN GIFTED AND TALENTED:

A CASE STUDY IN

ONE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Dissertation

by

RUTH DELORIES BRAZILE

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2010

Major Subject: Curriculum and Instruction

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Approved by:

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ABSTRACT

Selection Process for Third and Fourth Grade African American Gifted and Talented:

A Case Study in One Urban School District. (August 2010)

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The purpose of this study was to examine teacher perceptions of third and fourth grade African American students who might be selected for the gifted and talented program. It is the first study concerning teachers' perceptions of African American students in an urban school district with a relatively high representation of African American students and teachers in the gifted and talented program.

The results showed the improvement in African American representation in gifted and talented programs that can result from positive teacher perceptions of African American students. Since these positive perceptions may be due, at least in part, to the high proportion of African American teachers in the school district under study, these results suggest a link between an increased proportion of African American teachers, positive teacher perceptions of African American students and an improvement in African American representation in gifted and talented programs. Public educational policy should strive to increase the proportion of African American teachers. This could be achieved by modifying standardized tests used for teacher certification, which

researchers have shown to be biased against minority cultures, and also by university recruitment to attract African Americans to education.

The results also suggest the need for increased levels of multicultural and urban courses as a standard part of pre-service teacher education. Quality instruction in these areas can contribute toward a greater understanding among teachers of the effect of culture in the classroom and, thereby reduce the tendency to form low expectations of African American and other minority students. This indulgence in deficit thinking needs an aggressive intervention before prospective teachers enter the classroom where some may propagate the detrimental effects of low teacher expectations on another generation of African American students.

Increased levels of multicultural and urban education among teachers can also help teachers understand how to interact with African American parents in a constructive manner. This is an important step in creating a school environment, which encourages parental school involvement and, thereby allows African American students readily to enjoy more the academic benefits of parental involvement. When these steps are implemented, this may lead to an increase of African American students to the gifted and talented program.

DEDICATION

To: God

It is with the most grateful and humble spirit that I dedicate this dissertation to whom all

blessings flow. For with God, all things were and are possible.

To My Parents: Mr. & Mrs. John (Annetta) Brazile

You developed the foundation of my education. Your value of education permitted me to

embark upon this journey. You indicated to me that I could do it. I had to continue and

persevere.

To: My Siblings

Johnny, Mary (late Calvin), Carl, Oren, Nettie, Aubrey, Dara, Marcus, Johnetta, Paul,

Emile Jr., and Arthur:

Your devotion has contributed to my education from the beginning. Often, you would

monitor my progress, which was my message that you were encouraging me to endure

until the end.

To: My Nephews and Nieces

May you excel in all of your endeavors. You have the spirit of love, power and a sound

mind. Thanks for encouraging me to take a break and enjoy life with you.

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Thank you Dr. Lynne Walters, for your readiness to serve as co-chair of the committee. I am certainly appreciative. Your readiness has enabled me to complete my dissertation. The completion of this dissertation would not have been possible unless you were willing to serve as co-chair of the committee. You have demonstrated that as a researcher, my work contributes to improving the field of education while enhancing society.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As our nation seeks to educate its citizenry, there are children in our schools who are highly valued for the intellectual and artistic brilliance they bring into the academic arena. They are known as the "gifted and talented" in our society. They are highly valued because of the contributions they are capable of making to our nation and for potential contributions they can make to the quality of life in our society. It is expected that they will find cures for fatal diseases, develop new explorations of outer space, write books, plays and musicals that overwhelm audiences and conquer many social ills. Gifted and talented students are important individuals in our society. Their ideas and actions result in society's greatest achievements and successes (Terry, 2008).

Brilliant African Americans have made such contributions to our society. For example, Vivian Thomas has been credited with major contributions to the development of open heart surgery (Brogan & Alfieris, 2003; Timmermans, 2003). Daniel Hale Williams, the first African American cardiologist, performed the first cardiac surgery (Dupre & O'Leary, 1997). Many day-to-day items were created by African American inventors, for example, William Purvis patented the fountain pen in 1890 and Garrett

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This dissertation follows the style of *The Journal of Educational Research*.

Morgan invented the first traffic light (Lee, 2008). However, such gifted and talented individuals are often in need of specialized education to fully develop their potential.

In 1988, Congress passed the Javits Act which was intended to "identify and serve gifted students whose abilities and promise have been bypassed in our country's gifted programs" (Delisle, 2006, p. 48). To this end, in 2006, approximately 75% of the school districts in the United States provided gifted and talented programs (Office for Civil Rights, 2008).

Underrepresentation

According to the 2009 Digest of Education Statistics, there were 3,236,990 gifted and talented students in America's classrooms in 2006, and, of those, 9% were African American, 13% Hispanic, 9% Asian and 68% were European American (Snyder, Dillow, & Hoffman, 2009, Table 53). Yet, in 2006, in United States classrooms, 17.1% of the students were African American, 20.5% Hispanic, 4.7% Asian and 56.5% were European American (Snyder, Dillow, & Hoffman, 2008, Table 41). The discrepancy in the percentages, 17% versus 9%, indicates that a portion of the pool of high-ability African American students were not recognized as gifted and talented and may not have received the education they needed to develop their talents and reach their full potential.

Hebert and Reis confirm that high ability students are present in culturally diverse populations, yet their representation in gifted and talented programs does not reflect this view (Hebert & Reis, 1999). According to Milner and Ford (2005), non-majority cultures and races are not drawing sufficient attention from gifted and talented

education researchers, which may be due to the underrepresentation of these groups in the academic community.

Ford and Harmon suggested that African American students differ from European American students because, in part, they seek and enjoy social relationships with peers and use cooperative learning as one of their means of learning. Thus, African American students have social needs which are components of their education and are, therefore, imperative for their success (Ford & Harmon, 2001). African American students often have unique characteristics, including: their spirituality, oral tradition, verve, communalism, movement, social time perspective and expressive individualism (Ford & Harmon, 2001). Ford, Moore, Milner and Richard (2005) go further, suggesting that African American students may have behaviors that make them appear to be uninterested in the content of a class or indicate they are not motivated. Therefore, this may impact gifted and talented selection, because African American students may be less successful in the regular curriculum when their learning styles are not accommodated and their behavior is misunderstood.

Teacher Perceptions

Recommending a student for the gifted and talented program is one of the important decisions a teacher of the elementary grades must make. Teachers' perceptions have an influence on the decisions s/he makes regarding assignment to gifted and talented (Read, 1999). Students may be assigned to a particular group based on the teacher's perception and such perceptions can be subjective. These perceptions

may be the result of decisions made in regard to standardized test scores, or characteristics of the students, including gender, reading achievement, social behavior and attentiveness. From the social perspective, those students with behavioral challenges may encounter less opportunity for success, compared to those who are well behaved by mainstream culture standards (Tournaki, 2003), which disproportionately affects African American students, since they receive more referrals (Tenanbaum & Ruck, 2007). Thus, impressions that teachers have about a student's likelihood of attending college, motivation to learn, and family background may all affect the teacher's decision to recommend the gifted and talented program for a particular student.

School Culture

The achievement gap between African American and European American students is well known. For example, over the last 30 years, The College Board has reported an achievement gap of 20% between the SAT scores of African American students in contrast to their Caucasian peers (Paige & Witty, 2010, p. 39). Due to this achievement gap between students from the dominant Western (European American) culture and those from culturally diverse groups (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2003), educators may have difficulty in recognizing there are students who are culturally diverse and also gifted (Ford, 2004a).

Some researchers assert that culturally responsive schooling will help in closing this gap (Schellenberg & Grothaus, 2009). A culturally responsive school should have a multicultural curriculum and learning environment, teachers who encourage a variety of

learning styles, and a diverse teaching staff that have completed multicultural staff development (Banks & Banks, 2001; Irvine, 2003). Thus, it is reasonable to conjecture that a teacher, who works at a school which embraces only the majority Western culture, may find it more difficult to select African American students for the gifted and talented program, because such students are less likely to be successful in this environment (Gay, 2000).

Social Class

Poverty is often linked to educational underachievement (Dunne & Gazeley, 2008). Underachievement is a lack of academic success which is not due to a lack of intelligence, but, rather, a lack of opportunity to excel (Ford & Harmon, 2001). It has been reported that schools with higher percentages of lower income students often have curricula that are less challenging and, also, lack resources essential for providing an effective education (Johnson, 2004). In addition, when students attend schools that primarily enroll middle or upper class students, there are more resources available to them for success in learning (Mandara, Varner, Greene, & Richman, 2009). Hoffman, Llagas and Snyder's (2003, p. 68) listing of students' family background factors that contribute to their lack of success included: receiving financial assistance, living in a single-parent family home and having parents who lack a high school education. These risk factors impact educational outcomes by limiting the student's access to parental support for their academics (Matthews-Armstead, 2002). Poor performance in the

regular curriculum will reduce a student's chance for being nominated to gifted and talented regardless of their intelligence level.

Gender

At the college level, the disparity in enrollment between the genders has been quantified. In 2000, there were an estimated 972,000 African American females who were enrolled in institutions of higher learning while, in contrast, there were only 577,000 African American males who were enrolled in such institutions during the same time period (Hubbard, 2005). Some boys struggle for success, as a result of both nature and nurture, which has led to fewer educational opportunities for men (Reichert & Kuriloff, 2005). This effect is exacerbated in boys of color (Wiens, 2006). This lack of academic success for the African American male may be attributed to, in part, to the behavior of the male student: boys receive more referrals, negative evaluations and suspensions. Other factors that have been suggested to contribute to the gender gap include a lack of male role models and the impact of violence (Martin, Martin, Gibson, & Wilkins, 2007) on both the perpetrator and victim.

However, the effect of gender is not one-dimensional. In fact, boys have long been considered more likely to study certain subjects, such as mathematics and the sciences (Nosek et al., 2009). Teachers may take into consideration the gender of a student as part of the decision making process for inclusion in the gifted and talented program, if, for example, they perceive that boys will be more interested in the math and science curricula in the gifted and talented program.

Motivation

Motivation is an important element in education, since an unmotivated student is unlikely to contribute the necessary effort to achieve success in classroom tasks. Subotnik and LeBlanc asserted that gifted and talented students exhibit intense levels of motivation (Subotnik & LeBlanc, 2001). Behaviors that demonstrate a student's high level of motivation include a strong work ethic (Moon & Brighton, 2008), regular school attendance (Garrison, 2006) and being actively involved in enrichment activities outside of the classroom (Hebert, 2002). If teachers fall into the trap of assuming that all African American students are unmotivated, due to the poor work habits or attendance difficulties (Weden & Zabin, 2005), they may be less likely to recommend an African American student for gifted education.

Expectations

Deficit thinking is stereotypical thinking about particular groups that leads to discriminatory behavior or actions (Ford et al., 2002). A large body of research has confirmed that teachers in general have lower expectations of African American students (Tenanbaum & Ruck, 2007). Teachers adhering to these negative points of view may be less likely to nominate an African American student to the gifted and talented program. When students meet the low expectations of their teachers, this is identified as the Pygmalion effect (a self-fulfilling prophesy) which has been shown to occur in the classroom (Jacobson & Rosenthal, 1968). For example, when students are provided an

assignment to complete, whether the assignment is challenging or not, from the tone of the learning environment African American students will detect whether the teacher perceives they can successfully complete the assignment. For African American students who perceive the teachers as having lower expectations of them, they will perform on a lower level which results in lower performance. When teachers have high expectations, the students will be successful (Brophy, 1983, p. 632). Consequently, the lower performance of African American students reduces their likelihood of being nominated to the gifted and talented program since the teachers perceive African American students may be unable to succeed participating in a gifted and talented curriculum.

The expectations of teachers may play a role in the enrollment of African American students to the gifted and talented program. When African American students execute the lower expectations of the teacher, may be a contributing factor to the underrepresentation of African American students to the gifted and talented program. Teachers, who are typically role models who promote educational success, may also be modeling the lack of success of an African American student by expecting African American students to perform at a lower level. Consequently, the African American student is not demonstrating his or her strengths and abilities (Hebert, 2002, p. 128) which may result in the student not being enrolled in the gifted and talented program.

Given the paradigm shift away from the use of testing to identify gifted students and the inclusion of teacher nomination into the process, a greater understanding of the perceptions of teachers is needed. The powerful influence of teacher nomination on the selection of students for the gifted and talented program opens the possibility of bias due

to ill-informed personal opinions. This review of the literature has uncovered several areas in which characteristics that have been identified in gifted students that teachers may be using to identify gifted students in their classroom may be grouped. These areas are: a strong work ethic, high academic motivation, an aspiration for higher education and, of course, and intelligence. Also, there are factors that affect a student's likelihood of a successful education, such as family poverty, having attended an impoverished school (Ferguson, 2003, p. 461), and gender. These factors may influence a teacher's decision of whether a student would be successful in a gifted and talented program. Finally, the school environment in which the teacher works can play a role, particularly with regard to the race, ethnicity and culture of the student (Harding, 2005, p. 75). In an atmosphere that embraces only the dominant European culture, a teacher may be less likely to nominate students of color to the gifted and talented program.

Statement of the Problem

Disproportionately low numbers of African American students are enrolled in gifted and talented programs across the nation. The perceptions of teachers may play a role in the selection process for gifted and talented programs and be a limiting factor of the number of African American students selected for the gifted and talented programs.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine teachers' perceptions of factors that may affect the selection process of African American students for third and fourth grade level gifted and talented programs.

Significance of Study

Education appropriate for the most gifted members of our society is necessary to enable them to fully develop their potential, which will ultimately lead to contributions to society that enhance our quality of life. The manner in which students are selected for admission to gifted and talented programs is of major importance in determining the number of enrollments in the program. If the study findings reveal negative perceptions of African American students among teachers, this will highlight the need for teachers to combat deficit thinking. This may also give empirical support for an increase in the number of multicultural courses included in teacher education training. This study will provide insights into teachers' perceptions of African American students and will contribute to the body of knowledge concerning African American underrepresentation in gifted and talented programs.

Research Questions

1. What are teachers' perceptions of school culture and expectations of African American students? What are the teachers' perceptions regarding

students' motivation, gender, and social class that may affect the selection

of African American students to the gifted and talented program?

2.   Are the teachers' perceptions of these factors related to the ethnicity of

the teacher?

Definition of Terms

The terms and definitions used in this research are as follows:

African Americans: An ethnic group, also referred to as Afro-American, Black

American or Black, having ancestors who were indigenous to the African continent.

Although African Americans were indigenous to the African continent, they may also

have some European, Native American or Asian ancestry.

European Americans: An ethnic group whose ancestors were indigenous to Europe,

North Africa, West Asia and areas of South and Central Asia. This group is also referred

to as Caucasian.

Culture: A collection of the knowledge, arts, values, manners and interests shared by

individuals.

Ethnicity: An ethnic group is a group of people who identify with one another through a

common heritage, such as a common ancestry, culture, shared territory, nationality or

physical appearance.

Gender: The sex of an individual, given as male or female, and distinguished by roles,

behaviors and attitudes.

Gifted and talented: A child or youth who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment, when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment and who: (1) exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative or artistic area; (2) possesses an unusual capacity for leadership; or (3) excels in a specific academic field (The Research Division of the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented, 2008, p. 10).

IQ: The Intelligence Quotient.

NCLB: The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

PEIMS: The Public Education Information Management System: a process by which data is collected for the Texas Public Schools.

Perception: A point of view attained by observing and understanding experiences.

Social Class: A measure of a person's position relative to others, based on income, education and occupation.

WISC: The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gifted and Talented Students

History of Gifted and Talented Education in the U. S.

Gifted and talented education was initiated in the United States over 140 years ago (Oakland & Rossen, 2005). In the 1860s William Harris developed and implemented a systematic approach to the education of gifted students in St. Louis (DeLeon & VandenBos, 1985). In 1916, Lewis Terman developed an intelligence test that was used to identify gifted and talented students for enrollment to gifted and talented programs (Terman, 1954), and carried out a study of gifted children in California, starting in 1922, on more than 1,000 students with intelligence quotient (IQ) scores of above 135 (Terman, 1925). Terman further contributed to the progress of education for the gifted through a scholarship in 1925, which provided funds that enabled schools to create standards for the development of gifted and talented programs. An important part of these standards was the use of intelligence tests to identify the gifted (Oakland & Rossen, 2005).

On the East Coast, movements to provide education for the gifted were beginning, also. In 1922 Leta Hollingworth began the Special Opportunity Class at a public school, on the East Coast, for gifted students. She wrote many research articles and a book considered to be the first text on the topic of education for the gifted

(Colangelo & Davis, 2002). Hollingworth invented multiple strategies to identify students for enrollment to gifted and talented programs, including ideas for counseling and supporting the gifted and talented student (Davis, Rimm, & Siegle, 2010).

The launching of the Russian satellite Sputnik, in 1957, accelerated awareness that in the United States the brightest students were largely ignored. The Educational Policies Commission (Educational Policies Commission, 1952) acknowledged the neglect of superior students who could positively impact the arts, sciences and professions in America. The commission resulted in the identification of gifted students, the implementation of acceleration and ability grouping, the availability of instruction in a variety of languages at the elementary level, the development of a revised math and science curricula and the availability of college courses at the high school level (Davis et al., 2010).

In 1954, the National Association for Gifted Children was created. It was the first vehicle for organizing the support of parents and educators for gifted education and, in addition, it provided a mechanism for advocacy on behalf of gifted children to ensure their voice was heard in the political debate on education (Roberts, 1999).

In 1972, Congress received *The Marland Report* (named for its originator, U.S. Commissioner of Education, Sidney P. Marland), which provided standards for gifted and talented education (Marland, 1972). These standards were guidelines for enrollment to a gifted and talented program and stated that 3 to 5% of students are gifted. The report proposed that the goal of providing an education that is suitable for gifted students be

made a national priority, and stated that the federal government should provide some financial support for gifted and talented programs (Davis et al., 2010).

In 1976, the Office for Civil Rights began collecting data on school districts, ethnicity and race of students participating in programs (Office for Civil Rights, 2008). Collection of the data is conducted every two years. In 1976 and 2000, data from all the nation's school districts was collected; in all other years, data was collected from a sample of one-third of the nation's school districts (Office for Civil Rights, 2000). Table II-1 and Figure II-1 show the percentage of reporting school districts that offered a gifted and talented program. By 1978, 44% of reporting schools offered a gifted and talented program.

In 1983, the report *A Nation at Risk* was released (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). This report highlighted the need for implementing high academic standards, since the United States was behind other countries in terms of educational achievement. This resulted in a great deal of public attention being focused on educational reform. Over time, the report was considered to have only a marginal impact due to the widespread criticism of its recommendations, such as employing scare tactics, and its recommendations were over simplistic (Hunt & Staton, 1996, p. 289).

Table II-1: Percentage of Reporting Districts Offering a Gifted and Talented Program

Year	# Offering Gifted and Talented Program	# Districts Reporting	% Offering Gifted and Talented Program
1978	2700	6048	44.6
1980	2964	5055	58.6
1982	2281	3128	72.9
1984	2041	3307	61.7
1986	2812	3378	83.2
1988	3397	4555	74.6
1990	3006	3434	87.5
1992	3337	4684	71.2
1994	3824	4667	81.9
1996	3154	4346	72.6
1998	4320	5570	77.6
2000	10133	14634	69.2
2002	4308	5831	73.9
2004	4213	5804	72.6
2006	4375	5924	73.9

Source: (Office for Civil Rights, 2008, Table 7)
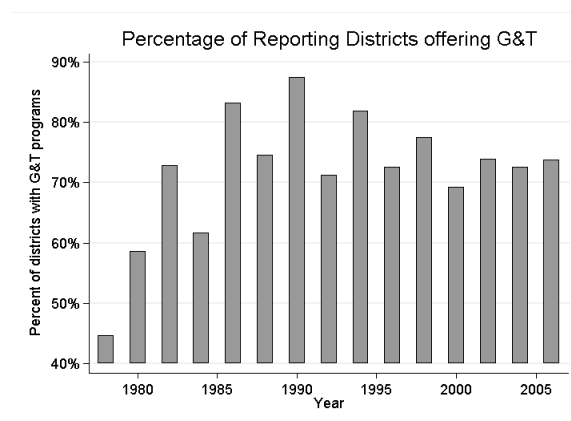
Figure II-1: Percentage of Reporting Districts Offering a Gifted and Talented Program

Five years later Senator Bill Bradley, from New Jersey, introduced the Jacob Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act of 1988 (1988). The Javits Grants Program provided grants for the gifted and talented education of students who are economically disadvantaged, have limited English proficiency or are disabled. Such grants enable public schools to identify and meet the needs of gifted and talented students. Research arising from the Javits Grants Project contributes to the body of knowledge concerning how to provide a rich and challenging education to disadvantaged students and has helped to identify successful and unsuccessful practices in gifted and talented education (Ross, 1994).

The Richardson Study and Dissemination Conferences, in the late 1980s, examined gifted programs and developed a list of recommendations for education of gifted children. These conferences were influential in bringing together educational, business and government decision makers, and continued to build support for addressing the needs of exceptionally able learners in the United States (Roberts, 1999). These efforts led to the creation of the Pyramid Project in four Dallas/Ft. Worth schools, which implemented provisions for the ablest learners, coordinated with the regular curriculum, for all grades K-12 and in all content areas (Cox & Gluck, 1989).

In 1993, the *National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's Talent* was implemented by the U.S. Department of Education (U.S. Department of Education, 1994). The report stated that gifted and talented education should impact rural schools in addition to urban schools, confront the challenges of identifying culturally diverse gifted and talented students, and increase our competitiveness with other countries in the fields

of mathematics and science (Colangelo & Davis, 2002). The report encouraged educators to consider the type of gifted and talented education that was being provided and to work towards developing more students who excel in leadership in fields such as health, science, math, business, writing, politics, dance and the arts (Davis et al., 2010). The Texas legislature responded in 1995 by passing laws that specified the procedures to use for identifying gifted and talented students and criteria to measure the quality of gifted and talented programs. In addition, the Texas Education Agency sought to create performance standards for gifted and talented students which were released in 2001 (Alvoid, 2002).

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2008) was signed into law by President George W. Bush in January 2002. One of the goals of the act was to increase the number of children who are proficient in reading and math. Educators were concerned that schools' resources were being drained from gifted and talented programs and diverted to lower performing students in an effort to ensure their school achieved adequate Annual Yearly Progress (Gallagher, 2007).

Although history shows 100 years of progress has been made toward improving education for the gifted in the United States, there are still many unanswered questions. For example, criteria for enrollment in gifted and talented programs is still far from uniform due to a lack of consistency in the definition of giftedness. In addition, despite 35 years of effort to address the underrepresentation of African American students in gifted and talented programs, the problem persists.

Gifted and Talented Definitions in the Literature

Early research on intelligence was performed by Francis Galton (Galton, 1892). He believed that intelligence has a relationship to the sharp abilities of the senses of an individual and that an intelligent person would complete tests that measured their abilities based upon the senses of acute vision, auditory sense, sense of smell, sensitivity to touch in addition to the quick responses to reactions (Davis et al., 2010).

Across the English Channel, Alfred Binet was working to develop a battery of tasks that would help quantify intelligence in children and relate it to age (Binet & Simon, 1916). Binet's test would form the basis of the Stanford-Binet Intelligence test developed later in the United States by Lewis Terman. However, Binet objected to the use of his test as a one-dimensional construct (Davis et al., 2010). In 1925, Terman defined giftedness as scoring in the top 1% on an intelligence test. Since then many researchers have struggled to define giftedness in a way that captures its full complexity.

Joseph Renzulli, a leading researcher in the area of gifted education for many years, provided a definition of giftedness, in 1978. His definition of giftedness, called the Three Ring Conception of Giftedness, is as follows: a gifted and talented student is one who (1) has above-average general abilities, (2) has high levels of task commitment, and (3) has high levels of creativity (Renzulli, 1978; Renzulli, 1979; Renzulli, 1980).

In 1982, Renzulli further refined his definition of giftedness into two types (1982): "schoolhouse giftedness" and "creative/productive giftedness". Schoolhouse giftedness is determined by IQ tests, as well as other standardized tests, that measure cognitive ability. Students exhibiting creative/productive giftedness are able to apply the

information or content that has been taught to them to become inductive and real-life problem solvers. This type of giftedness differs from schoolhouse giftedness by the ability of the student to engage in inquiry-type questions, as opposed to the structured process of storing and retrieving information from lessons. Creative and schoolhouse giftedness are equally important types of giftedness that can both be exhibited in the same individual (Renzulli, 1982).

The identification of two types of giftedness was a major breakthrough in the definition of giftedness (Renzulli, 1982). This was the first time that it was acknowledged that there is more to giftedness than can be measured on an intelligence test. This may have positive implications for the selection of students of color to the gifted and talented program.

A major contributor to the concept of giftedness was Abraham Tannenbaum (Tannenbaum, 1983). He contended that the abilities of students who are gifted and talented are an indication of those who will excel with superior accomplishments in adult life. The ideas that are produced by the gifted and talented will impact the moral, physical, emotional, social, and intellectual qualities of life in our society. The gifted and talented are inventors who enhance our daily lifestyles with products such as the air conditioner, light bulb, medical advancements, technology, and communication devices (Tannenbaum, 1983). For a person to be gifted and to achieve excellence, Tannenbaum listed five interwoven factors: superior general intellect, distinctive special aptitudes, a supportive array of nonintellectual traits, a challenging and facilitative environment, and the smile of good fortune at crucial periods of life (Tannenbaum, 1991, p. 9).

Another theorist who viewed giftedness as having qualities that could not be measured on an individual test was Robert Sternberg. In his Triarchic Theory of Human Intelligence (Sternberg, 1985), he rallied strongly against the use of a single number, such as IQ, to define intelligence. He claimed there are multiple loci of intellectual giftedness and three main kinds of giftedness: analytic (problem solving), synthetic (insightful, creative) and practical (able to apply abilities to everyday problems) (Sternberg, 1991b, p. 45). Since standard IQ tests only measure analytic intelligence, Sternberg developed the Sternberg Triarchic Abilities Test to quantify all three kinds of intelligence (Sternberg, 1991a). In addition, he developed instructional techniques tailored to meet the various needs of students with the three types of intelligence. Research has shown that student performance is maximized when the instructional technique best matches their ability type (Sternberg, 2005).

Another assessment of the gifted was developed in the early 1990s. Mary Frasier and Harry Passow developed the Frasier Talent Assessment Profile (Passow & Frasier, 1994). As part of this work they identified the common attributes of the gifted and talented student: communication skills, humor, imagination or creativity, inquiry, insight, interests, memory, problem-solving ability, reasoning and extraordinary interests. The profile aimed to get beyond the notion of "adding points together" and looked at many factors relative to environmental and cultural considerations.

Individuals have many talents. The Piirto Pyramid of Talent recognizes that we have many talents (Piirto, 1994). These include the genetic aspect (heritage), emotional aspect (personality attributes), cognitive aspects (intelligence), talent aspect (drawing,

writing), vocational aspect (feeling the thorn), and environmental aspect (home and family) (Piirto, The Piirto Pyramid of Talent Development: A Conceptional Framework for Talking about Talent., 2000). By "feeling the thorn", Piirto means that individuals feel they have a calling in their life or a desire to pursue the development of a talent. Jane Piirto, as a gifted poet and novelist, stresses the significance of creativity. However, she emphasizes that creativity alone is insufficient; one must have a calling to pursue the development of a talent (Piirto, 2000, pp. 26-27).

These definitions demonstrate an obvious trend away from the use of a single number, such as IQ, to describe giftedness. Researchers have sought a broadened, varied, and expanded notion of giftedness, to take the concept beyond achievement alone. Different types of giftedness have been stressed, such as creativity, problem-solving and practical skills.

Legislative Definitions of Gifted and Talented

The identification process for enrollment in the gifted and talented program has been an issue that has been discussed for many years (Brown, Renzulli, Gubbins, Siegle, Zhang, & Chen, 2005). After seventy years of research, a definition of giftedness, or a reliable process that would define or identify the gifted student, has yet to be agreed upon by gifted and talented theorists (Glass, 2004, p. 25).

The first attempt to define the term "gifted and talented" at the federal level came

as part of The Education Amendments of 1969 (U.S.C. Committee on Labor and Public

Welfare, 1970) which defined gifted and talented children as:

> those who have outstanding intellectual ability or creative talent, the development of which requires special activities or services not ordinarily provided by local education agencies.

The 1972 *Marland Report* definition was somewhat different. It gave six areas of

giftedness to be used to identify gifted and talented students, and stated that the

identification process should be based upon achievement and potential: general

intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, creative or productive thinking,

leadership ability, visual and performing arts abilities, and the use of psychomotor

ability (Marland, 1972, p. 5). In 1978, these standards were altered to remove

psychomotor ability (Stephens & Karnes, 2000).

Within the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act of 1988

(1988), gifted and talented was defined as follows:

> children and youth who give evidence of high performance capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who require special services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop such capabilities. (1988)

> In 1994, the U.S. Department of Education defined the gifted and talented as

> children and youth with outstanding talent to perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others their own age, experience or environment. These children and youth exhibit high performance capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic or leadership capacity, or excel in specific academic fields. They require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools. Outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata,

and in all areas of human endeavor. (Stephens & Karnes, 2000, p. 220; U.S. Department of Education, 1994)

After twenty-five years of the promotion of various definitions of gifted and talented, this is the first definition that specifically mentions cultural differences. This is likely a reflection of the changing educational landscape due to the positive advancements achieved in the civil rights era. The inclusion of culture in the gifted and talented definition highlights the growing realization that culture does have some effect in the classroom.

The most recent legislative action addressing education is NCLB, which was signed into law in January 2002. It had as one of its goals to increase the number of children that are proficient in reading and math (Gallagher, 2007). The definition of gifted and talented in the NCLB is as follows:

> The term "gifted and talented", when used with respect to students, children, or youth, means students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities. (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 2008)

This is similar to the U.S. Department of Education definition given in 1994, but has no reference to the existence of talent in diverse cultural groups. By including the existence of talent of diverse cultural groups, this would have assisted teachers in applying the gifted and talented definition to students of all cultural groups when recommending students to gifted and talented and made it more difficult for school districts to claim that underrepresentation is occurring because of the lack of gifted African Americans.

However, the response to NCLB among academicians and educators was less than positive. Many expressed the opinion that schools' resources were being drained from programs such as gifted and talented and allocated to the regular education students, in an effort to ensure their school obtained a passing grade with respect to adequate Annual Yearly Progress standards (Johnsen, 2009).

Within the United States, each state may create its own definition of the gifted and talented student. Currently Texas defines gifted and talented as follows:

> Gifted and talented student means a child or youth who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of achievement when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment and who:
> 1. exhibits high performance capability and intellectual, creative, or artistic area;
> 2. possesses an unusual capacity for leadership; or
> 3. excels in a specific academic field. (Education Commission of the States, 2004)

One notable difference between the federal and Texas definition is that the Texas definition does not require the student to be in need of any special instruction to develop their potential. Teachers may recommend a student to the gifted and talented without the student having a special need to develop their potential. Since the Texas definition does not require the student to be in need of any special instruction to develop their potential, this has the advantage of making gifted and talented education available to a wider audience. It also has the potential for a positive impact on the selection of African Americans to the gifted and talented program. Without the requirement of a student needing any special instruction to develop their potential, this provides African American students to enroll to gifted and talented based upon their gifts and talents.

Definitions of giftedness may vary at the local level. The Aldine Independent School District uses the Texas definition of gifted and talented (Aldine Independent School District, 2009). In contrast, in the Klein Independent School District, Spring, Texas, the gifted and talented are defined by:

> Gifted and talented students are those who excel consistently or who show potential to excel in a combination of the following areas: general intellectual ability, specific subject matter aptitude and achievement, and creative and productive thinking ability. These students require educational experiences beyond those normally provided by the regular school program. (Klein Independent School District, 2010b)

This aligns more with the federal definition than the state, since it specifies that students be in need of special education to reach their potential. By adhering to a more restrictive definition of giftedness, this may adversely affect the selection to the gifted and talented program. The restrictive definition requires students need to receive special education to reach their potential. Although some African American students perform well, they do not reach their full potential. For the African American student who is performing well in the regular curriculum, the student may not be admitted to gifted and talented since they do not need special education to enable them to reach their potential.

But another viewpoint is gained by examining the specific method Klein ISD uses to identify students for inclusion in the gifted and talented program. Specific scores on particular ability tests are required, including Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Tests (K-4) or Otis-Lennon School Ability Tests (5-12) and Stanford Achievement Test (Klein Independent School District, 2010a). Reliance on tests, while easy to administer, may contribute to the underrepresentation of African American students in the gifted and

talented program. Since researchers have found these tests to be biased, African American students score lower on the ability tests (Jensen, 1977), resulting in their underrepresentation in the gifted and talented program.

In summary, gifted and talented education in the United States has had a long history which has seen many developments in testing and nomination practices, much of which has been spurred by the desire to remain internationally competitive. Starting in the civil rights era, there have been many legislative attempts to ensure that gifted and talented programs are equally accessible to people with diverse culture and languages. Despite these efforts, problems remain, such as a lack of consistency in enrollment criteria. With a lack of consistency in enrollment criteria, there may be inequity when teachers nominate students to the gifted and talented program. This lack of consistency may result in the disproportionate number of African American students enrolled to the gifted and talented program.

Academic researchers have produced many theories on the meaning and definition of the term gifted and talented. While there is agreement that intelligence and creativity are multifaceted concepts, there is little agreement on how to quantify these characteristics and on the type of education needed to develop such talents to their fullest extent in an individual.

Underrepresentation in Gifted and Talented Programs

Concern about the poor educational opportunities for African American students was prevalent prior to the Civil War (Harris, Brown, Ford & Richardson, 2004). Many

of the civil cases that began in the 1800s, and continued through the 1900s, validated the concern for equal education for African Americans. The *Roberts v. City of Boston* (1850) case prohibited a five-year-old African American student from achieving equity in education. She was unable to attend a school for European Americans students where new and better educational materials were available and, thus, was denied the opportunity to maximize her potential, academically. Since she attended a school lacking in adequate educational materials, this may have resulted in limiting her from the opportunity to achieve her full potential in our society.

In the 1900s, legal action over inequality in education continued with *Missouri ex. Rel. Gaines v. Canada* (1938), *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950) and *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents* (1950); these cases all contributed to improving equity in education. The most influential case of that era was *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) which focused on the equity of education for all children. This equity in education was also meant to include those students whose culture and socioeconomic status differed from the dominant middle class, European American culture. The verdicts of these cases stated that separate education for the races was not equal education, that the education provided to African American students was inadequate and of poorer quality of that provided for European American students (Harris, Brown, Ford & Richardson, 2004).

Between 1972 and 2007, the enrollment of students from minority groups in United States classrooms increased markedly, with the percentage of European Americans enrolled in grades K-12 decreasing from 78% to 56%. The greatest increase has been for Hispanics and minority groups other than African Americans, with the

proportion of African American enrollment remaining constant, for the most part, at approximately 15% nationwide. (Planty et al., 2009, p. 16). However, in 1993, only about 8% of African American students were enrolled in gifted and talented programs, which was an underrepresentation of approximately 50% (where underrepresentation is defined as the ratio of the number of African Americans in gifted and talented to the number of African Americans in the student population). This trend was also evident for Hispanic students; in 1993, while 9% of public schools students were Hispanic only 5% of gifted students were Hispanic (Ford & Grantham, 2003).

The Office for Civil Rights has provided statistics about the African and European American student populations in gifted and talented classrooms for several decades. By dividing the percentages of African and European American students in public schools to the percentages of those in gifted and talented programs, one can

calculate the representation ratio. If the ratio is greater than 1, then more students than expected are in the gifted and talented program for a given racial group. Conversely, if the ratio is less than 1, then fewer students than expected are in the gifted and talented program. Table II-2 presents data on African and European Americans in public elementary/secondary education gifted and talented programs for 2002 - 2006 by state.

These data, accessed from The Office for Civil Rights, shows a continuous trend of underrepresentation of African Americans and overrepresentation of European Americans, in nearly all states of the U.S., which has remained largely unchanged for the last decade which is illustrated in Figure II-2 and Figure II-3. Nearly all states have an overrepresentation of European Americans in gifted education (bar height greater than 1) and an underrepresentation of African Americans (bar height less than 1).

Table II-2: Representation Ratio of African and European Americans

	2002 African	2002 European	2004 African	2004 European	2006 African	2006 European
Alabama	0.42	1.35	0.5	1.3	0.51	1.32
Alaska	0.46	1.41	0.52	1.38	0.52	1.41
Arizona	0.55	1.42	0.59	1.35	0.55	1.44
Arkansas	0.64	1.17	0.68	1.14	0.69	1.17
California	0.5	1.46	0.52	1.47	0.54	1.55
Colorado	0.76	1.19	0.78	1.18	0.77	1.21
Connecticut	0.46	1.22	0.56	1.17	0.55	1.19
Delaware	0.49	1.29	0.47	1.33	0.46	1.39
Florida	0.43	1.28	0.43	1.28	0.43	1.34
Georgia	0.43	1.45	0.43	1.49	0.43	1.56
Hawaii	0.45	1.06	0.49	0.98	0.49	1
Idaho	0.61	1.09	0.4	1.12	0.37	1.14
Illinois	0.44	1.33	0.46	1.25	0.46	1.28
Indiana	0.56	1.08	0.6	1.07	0.59	1.09
Iowa	0.63	1.04	0.56	1.05	0.51	1.06
Kansas	0.32	1.17	0.33	1.17	0.33	1.2
Kentucky	0.42	1.08	0.43	1.08	0.43	1.09
Louisiana	0.52	1.42	0.49	1.43	0.51	1.38
Maine	0.31	1.02	0.47	1.01	0.39	1.02
Maryland	0.44	1.24	0.48	1.25	0.48	1.3
Massachusetts	0.66	1.06	1.03	0.88	1.09	0.9
Michigan	0.36	1.16	0.67	1.07	0.66	1.08
Minnesota	0.53	1.09	0.62	1.04	0.56	1.07
Mississippi	0.47	1.56	0.57	1.46	0.57	1.48
Missouri	0.44	1.13	0.44	1.13	0.44	1.14
Montana	0.39	1.08	0.43	1.08	0.34	1.09
Nebraska	0.65	1.11	0.54	1.13	0.52	1.16
Nevada	0.62	1.34	.	.	0.37	1.64
New Hampshire	0.17	1.02	0.28	1	0.25	1.01
New Jersey	0.55	1.26	0.46	1.24	0.47	1.27
New Mexico	0.64	1.89	0.86	1.18	0.82	1.23
New York	0.4	1.48	0.36	1.57	0.36	1.6
North Carolina	0.33	1.42	0.36	1.45	0.38	1.45
North Dakota	2.15	0.86	0.75	0.93	0.5	0.94
Ohio	0.61	1.08	0.86	1.03	0.86	1.04
Oklahoma	0.59	1.14	0.52	1.19	0.52	1.23
Oregon	0.55	1.13	0.45	1.15	0.48	1.18
Pennsylvania	0.54	1.11	0.48	1.13	0.48	1.15
Rhode Island	0.75	1.13	0.84	1.11	0.82	1.13
South Carolina	0.45	1.44	0.44	1.45	0.45	1.46
South Dakota	0.52	1.09	0.43	1.07	0.4	1.07
Tennessee	1.29	0.9	1.33	0.88	1.34	0.89
Texas	0.56	1.4	0.6	1.45	0.59	1.53
Utah	1.15	1	0.89	1	0.76	1.02
Vermont	0.45	1.03	0.97	1.04	0.84	1.05
Virginia	0.36	1.27	0.36	1.26	0.36	1.28
Washington	0.39	1.13	0.36	1.13	0.36	1.16
West Virginia	0.46	1.01	0.69	0.99	0.65	1
Wisconsin	0.24	1.16	0.27	1.16	0.27	1.17
Wyoming	0.59	1.07	0.49	1.11	0.46	1.12

Sources: (Snyder et al., 2009, Tables 41, 53; Snyder et al., 2008, Table 50; Snyder, Dillow, & Hoffman, 2005, Table 42).
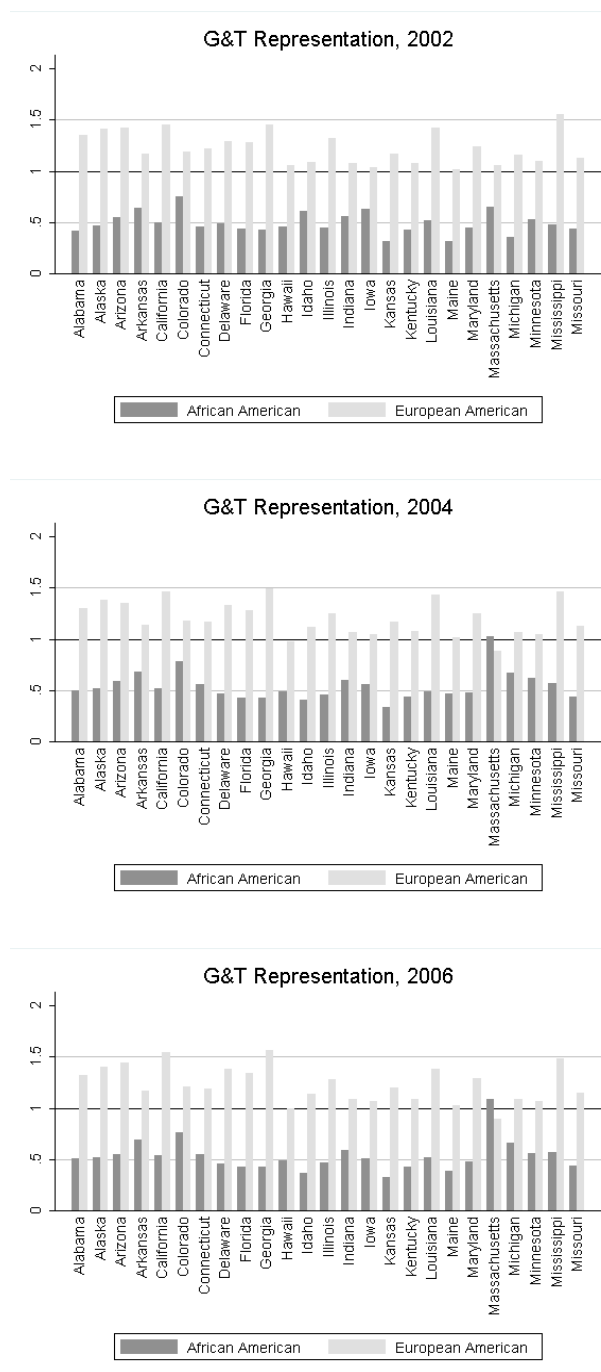
Figure II-2: Representation of African American and European American Students in Gifted and Talented Programs (states A-M)
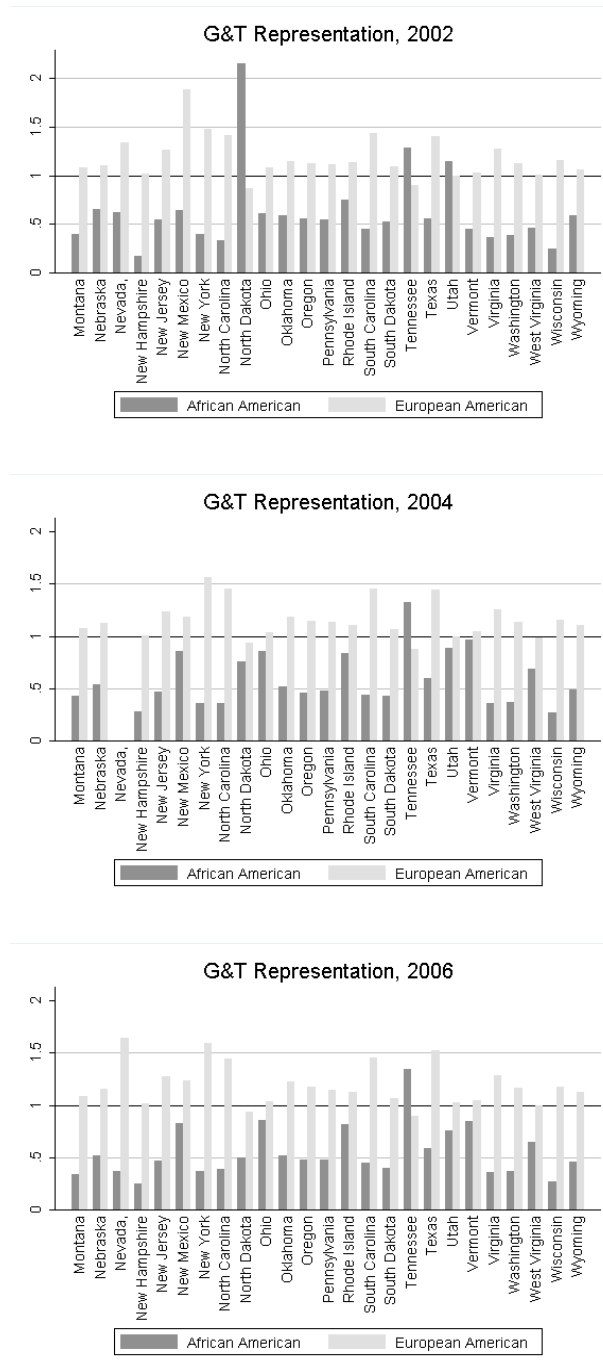
Figure II-3: Representation of African American and European American Students in Gifted and Talented Programs (states M-Z)

In isolated incidents, the ratio can be higher without signaling a large scale, overrepresentation problem. For example, in 2002, North Dakota had a 2 to 1 overrepresentation of African Americans. The percentage of African Americans in the student population in North Dakota was only 1.1%. The number of students in gifted and talented that year was 3,380. Therefore, 1.1% of these students would be expected to be African American which would be 37 students. However, 80 African American students were in gifted and talented in North Dakota, in 2002, which was 2.4%. Such small numbers of students can reflect variation in the population, coincidentally, rather than being an accurate reflection of the norm. In contrast, if there were 8,000 African Americans in gifted and talented, when only 3,700 were expected, this would be an accurate reflection of the norm in this population.

In Texas, the underrepresentation of African Americans was 0.56, 0.60, and 0.57 in 2002, 2004, and 2006, respectively, and the overrepresentation of European Americans was 1.40, 1.45 and 1.43 in 2002, 2004, and 2006, respectively. This quantifies the need for further research to understand the causes and cures of the underrepresentation of African American students in the gifted and talented programs.

Legislative Response to Underrepresentation

Several actions resulted from response to the underrepresentation of African American students in gifted and talented programs. Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm introduced the Elementary and Secondary Career Education Act of 1977 (1977).

Chisholm often emphasized the importance of education to the democratic system (Chisholm, 1988) and credited her experience in the rigorous British-style public education system in Barbados during her youth for her strong stance on the value of a good education (Brown, 2008). In 1978, she addressed the National Forum on Minority and Disadvantaged Gifted and Talented Students, emphasizing the lack of effort devoted to developing and nurturing the talents of the gifted and talented African American student in American public schools, and she focused on the United States education system as the reason for African American students' underrepresentation in gifted and talented programs.

Chisholm believed that the United States education system needed to improve in two areas (Chisholm, 1978). First, improvement was needed in the identification methods for enrollment to gifted and talented programs, which are often barriers to enrollment for the African American student due to the use of cultural biased testing to identify gifted students. Second, the level of funding needed to increase, in addition to the current funding being used appropriately (Davis et al., 2010). Chisholm's efforts lead to an improvement in enrollment procedures to the gifted and talented program and an increase in the funding available for effective gifted and talented programs, from 2.56 million in 1976 to 6.28 million in 1980 (Chisholm, 1978; Pinderhughes, 1982; Sisk, 1980).

Legislative action continued with the Javits Act of 1988, which was created to identify minority and low socio-economic status students and provide all such students the opportunity to excel by being enrolled in gifted and talented programs (Harris et al.,

2004). One of the highlights of the Javits Act is the specific inclusion of youth from all cultural groups: "…outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across the economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor" (Colangelo & Davis, 2002). Therefore, the legislation emphasized the goal of equity in gifted education.

<div align="center">**Test Bias**</div>

Underrepresentation has been used as an indicator of probable bias in gifted and talented programs for some time. In the 1980s, the Peoria School District in Illinois was in danger of losing its funding, because of an extreme imbalance in the proportion of African Americans in its gifted program: while 40% of the population was African American, less than 1% of the gifted and talented students in the district were African American (Fetterman, 1988). An inquiry resulted in many changes to this program, including an increase in the proportion of African Americans on the gifted and talented selection committee, teacher training in schools with the lowest representation of African American gifted and talented students, and examination of the ranking system used during the selection of students (Fetterman, 1988, p. 164).

When a gifted and talented program utilizes the traditional methods of identification (tests and/or the ability to quickly master the content), all gifted and talented students are not recognized. According to Renzulli (2005), the students who are not recognized include the following: students of color, students from low socio-economic status backgrounds and students who demonstrate their academic knowledge

in other than traditional methods, because they do not fit into the "stereotype of good test takers and lesson learners" (Renzulli, 2005, p. 80). Thus, identifying students based upon the mainstream cultural values (classroom participation, mastery of one core content subject) may result in omitting students of color (Renzulli, 2005). In 2009, Yoon and Gentry used data from the Office for Civil Rights, to show the level of underrepresentation of African Americans and Hispanics, and the level of overrepresentation of European Americans and Asians, which they suggest is due in part to test bias (Yoon & Gentry, 2009).

Intelligence quotient (IQ) tests typically play a role in the screening of children for enrollment in gifted and talented programs. Factors that are currently used to identify the gifted and talented include: intelligence (as measured with an IQ test), talents, creativity, productivity and recommendations by teachers and/or parents (Cross & Cross, 2005). Indeed, IQ tests have long been the basis of identifying the gifted and talented.

Traditionally, gifted and talented students were identified by the range, or percentile, within which they scored on an IQ test. In 1925, Lewis Terman defined those who scored within the top 1% on the Stanford-Binet test as being gifted (Terman, 1925). The *Marland Report* was more generous, defining the top 3-5% as being gifted (Marland, 1972). Unfortunately, using scores from IQ tests is a biased method for the identification of students for enrollment to gifted and talented programs, since a well established body of research documents that European Americans score, on average, 15 points higher than African Americans on intelligence tests (Herrstein & Murray, 1994; Jensen, 1977).

Despite extensive research efforts, there is still no consensus as to why this occurs. Various intelligence tests, such as the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC), have been examined repeatedly to attempt to identify the test items that lead to differences, if any (Koh & Abbatiello, 1984), and to determine the cause of the difference in scores between different cultural groups (Fakolade, 2006). Much of the focus of this research has been on the relative weight of hereditary or environmental effects (Rushton & Jensen, 2005; Wicherts, Dolan, & van der Maas, 2010).

The Black/White gap occurs on standardized achievement tests as well, causing African American students to be consistently channeled into less rigorous types of education (Steele, 2004). Donna Ford summarizes the main arguments of the ongoing debate by two ideologies: on one side there are those who believe that culturally different children really are less intelligent, and, on the other side, there are those who believe that culture impacts tests results, but does not equate low performance with inferiority. Among the possible mechanisms of the effect of culture on test performance, Ford lists examiner effects, testing environment and atmosphere (Ford, 2004b).

Many educators have called for a widening of the criteria used to identify students as a way to reduce the effect of testing bias. For example, John O'Neil suggested that when students are being identified for gifted and talented, the use of multiple criteria, such as spatial sense, deductive reasoning, and teacher recommendation, could increase the representation of minority students (O'Neil, 2006).

Empirical studies have found that teachers concur with this sentiment. Focusing on the beliefs and practices of teachers concerning the identification of students for

enrollment in gifted and talented classes have been done, Brown and Renzulli performed a survey of six thousand educators in the field of gifted education and respondents strongly agreed that multiple criteria should be considered for the identification of the gifted and talented student. By utilizing multiple identification techniques, teachers' perceptions may be modified to encompass the many facets of the unique talent of each student (Brown et al., 2005). Research by Pfeiffer supports these results; from a survey of 137 experts in gifted education, Pfeiffer concluded that "educators should be most concerned with not excluding any possibly gifted young students with outstanding promise" (Pfeiffer, 2003).

However, the use of teacher nominations has its own dangers; if teachers fail to nominate minority students the problem of underrepresentation will be perpetuated. Since teachers in poor areas may be the least equipped to identify gifted students (Oakland & Rossen, 2005), poor students who are disproportionately African American are the most likely to be overlooked for gifted and talented nominations.

Teacher Perceptions

Since the cultural bias in intelligence and achievement tests has been so well documented, most gifted and talented programs in the U.S. now include teacher nominations as part of the selection process. Despite this, underrepresentation of African Americans continues to be a problem. Thus, further research is needed to understand teachers' perceptions of African American students to determine whether any negative

perceptions of African American students exist, and, thus, may impact a teachers' nomination of African American students to a gifted and talented program.

Educators would anticipate that teacher education in gifted and talented, as well as multicultural and urban education, would have a positive impact on teachers' perceptions of students of color. Having more teachers of color in a school would likely improve other teachers' perceptions of students of color, since their colleague would be an example of a minority person who has been successful in the educational system.

Many factors have been demonstrated to be linked to academic success, for example, social class, student motivation and work ethic, and gender for some subject areas (e.g., boys in science). It is important to establish whether teachers ascribe these positive or negative qualities to African American students. If it is found that teachers, in general, are ascribing negative characteristics to African American students, then this would certainly help in explaining the persistence of the underrepresentation problem.

School Culture

Lack of Teacher Education on Gifted and Talented

The state of Texas requires teachers to obtain certification in gifted education within one semester after starting to teach in the gifted and talented program. Certification entails 30 hours of professional development on teaching gifted children. In addition, Texas teachers may choose to obtain an endorsement in gifted education,

which involves taking a series of four courses on gifted education at a Texas university

(Texas State Board of Education, 1995).

In 1992, a study of teachers' beliefs about gifted students was completed. Copenhaver and Mc Intyre evaluated a sample of 85 students who were enrolled in a graduate class on gifted education, about half of whom had taught a gifted class. They found that inexperienced teachers, with little education on giftedness, do not understand the negative characteristics of gifted children (such as frustration and perfectionism) and may categorize such children as being badly behaved, all too easily (Copenhaver & Mc Intyre, 1992). For example, teachers may view inappropriate behavior in African American boys as being merely a discipline problem, whereas it could be a sign of their boredom with an unchallenging curriculum. Thus it is of interest to determine the level of teacher education on gifted and talented when ascertaining teacher perceptions of African American students.

Lack of Multicultural Teacher Education

The theory and practice of multicultural education has been emphasized prolifically by Geneva Gay (2009). She defines multicultural education as teaching that uses cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them (Gay, 2000). More specifically, multicultural education acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups; it builds meaningful bridges between the home and school environments;

and it uses a wide variety of instructional strategies that are tailored to different learning styles and incorporates multicultural information, resources, and materials from all the subjects and skills routinely taught in schools (Gay, 2000, p. 29). There is a growing body of research to show that culturally relevant education improves student performance (McCarty, 2002; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). Sonya Nieto defined multicultural education as anti-racist education although not all diversity is based on race and emphasized that teachers' practices and attitudes can enhance the learning of those students from diverse backgrounds (Nieto, 1999; Nieto, 2002). However, Gay views the impact of the lack of teacher education on culture as an obstacle to implementing multicultural education in U.S. schools (Gay & Kirkland, 2003).

James Banks argued that many educational practitioners view multicultural education as only relating to curriculum and, thus, more emphasis on pre-service and in-service training is needed on the topic to enlighten educators on the more commonly ignored components, such as teaching and learning styles (Banks, 1993). In particular, professional development programs should help teachers understand the characteristics of ethnic groups and the manner in which race and ethnicity influence student behavior, and make clear the distinction between this and ethnic stereotyping (Banks et al., 2001; Banks & Banks, 2001).

The lack of multicultural teacher education can lead to a cultural mismatch between the teacher and students in the classroom. Delpit and Ravitch (1995) describe the way that cultural mismatch operates in the classroom. For example, the interaction styles of European and African American students are generally quite different: African

American students respond more to a direct style, whereas European Americans respond better to an indirect style. Thus a European American teacher may perceive African American students are less willing to follow instructions. When the cultural mismatch in the classroom is significant, this can affect the teacher's view of the student's abilities and, thus, negatively impact the learning outcome of students (Delpit & Ravitch, 1995) and the teacher's willingness to recommend the student for the gifted and talented program.

Cultural mismatch is identified as being similar to culture shock (Ford et al., 2005). In order to alleviate culture shock, teachers need to be aware of the differences between the African American student and the European American teacher and strive for a culturally diverse learning environment. They suggested five methods to achieve this goal: first, modify teachers' perceptions of cultural differences from being weaknesses, to, instead, being strengths; second, culture should be incorporated into definitions of learning; third, there is a need for educators to advocate methods of assessment, policies and procedures that promote diversity; fourth, strategies for learning and instruction should reflect a learning environment that is responsive to the needs of the culturally diverse student; and, fifth, teachers should continue their multicultural education. This training should provide teachers with knowledge about families, communities, testing, curricula, culturally responsive classrooms, and learning styles that will impact the success of the African American student (Ford et al., 2005).

Research reveals that a correction of cultural mismatch positively impacts the success of the African American student (Boykin, 1984). When a teacher provides an

opportunity for the African American student to express Afro-cultural behaviors, such as communicating orally, and recognizes the value of cooperation and communalism, the opportunity for success for the African American student is greater. However, when there is a cultural mismatch in the classroom, learning may be disrupted. This can result in an African American student not being recognized as a gifted and talented student, due to low academic performance in the regular curriculum (Boykin, 1994). Professional staff development concerning the culture of African American students will enhance a teacher's ability to teach and meet the needs of the African American student (Garcia & Guerra, 2004).

Research suggests gifted and talented African American students may have behaviors that make them appear to be uninterested in the content of a class or indicate they are not motivated (Ford et al., 2005). Other unique characteristics of gifted and talented African American students include their spirituality, harmony, oral tradition, affect, verve, communalism, movement, social time perspective and their expressive individualism (Ford & Harmon, 2001). If these characteristics are not recognized or considered disruptive, there will continue to be a disproportionately low percentage of African American students enrolled in gifted and talented classes.

Training in multicultural education contributes to equity in the gifted and talented program. Ernest Bernal stated that one of the three ways to reduce underrepresentation in gifted and talented programs is to have teachers of the gifted obtain training in multicultural education. Indeed, he states that no meaningful change in the identification process for gifted children can take place in traditional, middle-class gifted and talented

programs, and that no method of increasing minority representation in gifted and talented programs will be effective until the curriculum is modified to become more multiculturally oriented (Bernal, 2002).

Research indicates multicultural education contributes to the equity of identification of students to the gifted and talented program. Fred Bonner summarizes the key point succinctly: "without proper training, teachers make judgments based on their own preconceived ideas of what characteristics a gifted student should exhibit, … , and this exacerbates the problem of under-identification of African American students" (Bonner, 2000, p. 647).

Lack of Multicultural Curriculum

A multicultural curriculum should include subject matter on African American culture. However, it has been asserted that gifted and talented programs rarely emphasize the significance of African American culture (Colangelo & Exum, 1979), and thus academicians have recommended curriculum reform for gifted and talented programs as a method for reducing underrepresentation of African American students in gifted and talented programs (Bernal, 2002).This outcome may occur in two ways: either by increasing African American students' engagement and motivation to learn in the regular program (prior to enrollment in gifted and talented), thus making it more likely that they be identified as gifted and talented; or by contributing to the continued

successes of the African American student once they have enrolled in the gifted and talented program through the use of a multicultural curriculum.

A multicultural curriculum should encompass much more than a few lessons about ethnically diverse individuals (Gay, 2003, p. 33): it should include an equitable representation of all diverse groups in all areas of the curriculum. For example, in math, a teacher could use the proportion of diverse groups in the class to teach about fractions and percentages. A multicultural curriculum would include contributions to the field of study by persons from cultures other than the dominant Western culture. For example, in music, a teacher could study music from all the continents, not just Europe and North America.

A diverse, multicultural curriculum will be advantageous to all students. This will enable students to gain awareness of the diverse, rich cultures existing within their own society (Gay, 2003). A multicultural curriculum that impacts the success of African American students would include the following: content that encompasses various cultures, which are reflective of U.S. society; and implementing positive learning groups, which promote positive attitudes and a pedagogy that is reflective of students and their culture. When classroom teaching and learning focuses on the culture of the African American student, as well as all cultures, effective teaching and learning are promoted while considering the rich cultural background.

As a response to educational problems the school encountered, such as increasing resistance to desegregation busing and an increasing achievement gap between African and European American students, immersion schools were first established in

Milwaukee, in 1991 (Pollard & Ajirotutu, 2000, p. 31). These schools aimed to infuse Afro-centric thinking into all aspects of school life. Self esteem, cultural pride, and a more nurturing role for teachers were all emphasized. One method that was employed to increase the familial feel of the classroom was abandoning the use of Mr. and Mrs. for teachers, and using African terms such as "Mama Jones". In addition, changes to the curriculum highlighted the achievements of African American inventors, scientists and celebrities. In social studies, the study of African geography and the culture of her people were key, and African literature was used to teach reading and writing skills (Pollard & Ajirotutu, 2000, pp. 62, 105). The successful creation and use of an Afro-centric curriculum, in these cases, shows it is possible to reduce the European influences observed in the regular curriculum and diversify cultural content, while, simultaneously, achieving equivalent educational goals.

Individual teachers also have some flexibility in increasing the cultural diversity of their classroom activities. Textbooks and teaching units frequently present lessons using the dominant point of view (Banks et al., 2001). For example, the historical westward movement and settlement in the United States is usually presented from the point of view of the European settlers. The authors recommend that teachers introduce students to alternative points of view, not only to provide a multicultural perspective, but also to encourage critical thinking. Milner and Ford give explicit suggestions as to the manner in which educators can increase the visibility of cultures and races in their classroom, including: adding culturally different points of view to existing curriculum

topics, adding curriculum topics from other cultures such as Black History Month, and including units on heroes and holidays from diverse cultures (Milner & Ford, 2005).

According to Ladson-Billings, though, Afro-centric activities shouldn't just be an "add-on", and teachers should not be satisfied with superficial celebrations of heroes and holidays. Afro-centric activities should be central to the curriculum. The curriculum may include various cultural activities that are reflective of our world, for example, celebrating by eating different foods from another country. It is preferable, though, to include materials from other countries in the regular class period. For example, reading a story that has several versions, according to each of several countries, gives the students an opportunity to look at similarities and differences in cultures (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

In a qualitative study of one successful white teacher in an urban district, Harding identifies techniques and ideologies that this teacher used in the classroom to great effect. This teacher strove to incorporate home culture, while explicitly teaching the culture of power, meaning that the best way to empower students is to teach them to read and write. In addition, this teacher understood that Standard or "school English" does not always sound right to urban students, thus, she focused on teaching her students the value of code-switching, which is the ability to choose the type of language that is appropriate for a given setting. This is an important factor for success, she believes, because language is a powerful force in our society (Harding, 2005, p. 77). Thus, use of multicultural curriculum in a school can have a positive impact on student achievement, for African Americans in particular, and allow them more opportunity to be identified for the gifted and talented program. Furthermore, teachers who use a multicultural

curriculum are likely to be sensitive to cultural differences and be less likely to interpret cultural differences negatively. Also, these teachers may be more likely to nominate an African American student, as well as those of other cultural groups, to the gifted and talented program than a teacher who is naive about the importance of culture.

Culturally Varying Learning Styles

Group learning is more practical in small classes, which, in itself, has been shown to benefit minority students. In 1985, the Tennessee state legislature, along with Tennessee universities and the Tennessee State Department of Education, sponsored a study about class size, conducted by Project Star (Krueger & Whitmore, 2001). Five years after the experiment ended, when the students were in grades four through eight, another study was conducted to determine the long-term effects of enrolling fewer students in a class. The study, which included large urban school districts, revealed significant lasting benefits of small classes for the African American learner. For African American students, the results of the small-class size study were more substantial than for the European American students and, thus, African American students in a large class setting may be more likely to be less successful and thereby fail to be identified as gifted (Nye, Hedges, & Konstantopoulos, 2001).

Gifted African American students differ from European American students in that they seek and enjoy social relationships with peers, as well as participating in cooperative learning as their means of learning more than their European American

counterparts. Thus they have greater social needs that are imperative components of their success (Ford & Harmon, 2001). This method may enhance the learning of all in the group because, if one person in the group reaches his or her goal, then the other students use that as motivation to accomplish their goals (Vaughan, 2002).

There is evidence that teachers perceive African American students learn best when their learning environment is personal and relational. This type of personal and relational environment is similar to that which is found in a family. In this environment, the teacher and the student act as an extended family, and African American students are in a "home away from home" (Love & Kruger, 2005). Along the same lines, Franita Ware describes the "warm demander pedagogy" as reflective of an African American parenting style, which is caring, yet authoritarian, and focuses on the message "I expect more from you" (Ware, 2006).

In their influential monograph, Renzulli and Reis examined the experiences of compensatory programs, and their impact on the learning environment for the African American student, and concluded that they are ineffective in demonstrating the potential and growth of the African American student. In the public schools, the "drill and kill" style of learning has negatively impacted the success of many students including the African American learner (Renzulli & Reis, 2002). It is possible however to adhere to the same curriculum but present the material in different ways for different groups, for example, visual and auditory methods may benefit minority students (Gallagher, 2005).

A major contributor to the literature on culturally sensitive classrooms (Irvine, 2003), Jacqueline J. Irvine stresses the importance of a safe environment in the

classroom. She asserts that some students of color are silent in class because, in part, they are afraid they will fit into perceived stereotypes. Furthermore, some teachers fail to create a learning environment where all students feel safe from discrimination and free to be creative, articulate, talented, and candid, and are not isolated (Wynn & Mark, 2005).

For gifted minority students, the use of inappropriate learning styles presents a formidable problem, as the failure to capitalize on African American students' relational learning modality directly contributes to the students' underachievement (Bonner, 2000, p. 650). Thus, the use of culturally appropriate learning styles can raise teacher expectations together with student motivation and achievement, and should be part of the solution to the underrepresentation problem in gifted education (Harris et al., 2004).

Shortage of African American Teachers

The ethnic (people of color) teacher shortage is a major problem in U.S. schools and is expected to worsen. It is reported that ethnic teachers currently represent 9% of public school teachers, a percentage that is expected to drop, and ethnic students represent 40% of public school students, a percentage that is expected to increase (Jorgenson, 2001, p. 64). It is suggested that this shortage is due, in part, to the fact that ethnic students frequently attend impoverished urban schools, and leave school with poor skills and negative experiences; they do not aspire to become teachers. Indeed, because of the shortage of teachers of color, there are few role models to send the

message "you can be a teacher" to today's students, and, thus, we have a self-perpetuating cycle (Branch, 2001).

These assertions are backed up by quantitative research. Meier, Stewart and England used national data collected on the British Educational system to show that discriminatory practices in schools occurred less frequently in schools with a higher proportion of black teachers (1990, p. 140). More recently, similar results have been found in a U.S. study using data from the Tennessee Project Star, which provided consistent evidence that large educational gains are made when students are assigned to a teacher belonging to their own race (Dee, 2004).

In order to attain the goal of an equitable representation in gifted and talented students, it has been suggested that school districts should have minority teachers in the gifted and talented program (Bernal, 2002). This approach to underrepresentation was put into practice successfully in the early 1990s, in Arkansas, where it was shown that African American student enrollment increases coincided with the increase in the number of African American facilitators in the gifted and talented program (Grantham, 2003).

Social Class

Family Resources

Children living below the poverty line have language, literacy and mathematics scores that are all, on average, below those of children living above the poverty line

according to the Digest of Education Statistics 2008 (Snyder et al., 2009, p. 174, Table 114). Using the National Educational Longitudinal Study 1988-1994, Cabrera and La Nasa estimated that only 10% of socioeconomically disadvantaged eighth graders will make it into a 4-year college (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2001). Teachers have taken these facts to heart and now expect poorer results from students with low socio-economic status backgrounds (Matre, Valentine, & Cooper, 2000). In other words, many teachers do not expect those living in poverty to succeed (Baron, Tom, & Cooper, 1983, pp. 263-264).

Poverty is not experienced equally throughout all racial groups. In March 2009, 24.7% of African Americans lived below the poverty line, while only 8.6% of European Americans lived below the poverty line (DeNavas-Walt & Proctor, 2009, p. 17, Table 5). Thus, the deleterious effects of poverty on educational opportunity are experienced by African American students, in particular.

A study involving elementary teachers that used hypothetical student vignettes concluded that teachers recommend and place high socio-economic background students in gifted and talented at a slightly higher rate than those with low socio-economic backgrounds (Elhoweris, 2008). It has been asserted that minority underrepresentation in gifted education is caused, at least in part, by the belief that ethnic and low-income children are so lacking in basic skills that their development into gifted children and adults would be highly unlikely (Callahan, 2005).

A valuable resource a family environment can provide is parental involvement in a child's education. It has been well documented that student achievement is positively affected when parents are engaged in their child's schooling (Epstein, 1987). However,

some researchers report that racial biases in schools have discouraged African American parents from being involved in their child's schooling (Archer-Banks & Behar-Horenstein, 2008). In fact, school personnel may view African Americans as being uneducated and thus react to them in a negative manner (Lareau & Horvat, 1999). When interacting with the school, this is a possible hurdle that African American parents face that European Americans do not face. This view of African American parents, which may be accreate, could affect the child's academic success and consequently their ability to be nominated to the gifted and talented program.

Instructional Resources

A lack of instructional resources in a school may impact student success, if the school is unable to provide materials, for example, manipulatives in the classroom, computers, additional support staff and enrichment activities, such as science fairs. In addition, an impoverished school may have difficulty attracting and retaining sufficient teachers of the desired caliber.

There is substantial evidence to back up the common-sense view that reduced class sizes improve students' performance, which can lead to better student and teacher attitudes and is related to enrichment of the core curriculum (Cooper, 1989). Using a meta-analysis of sixty research studies, researchers found that smaller school and class sizes are positively related to student achievement, as are teacher education and experience (Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine, 1996). Research studies such as these have

been the basis of many initiatives to reduce class sizes (Class-Size Reduction and Teacher Quality Act of 1988, 1988; Nyhan & Alkadry, 1999). California's 1996 billion-dollar class-size-reduction program was examined to determine whether the expected benefits materialized, and it was confirmed that a reduced class size improved both mathematics and reading achievement in the early grades for all demographic groups (Jespen, 2009).

The negative implication of these findings is that students from schools with limited resources are at an educational disadvantage. Some researchers claim that the school environment itself contributes to students' academic failure (Glass, 1991; Waxman & Padron, 1995). This point was forcefully made by Piccigallo (1989) as follows:

> "The dismal portrait of America's urban school is now widely known: shattered windows, leaky roofs, corroded plumbing. … An acute scarcity of space sometimes necessitates the use of closets and even lavatories for classes and conferences. Supplies are inadequate and the surroundings are generally drab. … Should anyone realistically be expected to work, creatively and productively, under such wretched conditions?" (p. 402).

In 2010, such problems continue to exist. The Talented and Gifted Young Scholars School in East Harlem is reported to have a prison-like appearance, with corrugated metal siding and grates on the windows. Its playground is a bare concrete square in an adjacent public park (Otterman, 2010).

The Digest of Education Statistics 2008 reports that urban schools have the largest proportion of African American students. To be precise, the ethnic breakdown of students enrolled in large city schools is: 30.4% African Americans, 39.0% Hispanics

and 22.9% European Americans, which is in stark contrast to that of midsized suburban schools, where it is: 9.8% African Americans, 15.0% Hispanics and 71.2% European Americans, (Snyder et al., 2008, p. 127, Table 90). Thus, the problem of deteriorating urban schools adversely affects the educational outcomes of African Americans and Hispanics more than European Americans. With less funding, such schools would have fewer resources to support special programs, such as a gifted and talented program, thus students attending such a school would have less access to a high quality gifted and talented program. Thus, the lack of instructional resources could be a contributing factor to the underrepresentation of African Americans in gifted and talented programs.

Teachers' perceptions of the need for funding have been examined empirically in one study of middle and elementary schools in a large urban school district. The study results revealed that more than half the responding teachers agreed that additional funding to reduce class sizes and declining resources in a time of increased demands are visible areas of need (Maxson, Wright, Houck, Lynn, & Fowler, 2000). However, teachers without the personal experience of working in an impoverished school, or those who haven't taken courses on urban education, may be unaware of the academic impact of a lack of resources on students. This naivety may give rise to a lack of understanding of students who have experienced these effects in a previous school, and lead some teachers to the false conclusion that such a student's low achievement is necessarily a sign of low ability. Thus, understanding teachers' perceptions of the effects of inadequate school resources is an important part of understanding teacher perceptions of African American students.

Gender

A student's gender may have an impact, either positive or negative, on nomination into the gifted and talented program, and research shows that both of these effects occur in U.S. classrooms.

Girls

Gender bias has been identified when nominating students to gifted and talented programs. Powell and Siegle (2000) investigated this potential type of teacher nomination bias and found evidence of gender bias against girls. In particular, teachers are more likely to nominate a disorganized boy than a disorganized girl, if the teacher expects girls to be more organized. Also, teachers are more likely to give a boy who loves reading a higher rating than a girl who loves reading, if the teacher expects girls to like reading more than boys (Siegle, 2001). In other words, if a student's negative attributes match the teacher's expectations for their gender, the negative attribute won't count so heavily against the student. On the other hand, if a student's positive attributes do not match the teacher's expectations for their gender, the positive attribute may count more heavily in favor of the student. These findings corroborate earlier research on teachers' perceptions of the differences between boys and girls, which found that teachers consider boys to be better at science than girls and more able at games of strategy, such as chess and Monopoly (Gagne, 1993). More recently, it was

demonstrated that girls are far more likely to confirm their teacher's underestimates of their math ability than boys (McKown & Weinstein, 2002, p. 176).

Boys

These perceptions, however, contradict the evidence of the academic achievements of girls. Recent research shows that girls outperform boys in every academic area, including math and science (Cole, 1997, p. 18; Wiens, 2006). Furthermore, some teachers even expect girls to outperform boys with respect to grades, graduation rates and college attendance (Matre et al., 2000). In his best seller, "*Boys Adrift*", Leonard Sax (2007) argued that a combination of social and biological factors is creating an environment that is literally toxic to boys.

African American boys are not immune to these challenges. Whiting (2006) eloquently summarizes the results of the difficulties African American boys face in school:

> As black males proceed through the educational pipeline, they appear to become less academically engaged. They appear to have learned to underachieve, to devalue school and academics, and to reject school as a place to develop their sense of identity, particularly self-worth and self-efficacy. (p. 222)

Self-confidence is a particular problem for African American boys (Baggerly & Parker, 2005). For example, it has been noted that African American girls have higher educational and occupational aspirations than African American boys and even European American girls (Hawkins & Mulkey, 2005, p. 65).

African American males are more prone to truancy and aggressive behavior in school than their peers of other races (Martin et al., 2007). A behaviorally challenged African American male may be perceived as intellectually inferior and, therefore, is a candidate for low teacher expectations as well as low student achievement (Neal, McCray, Webb-Johnson, & Bridgest, 2003).

Part of the problem of low male achievement may be related to gender specific learning styles and teacher expectations. Tharp-Taylor and Nelson-Le Gall (2005) performed a study in a predominantly African American public school, involving fifty-three fourth and fifth grade African American students. A survey examined whether students preferred to work cooperatively, competitively or individually, and its results showed that there was a significant difference among student perceptions of the teacher's preference: more boys indicated that teachers approve of competitive behaviors.

Research suggests that one possible cause of the problems that African American boys face is that schools are designed for and run by European American women and this creates a cultural gap between home and school (Mandara, 2006, p. 218). Tarek Grantham asserted that multicultural mentoring can be employed to increase African American male participation in gifted and talented programs, since some boys choose not to participate in gifted programs. He cites negative peer pressure and racial identity conflict (fear of "acting white") as possible reasons for such a choice (Grantham, 2004). Thus, multicultural education and counseling should be part of the solution (Baggerly & Parker, 2005; Bailey & Paisley, 2004).

Motivation

The link between student intrinsic motivation and achievement has been documented (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Newman, Myers, Newman, Lohman, & Smith, 2000; Renchler, 1993) and confirmed by recent research. Lepper, Iyengar and Corpus (2005) conducted a study, in which the responses of 797 elementary students were compared to the students' records, including the results of standardized tests and report card grades. Results showed a positive relationship between intrinsic motivation, standardized tests and class performance. While being intrinsically motivated enhances learning, students who were extrinsically motivated, and aimed to please their teachers while preferring easy work, obtained lower scores on standardized tests and had lower levels of performance on their class work (Lepper et al., 2005).

The gifted and talented student is reported to be one who is very motivated, has a high level of independence, is willing to take the initiative and can learn rapidly (Glass, 2004). Davis, Rimm and Siegle (2010) also listed motivation as a behavior that characterizes the gifted and talented student, as do Colangelo and Davis (Colangelo & Davis, 2002). In a recent study, it was shown that gifted students have high levels of intrinsic motivation (Skollingsberg, 2003). In fact, gifted and talented students may exhibit intense motivation. These students often desire to learn detailed information about a topic, as opposed to briefly discussing the topic. Also, the intensely motivated student may become so attentive to a particular assignment that it may be difficult for the student to discontinue it to take care of the basic necessities of life, such as eating, or even sleeping (Subotnik & LeBlanc, 2001).

Teachers' perceptions of student motivation and engagment in school influence their decision to nominate students for the gifted and talented program. This can lead to bias in nomination for certain students, for example disengaged males who do not appear to be highly motivated academically (Barber & Torney-Purta, 2008). Thus, it is important to quantify teachers' perceptions of Aftican American student motivation at school as these perceptions impact the nomination to the gifted and talented program.

Work Ethic

The work ethic of a student may correlate with the student's academic success. The first phase of a recent National Research Center on Giftedness and Talented project surveyed a sample of primary grade teachers about their beliefs and practices related to talent development in young children. It was found that teachers identified "strong work ethic" as a characteristic of gifted and talented students and they surmised that teachers believe that students should overcome any deficits before being considered for the gifted and talented program (Moon & Brighton, 2008).

When Lovelace-Taylor asked African American students for their explanation of the poor educational achievement levels of some African American students, some students admitted they could improve their study habits by working harder to accomplish a task. In other words, they accepted a measure of personal responsibility for academic failure. In addition, students responded that if academic needs interfered with their relationships with peer groups, then peer pressure negatively impacted their ability to be

motivated to achieve academically (Lovelace-Taylor, 2003). Thus there is some evidence that the fear of "acting white" can interfere with the ability of African American students to demonstrate a strong work ethic in the classroom. If some teachers have come to perceive African American students as having a poor work ethic, this negative perception could have a detrimental effect on the likelihood of nomination of African Americans to the gifted and talented program.

Attendance

In light of the theory that student absenteeism and lack of motivation are intertwined (Person, 1990), and the fact that giftedness and strong motivation are linked, one can see how student absenteeism may negatively affect a teacher's perception of a student's academic potential. This is a particular problem for African American males: national longitudinal data reveals that African American male teenagers comprise the ethnic/gender group with the highest truancy rate: 54.7% in 1997-2000, compared to only 42.3% for their European American counterparts (Weden & Zabin, 2005, p. 223, Table 1).

A recent report provides insights into truancy and the African American student. Between 1999 and 2000, in a truancy center in Delaware, 80% of the truants were African American youths, between 12 and 16 years of age. Approximately one quarter of the youth gave the reason "didn't feel like going" for not going to school; the other most common reason was "missed the bus" (Garrison, 2006). Research has also established

that increased levels of truancy are linked to decreased academic performance, as measured by grade point average (Steward, Steward, Blair, Jo, & Hill, 2008).

Teachers' accurate perceptions of the poor attendance patterns of African American students are, thus, linked to teachers' perceptions of the academic potential of African American students. If it were observed in this study that teachers perceive African American students to have poor attendance, then this may be a factor in the underrepresentation of African Americans in gifted and talented programs.

Enrichment Activities

At the other extreme are students who are involved in extracurricular activities at school. It has been reported that involvement in extracurricular activities is positively related to academic achievement and school connectedness (Akos, 2006). Teachers have been shown to have higher academic expectations of students who participate in extracurricular activities (Matre et al., 2000). It has been argued that this occurs because a student who is involved in out-of-school activities that tend to promote a positive academic self-concept will be more likely to view academic activities as congruent with the self and, therefore, have internal motivation that results in more persistence and effort (Valentine, Cooper, Bettencourt, & DuBois, 2002). It has also been suggested that these benefits may transpire because extracurricular activities often increase the opportunities for peer interaction and co-operation, as well as helping the student feel more connected with school (Hebert, 2002; Holloway, 2002; Kunzman, 2002).

Out-of-school activities with an academic focus have been shown to increase student-school connectedness (Brown & Evans, 2002) and increase positive attitudes towards particular subjects, such as science (Sorge, Newsom, & Hagerty, 2000). Some in-school activities, such as athletics (but not cheerleading), have been shown to be positively related to achievement in science (Hanson & Kraus, 1998).

Categories of extracurricular activity include the following: sports activities, fine arts activities, in-school activities and out-of-school activities. The study revealed that students who were engaged in extracurricular activities had a greater connection to their school. The same results have been found with respect to gifted students. Bucknavage and Worrell (2005) reported on the impact of the high achievement of gifted and talented students and those students who participate in extracurricular activities. Those students who participated in extracurricular activities had higher levels of achievement.

Teacher perception of African American student involvement in extra-curricular activity, thus, may impact teacher perceptions of the academic potential of African American students. If it was shown that teachers have a negative view of African American involvement in extra-curricular activities, this could explain, at least in part, some of the African American underrepresentation in gifted and talented programs.

Expectations of African American Students

College Bound

According to the Digest of Education Statistics, in 2005, 2006 and 2007, 55% of African American students who completed high school enrolled in a two or four-year college (Snyder et al., 2008, pp. 567-568, Table 388). This is quite an increase in the number of African Americans going to college, compared to 1988, when only 45% of African American high school graduates were enrolled in college (Snyder, Dillow, & Hoffman, 1990, p. 366, Table 346). In fact, it has been shown that African American high school seniors are more likely to apply to college than their European American counterparts (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2001, p. 140). One would expect that such improvements in the educational attainment of African Americans would be reflected in positive teacher perceptions of African American educational aspirations.

However, despite these facts, research has shown that European American teachers, on average, do not expect (correctly so) that African American students will enter and complete college at the same rate as European American students (Elhoweris, Mutua, Alsheikh, & Holloway, 2005, p. 29; Matre et al., 2000). Interestingly, these perceptions differ by the race of the teacher; it has been shown that African American teachers anticipate that more of their African American students will go to college, than do European American teachers (Beady & Hansell, 1981).

Teacher perceptions of the academic aspirations of students will likely have an effect on the decision to nominate to the gifted and talented program, since there would

be no value in putting a student that has no plan to further his or her education in gifted and talented. Thus, it is important to understand teachers' perceptions of African American students' educational aspirations.

Academically Talented

Whether a student is seen as being talented may be contingent upon the expectations of the teacher. The 1968 book "*Pygmalion in the Classroom*" popularized the theory that students fulfill teachers' expectations (Jacobson & Rosenthal, 1968). Although not all researchers agree with this point of view (Brophy, 1983), it has been supported by empirical research many times. For example, recently McKown performed a study on 560 children and 30 teachers in California and found that African American children suffer the effects of low teacher expectations markedly more than European American children (McKown & Weinstein, 2002).

Research supporting the claim that some teachers have low expectations of the academic ability of African American students has been available for some time. In 1978, DeMeis and Turner used audiotapes of students along with a picture to assess the effect of race on teachers' perceptions. They found that black students were perceived to have less academic ability (DeMeis & Turner, 1978).

Deficit thinking is negative, stereotypical and prejudicial beliefs about a minority group that results in discriminatory policies, behaviors and/or actions (Ford, Grantham, & Whiting, 2008). According to Ford et al. (2005), deficit thinking is a concept that

contributes to the underrepresentation of African American students to gifted and talented programs. The deficit thinking model identifies the African American student as one who has a deficit due to their genetic make-up, cultural affiliation or the quantity or quality of educational experiences. Educators adhering to this point of view can cause the African American student to be less likely to be recommended for enrollment to gifted and talented programs (Ford et al., 2002).

A comprehensive literature review and meta-analysis was performed by Tenenbaum and Ruck in 2007. They found that teachers have lower expectations for African American students, used less positive speech toward African Americans and gave more referrals to African American students (Tenanbaum & Ruck, 2007). Ferguson asserted that teachers' low expectations of African American students affect their behavior in the classroom and contributes to the perpetuation of the black-white test score gap (Ferguson, 2003, p. 494). This viewpoint is supported by Henfield, Owens and Moore, who suggested that teacher perceptions are a factor that affects student success because they are the gate-keepers of gifted education (Henfield et al., 2008).

The difficulty of preparing future teachers for the multicultural environment they will encounter in the classroom has been discussed by Mary Gomez. She reported that white middle-class prospective teachers took personal experiences from their own suburban upbringing into the classroom and applied them to children unlike themselves, and this lead to the teachers' failure to support the learning and achievement of a heterogeneous student population (Gomez, 1993). Findings on the effect of a teacher's race on teachers' perceptions have also been reported in more recent research that

revealed that African American teachers gave more positive ratings of African American students than their European American counterparts (Pigott & Cowen, 2000).

The reliability of teachers' perceptions and evaluations has been a topic of controversy for some time. In 1959, it was shown that teachers were not able to identify children who had high scores on an IQ test as gifted (Pegnato, 1959). However the validity of the statistical methods used to obtain those results has recently been refuted (Gagne, 1994).

The Approach of This Study

Given the paradigm shift away from the use of testing to identify gifted students and the inclusion of teacher nomination into the process, a greater understanding of the perceptions of teachers is needed. The powerful influence of teacher nomination on the selection of students for the gifted and talented program opens the possibility of bias due to ill-informed personal opinions. Thus, a mechanism which was intended to reduce underrepresentation of African Americans in gifted and talented programs may actually be perpetuating it.

A teacher, consciously or unconsciously, creates an image of a gifted student in his/her mind by forming a list of characteristics of a typical gifted student. Such a formulation may be based on an educational course they have taken, on gifted students or by personal experience in the classroom. When considering a student for nomination to the gifted program, a teacher evaluates the student against this mental checklist and, if

the student meets the teacher's standard of exhibiting enough of these characteristics, then nomination may occur.

This review of the literature has uncovered several areas in which characteristics that have been identified in gifted students that teachers may be using to identify gifted students in their classroom may be grouped. These areas include a strong work ethic, high academic motivation, an aspiration for higher education and, of course, intelligence. In addition, there are factors that affect a student's likelihood of a successful education, such as family poverty, having attended an impoverished school, and gender, which may influence a teacher's decision of whether a student would be successful in a gifted and talented program. Lastly, the school environment in which the teacher works can play a role, particularly with regard to the race, ethnicity and culture of the student. In an atmosphere that embraces only the dominant European culture, a teacher may be less likely to nominate students of color to the gifted and talented program.

This study will evaluate teacher perceptions about their school culture, and whether it is welcoming to students from minority cultures. Also teacher perceptions about the effect of poverty, both at home and at school, and student gender on the likelihood of academic success will be measured. This study will determine whether teachers perceive that African American students have important characteristics typical of gifted students, such as motivation and aspiration. Due to the importance of teacher education the amount of coursework on urban and multicultural education will be determined. Teacher's ethnicity has also been shown to modify a teacher's evaluation of

students. Therefore, this will be recorded to determine its effect on teacher perceptions

of African American students.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The Population

The school district that was selected for this study is located in a large city in the southern part of the United States. The student population, in 2003, was approximately 53,000, of whom 33% were African American students (Office for Civil Rights, 2008, Table 7). As seen in Figure III-1, this area had suffered "white flight" during the previous decade. At the same time, the underrepresentation of minorities in the gifted and talented program in the district remained a problem, since the ratio of the number of students in the gifted and talented programs to the general population for the Hispanic and African American racial/ethnic groups remained less than one (Figure III-2). Since the year 2000, there has been an increase in the percentage of children, between the ages of 5-17, in the school district living in poverty (Figure III-3) (U. S. Census Bureau, 2008).

This district's gifted and talented classes were offered at every grade level in the schools. At the elementary level, there were approximately 23,000 students enrolled in gifted and talented classes, of whom approximately 300 were African American. Additionally, there were approximately 1,300 elementary teachers in the school district, of whom 84 were current third and fourth grade teachers of the gifted and talented.
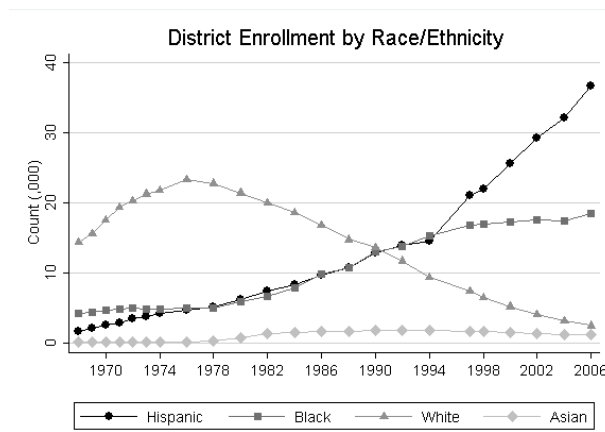
Figure III-1: District Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity
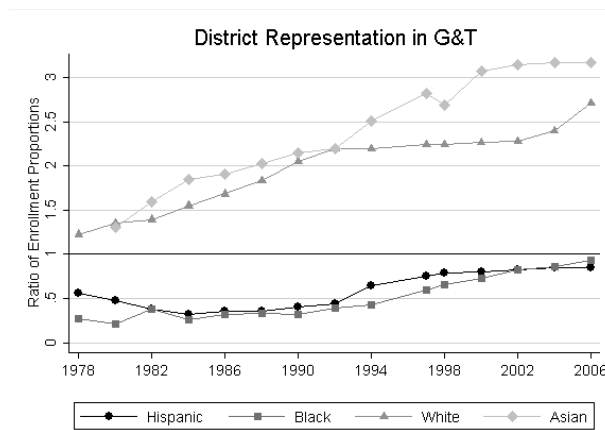

Figure III-2: District G&T Representation by Race/Ethnicity
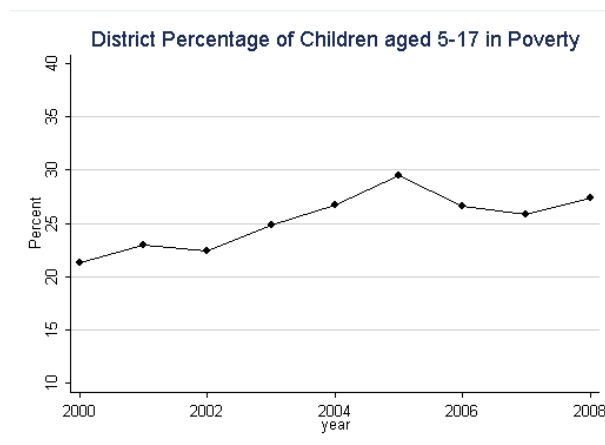
Figure III-3: District Poverty Level

The population selected for this survey was the third and fourth grade gifted and talented teachers from the twenty-eight elementary schools in the selected school district. All the gifted and talented teachers were provided the questionnaire, and the resulting sample consisted of those who completed the questionnaire.

Instrument

The instrument was designed to assess the teacher's perceptions of the factors that may affect enrollment of African American students to the gifted and talented program (see Appendix A for full instrument). As identified in Chapter II, these factors were:

- School culture,

- Social class,

- Gender,

- Motivation, and

- Expectations.

This instrument is a Likert-type perception survey. Each question from the instrument was rated by the respondent on a scale of 1 to 5. The scale corresponds to the following categories:

- 5 = Strongly Agree,

- 4 = Agree,

- 3 = Neither Disagree nor Agree,

- 2 =Disagree, and

- 1 = Strongly Disagree.

Demographic data were requested, including the participants' gender, age, ethnicity, and grade taught. The instrument also asked for participants' responses to questions regarding the number of years they had taught gifted and talented classes, whether the participant had an endorsement in gifted and talented education, and whether the teacher had 30 hours of certification in gifted and talented education. In order to assess whether the cultural needs of the African American student were being addressed, one question asked whether the teacher had been enrolled in a multicultural course and/or an urban course.

The Likert-type questions on the instrument were developed to address five factors: student abilities, student work ethics, academic activities, processing information according to gender and academic support.

- *School Culture* consists of questions: 4, 9, 13, 20 and 23. These questions relate to the teachers' perceptions of the environment at their school, as it relates to African Americans. Some examples include: the openness to African American culture and its inclusion in the curriculum.

- *Social Class* consists of questions 1, 5, 8, 11, and 15. These questions relate to the school's resources and the student's family resources. For example, do teachers perceive that the lack of school resources is a problem, or do teachers perceive that students who are members of lower socio-economic groups perform poorly in academic subjects?

- *Gender* consists of questions 14, 16, 18, 21 and 24. These questions relate to teachers' perceptions of gender issues. Perhaps teachers perceive girls to be less adept at math or badly behaved boys as being less interested in academics.

- *Motivation* consists of questions 3, 7, 12, 19, 22 and 25. These questions relate to teachers' perceptions of the motivation of students. Teachers may evaluate a student's level of motivation by observing the student's work ethic and involvement in extra-curricular activities, and a more motivated child may be deemed more suitable for the gifted and talented program.

Expectations consist of questions 2, 6, 10 and 17. These questions relate to the teachers' perceptions of the aspirations and abilities of African American students.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted with a diverse group of four teachers who were affiliated with gifted and talented students to assess the clarity and effectiveness of the questions in the instrument. These teachers were asked to complete the survey and assess it in terms of content and comprehensibility.

As a result of the pilot study, some aspects of the research instrument were clarified. First, a rearrangement of the Likert 1-5 scale was performed. For example, in order for the participant to complete the survey, the responses strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree, and neither agree nor disagree were arranged in a manner for easier response by the participant.

Procedures

A Texas A&M University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Protocol was completed and approved, which provided permission to conduct the study. After permission was granted by the IRB to conduct the study, a representative, the assistant principal, at each elementary campus was contacted to discuss the research. A thorough discussion about the research was provided. This discussion included details, such as who would complete the survey, when to conduct the survey, the timelines for completing the survey and the procedure for returning the surveys. The representative received a set of surveys that would be completed by the participants. In addition, a timeline was discussed for the completion of the survey.

Accompanying each survey was a cover letter (see Appendix B) which provided detailed information about the purpose of the study and about a consent form for voluntary participation in the study. Surveys were delivered to the representative to distribute to the third and fourth grade gifted and talented teachers for the 2002-2003 academic school years. An envelope was provided for returning the survey to the district's research office.

Two weeks after the distribution of the survey, a postcard was mailed to all participants. This postcard contained either a note of thanks for their participation in the study or a reminder for them to complete and return the survey as soon as possible. In order to encourage full participation, the assistant principal of the third and fourth gifted and talented elementary teachers contacted the remaining teachers about the completion of the surveys.

Data Collection

The representative for each campus (the assistant principal) passed out the surveys to the third and fourth grade elementary teachers at the conclusion of an after school faculty meeting. The teachers were provided an opportunity to complete the surveys. Once the surveys were completed by the teachers, the representative for each school collected the surveys. At the end of the study, the representative compiled the surveys and kept the surveys in one large envelope. The surveys were kept in a secure area in the assistant principal's office. Those teachers who needed additional time to complete the survey were instructed to return the survey to the assistant principal's office upon completion of the survey.

At the end of the two week time span allotted for conducting the research, the assistant principal for each campus received the surveys and the surveys were placed in a large envelope and mailed to the district's research office. All of the completed surveys for all of the elementary schools in the district were collected at the district's research office.

Methodology

This study assessed teachers' perceptions of factors that may have an impact on the nomination of African American students to the gifted and talented program at the third and fourth grade level. More precisely, the study sought to answer 2 questions:

1. **Question One: What are teachers' perceptions of school culture and expectations of African American students? What are the teachers' perceptions, regarding students' motivation, gender, and social class that may affect the selection of African American students to the gifted and talented program?**

    (1) School Culture – Survey Questions 4, 9, 13, 20, 23

    (2) Social Class – Survey Questions 1, 5, 8, 11, 15

    (3) Gender – Survey Questions 14, 16, 18, 21, 24

    (4) Motivation – Survey Questions 3, 7, 12, 19, 22, 25

    (5) Expectations – Survey Questions 2, 6, 10, 17

Research question one was answered by characterizing the responses to the questions in each selected factor. Frequency, mean and standard deviation were used to characterize the results. The calculation of means and standard deviations was performed to determine whether the teachers responded differently to the questions. A mean of one represents a low score and indicates that teachers mostly disagreed with these questions. A mean of three or more is a high score and indicates that the respondents agreed with these questions.

The standard deviation indicated how consistent the responses were to an item. Higher standard deviations indicated that the teachers responded differently from one another for these questions. Low standard deviations indicated that the respondents answered these questions consistently.

2.   **Question Two: Are the teachers' perceptions of these factors related to the**

        ethnicity of the teacher?

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to address research

question two. MANOVA identifies the effects of independent categorical variables on

the multiple continuous dependent variables. In this test, there is an increase in power of

the test and a decrease in the type II error, compared to conducting multiple ANOVAs.

The question responses were used as the dependent variables for MANOVA and the

ethnicity of the teachers was used as the independent variable. An alpha level of 0.05

was used to determine significance.

        The statistical significance of the size of the factor differences due to ethnicity

was gauged by using a Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test for each item. A Wilcoxon-Mann-

Whitney test has a null hypothesis of the two populations being the same and an

alternative hypothesis of the two populations being different. In this study, one

population was the African American teachers and the other population consisted of the

European American teachers. Responses to the Teacher Perceptions of Third and Fourth

Grade African American Students in One Urban School District survey questions were

analyzed using Stata Version 11.0 (StataCorp LP, 2009).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Description of Participants

The survey response rate was 92%, meaning that 92% of the gifted and talented teachers in the participating school district completed the survey, giving a final sample size of 77. Seventy-one of the respondents were female (Figure IV-1). Forty-eight of the respondents were younger than 40 years of age. As Table IV -1 shows, the sample consisted of 51.9% African American and 48.1% European American teachers.

Table IV-2 shows the results of the endorsement, certification, and enrollment in a multicultural or urban course for the teachers (Figure IV -2). Forty-one of the respondents, or 57.7%, had not completed the four university-level classes to receive a gifted and talented endorsement; although seventy-four, or 96.1% had passed the certification exams and completed sufficient professional development to be certified to teach gifted and talented. Forty-eight or 62.3% of the respondents had enrolled in a multicultural course, while only 29.9% had enrolled in an urban course.

More interestingly, these proportions vary somewhat by the ethnicity of the teachers (Table IV -3 and Figure IV -3). Of the African American respondents, 67.5% had completed a multicultural course, but only 56.8% of European American teachers had done so. In regard to urban courses, 37.5% of African American respondents had completed an urban course, but only 21.6% of European American teachers had done so.
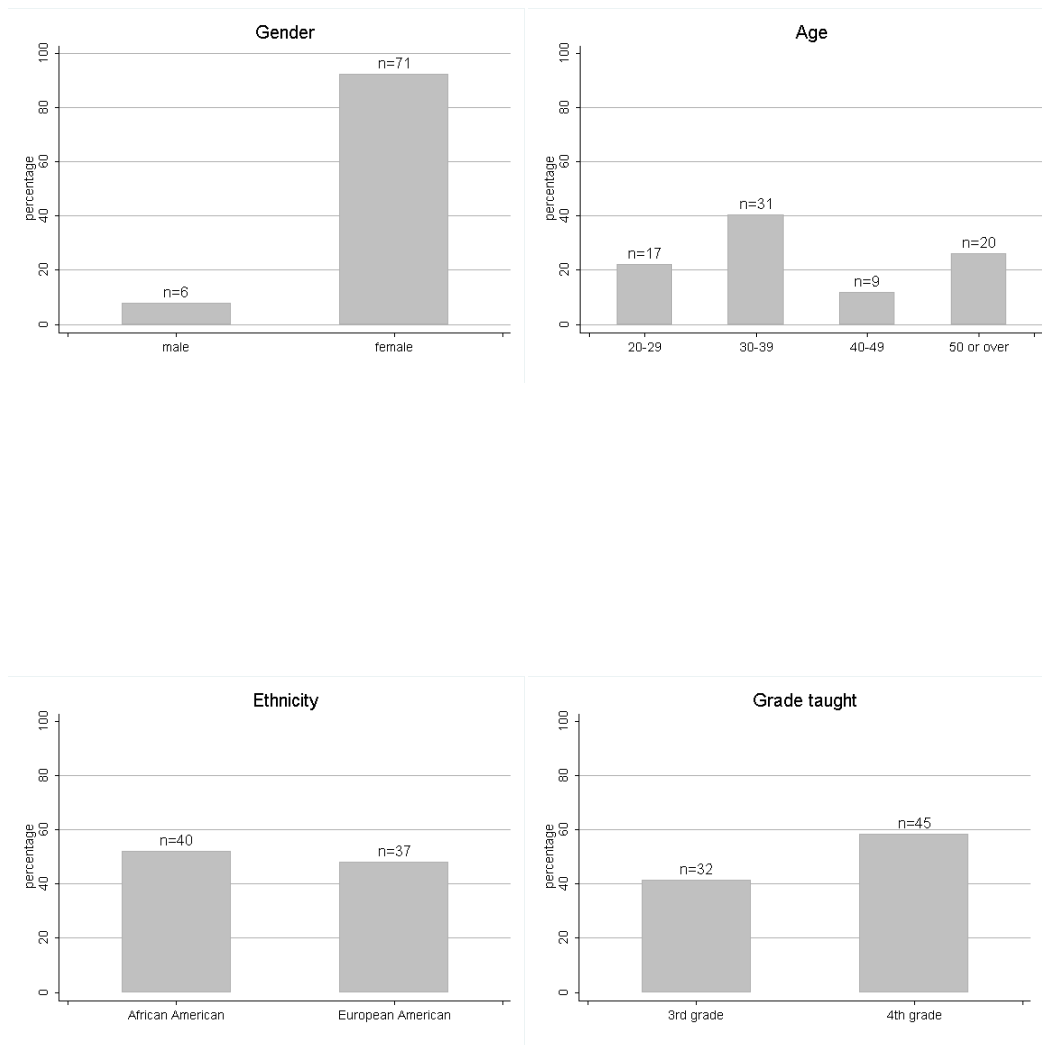
Figure IV-1: Demographics by Gender, Age, Ethnicity and Grade Taught

Table IV -1: Demographics by Gender, Age, Ethnicity, and Grade Taught

N=77	Status of Teacher	Number	Percentage
Ethnicity	African American	40	51.9
	European American	37	48.0
Gender	Male	6	7.8
	Female	71	92.2
Grade Taught	Third	32	41.6
	Fourth	45	58.4
Age	20-29	17	22.1
	30-39	31	40.3
	40-49	9	11.7
	50 or over	20	26.0

Table IV -2: Endorsement, Certification, and Enrollment Status

	Status of Teacher	Number	Percentage
Endorsed	No	41	57.7
N = 71	Yes	30	42.3
G&T Certified	No	3	3.9
N = 77	Yes	74	96.1
Multicultural Course	No	29	37.6
N = 77	Yes	48	62.3
Urban Course	No	54	70.1
N = 77	Yes	23	29.9

Table IV -3: Urban and Multicultural Courses by Ethnicity

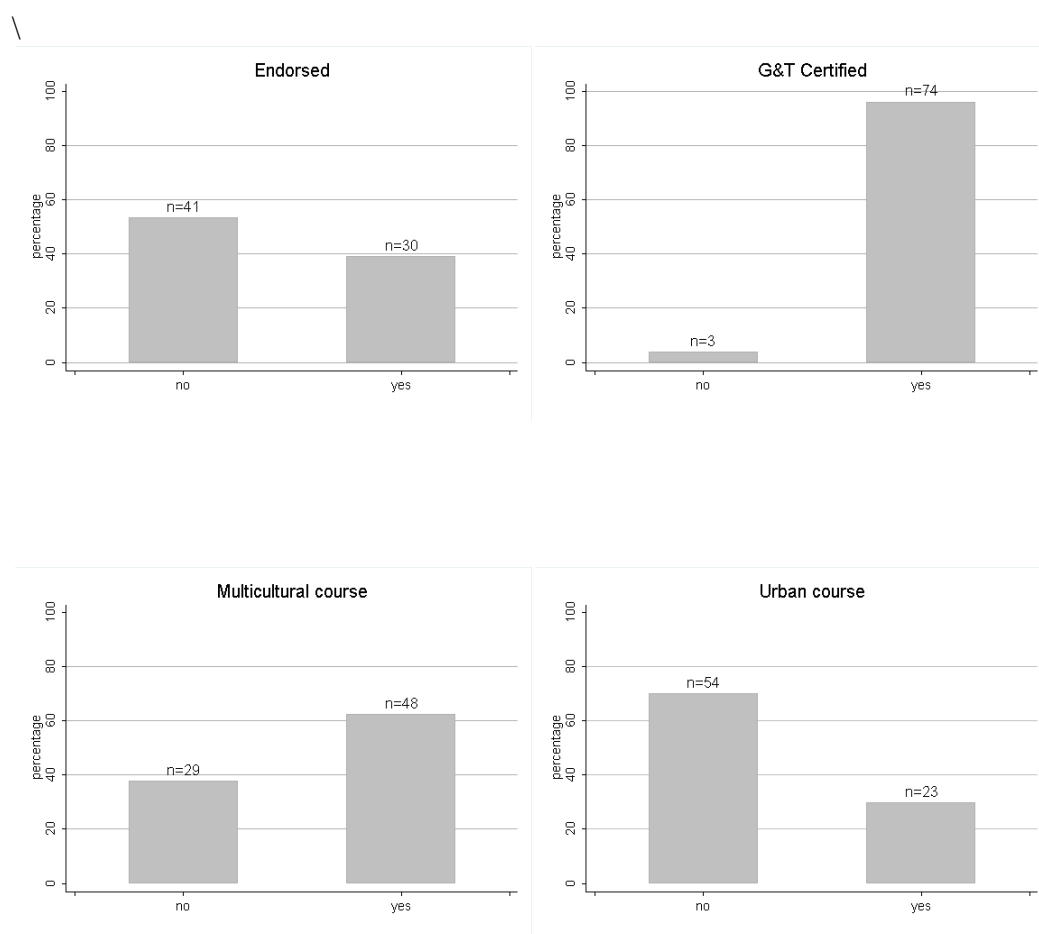| N=77	Status	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
		African American		**European American**	
Neither	No	13	32.5	16	43.2
Urban Only	No	0	0	0	0
Multicultural Only	No	12	30	13	35.1
Both	No	15	37.5	8	21.6

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Figure IV -2: Endorsement, Certification, and Enrollment Status of the Respondents
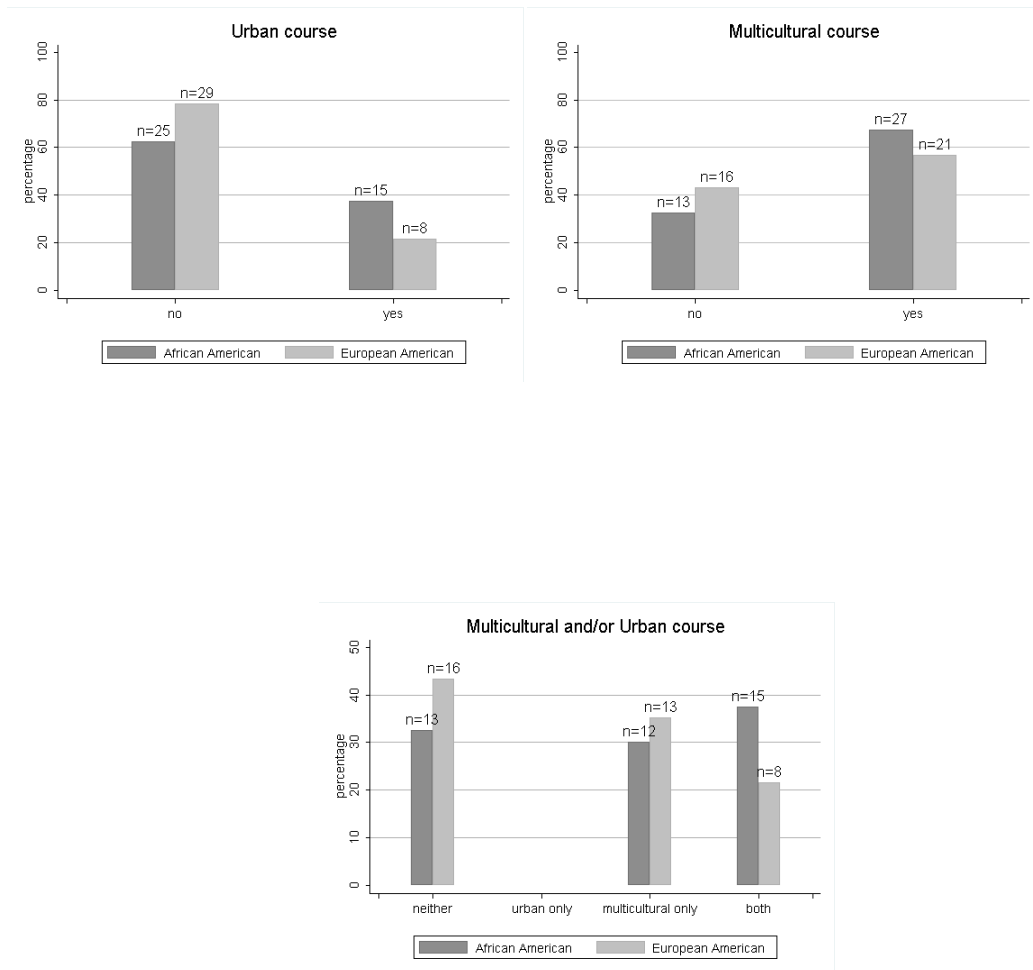
Figure IV -3: Urban and Multicultural Courses by Ethnicity

European American teachers have not completed either of these types of courses, 43.2% versus 32.5%. African American teachers had completed both of these types of courses, 37.5% versus 21.6%.

Description of Responses

Means and standard deviations of the responses were used to represent teachers' responses to the questions. A mean of two or less represents a low score (disagreement with the statement), while a mean of four or greater indicates a high score (agreement with the statement). A mean of three indicates teachers were, on average, neutral about the statement. For example, questions 3, 8 and 12 had a low mean value and this indicates that the teachers mostly disagreed with these questions. However, questions 17, 20 and 22 had a high mean value, indicating that the respondents agreed with these questions.

The standard deviation indicates the consistency of the responses for that question. For example, a question with a high standard deviation indicates that the respondents responded with greater variety. However, a question with a low standard deviation indicates that the respondents answered the question similarly. These results are summarized in the table on page 112.

School Culture

Question 23: I believe our curriculum includes African American content throughout the

year.
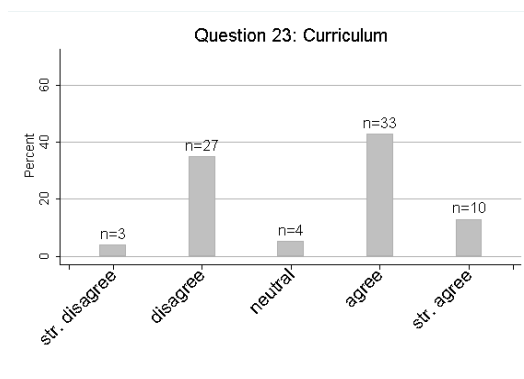
Figure IV -4: Question 23: Curriculum

This question relates to the school environment and the extent to which the

school has integrated multicultural elements into its curriculum. The mean response was

3.3, which is virtually neutral, with a standard deviation of 1.19 (Figure IV -4). While

the majority of the teachers, 56%, agreed that African American content is in the

curriculum throughout the year, a sizeable minority, 39%, disagreed with this statement.

Question 4: The gifted and talented program is not presented in a manner that

encourages African American students to apply for enrollment.
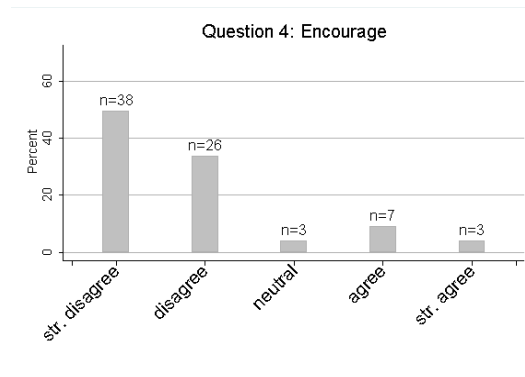
Figure IV -5: Question 4: Encourage

This question relates to the teachers' perceptions of the way that the school presents its gifted and talented program. The mean response was 1.8 and the standard deviation was 1.11 (Figure IV -5), which indicates that, on average, teachers agree that the gifted and talented program is presented in a way that is appealing to African American students.

Question 20: Teachers in my building are prepared to teach African American students.

Figure IV -6: Question 20: Teacher

This question relates to the teachers' perceptions of the skills of their colleagues with respect to teaching the African American student. In other words, the question asks whether the teacher thinks their colleagues are aware of the issues that are particular to teaching African American students. The mean response was 3.7 with a standard deviation of 1.20 (

Figure IV -6), indicating that respondents perceive that other teachers do have the necessary knowledge and skills for teaching African American students.

Question 13: Other teachers in my building do not recognize the talents of my African
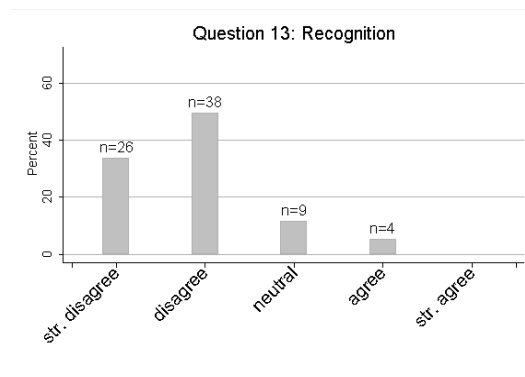
American students.
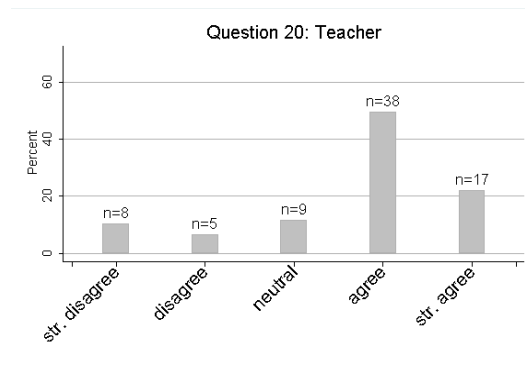

Figure IV -7: Question 13: Recognition

This question relates to the teachers' perceptions of the opinions of their

colleagues with respect to the ability of the African American student. The mean

response was 1.8 with a standard deviation of 0.82 (Figure IV -7), indicating that the

respondents perceive that other teachers can and do recognize giftedness in African

American students.

Question 9: In general, African American parents search for African American teachers

to instruct their children.
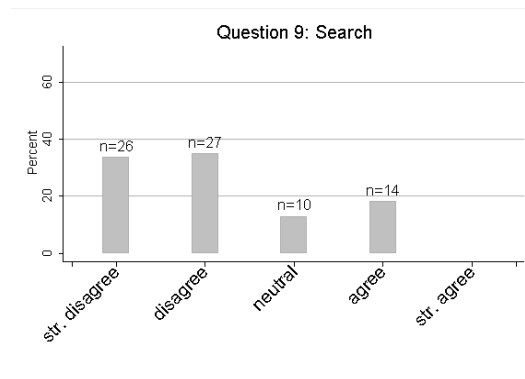
Figure IV -8: Question 9: Search

The responses for this question are provided in Figure IV -8, with 68.83% of the respondents disagreeing with the statement that African American parents seek African American teachers to instruct their children. Of the respondents, 12.99% provided a neutral response and 18.18% of respondents agreed with the statement that African American parents search for African American teachers. However, none of the respondents strongly agreed with this statement.

Social Class

Question 5: I believe that African American students who attend schools lacking supplies and resources weaken African American students' chances for academic success.
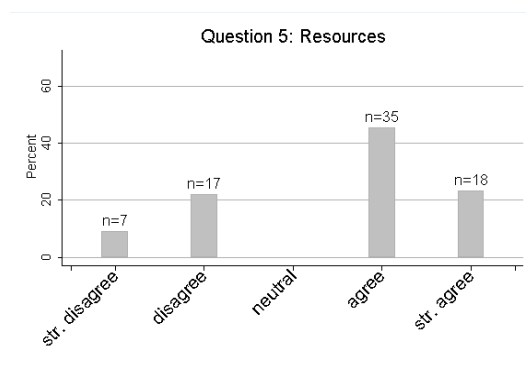
Figure IV -9: Question 5: Resources

This question relates to the effect that teachers perceive a lack of school resources has on African American student success. The mean response was 3.5 and the standard deviation was 1.31 (

Figure IV -9), which indicates that, on average, teachers agree that a lack of school resources weakens students' chances for success. However, the large standard deviation indicates there is a spread of opinion on this issue. Indeed, as seen in

Figure IV -9, there were no teachers who gave a neutral response to this question. To be precise, 68.8% of the respondents agreed that a lack of school resources

weakens chances for student success, while 31% of the respondents disagreed with this statement.

Question 1: I believe poor African American students cannot be as academically successful as middle class students because their families lack resources.
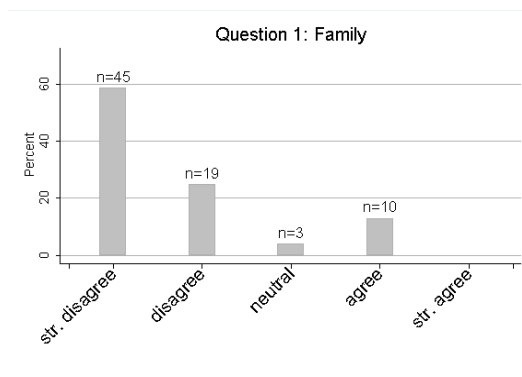
Figure IV -10: Question 1: Family

This question relates to the success of the African American student as a result of the impact of their family's resources. The mean response was 1.7 and the standard deviation was 1.04 (Figure IV -10), which indicates that, on average, teachers perceived that African American students can be as academically successful as middle class students, although their family may have fewer resources.

Question 15: I believe poor African American students usually lack parental involvement.
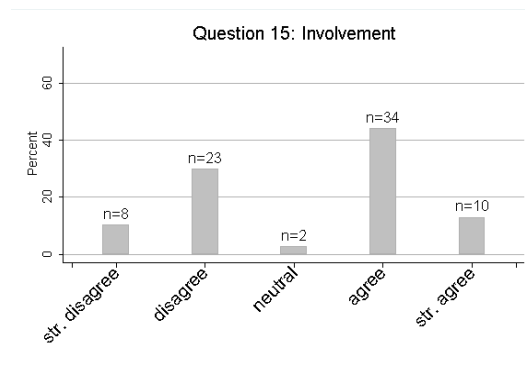
Figure IV -11: Question 15: Involvement

The mean response for this question was 3.2 with a standard deviation of 1.29 (Figure IV -11), indicating that, on average, teachers are mildly in agreement that African American students usually lack parental involvement. Interesting, teachers' responses were rarely neutral on this question: 56% of the teachers agreed and 40% of the teachers disagreed with the statement.

Question 8: I believe poor African American students cannot be as successful as middle class students.
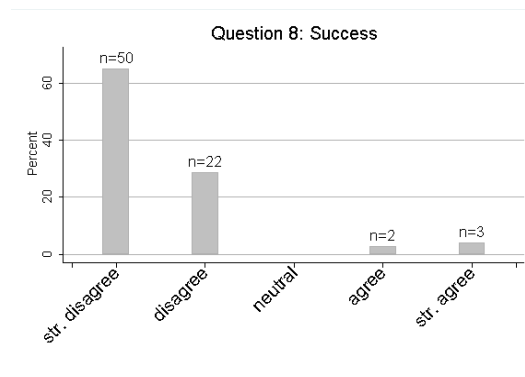
Figure IV -12: Question 8: Success

The mean response to this question is 1.5 and the standard deviation is 0.94 (Figure IV -12), indicating that, on average, teachers perceive that poor African American students can be as successful as middle class students. The relatively small standard error indicates that the respondents were in agreement on this issue.

Question 11: In general, I believe poor African American students lack essential
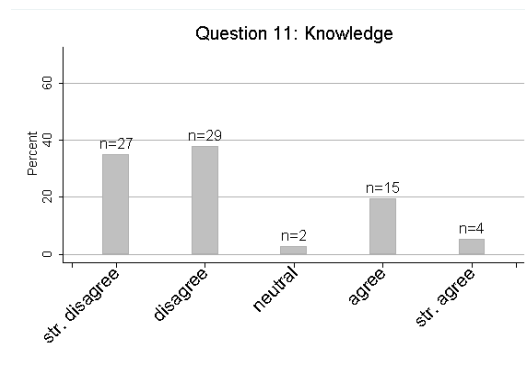
knowledge.

Figure IV-13: Question 11: Knowledge

This question relates to the essential knowledge of the African American student. The mean response was 2.2 and the standard deviation was 1.26 (Figure IV-13). This large standard deviation indicates that the respondents were divided in their opinion on the issue. Fifty-six respondents disagreed with the statement, while only 19 of the respondents agreed. Thus teachers, on average, agree that poor African American students do not lack essential knowledge.

Gender

Question 16: I believe African American girls are more attentive than African American
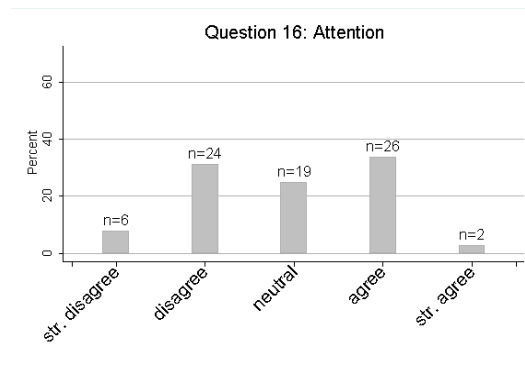
boys.

Figure IV -14: Question 16: Attention

As seen in Figure IV -14, teachers, in general, were divided when comparing the attentiveness of African American boys and girls. While thirty of the teachers agreed with this statement, 28 disagreed, and 25% were neutral. The mean response was 2.9 with a standard deviation of 1.03 (Figure IV -14).

Question 18: I believe African American boys are more vocal than African American girls.
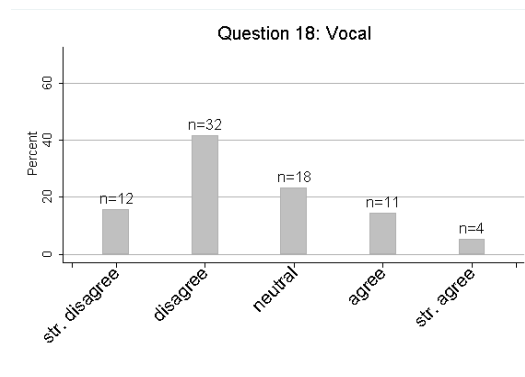
Figure IV -15: Question 18: Vocal

This question compares the amount of vocalization by African American boys and girls. The mean response was 2.5 with a standard deviation of 1.02 (Figure IV -15), indicating that 44 teachers, on average, disagreed with the statement. Thus, there is no evidence that teachers believe African American boys are more vocal than African American girls.

Question 24: I believe African American boys think quicker than African American girls.
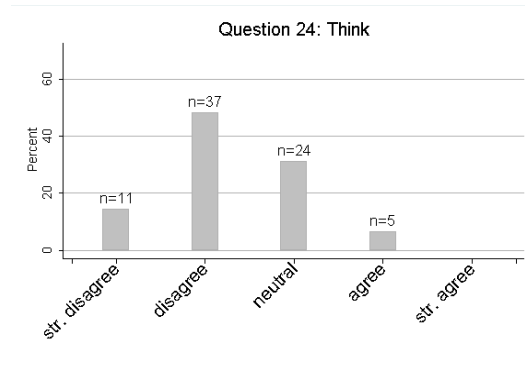
Figure IV -16: Question 24: Think

This question relates to teachers' gender biases regarding the ability of students to think quickly. The respondents clearly disagreed with this statement; the mean response was 2.3 with a relatively small standard deviation of 0.80 (Figure IV -16). In summary, on average, teachers do not think that boys think more quickly than girls.

Question 21: I believe African American boys are more successful in academics than

African American girls.
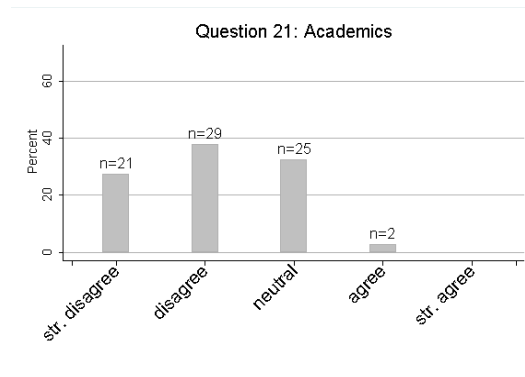
Figure IV -17: Question 21: Academics

This question specifically targets any negative biases the responding teacher may have relating to African American girls. The mean response was 2.1 with a standard deviation of 0.84 (Figure IV -17), indicating that teachers, on average, disagree with the statement, and, therefore, do not have any negative biases with respect to the academic achievement of African American girls.

Question 14: I believe African American boys' behavior deters teachers from effectively teaching them in the classroom.
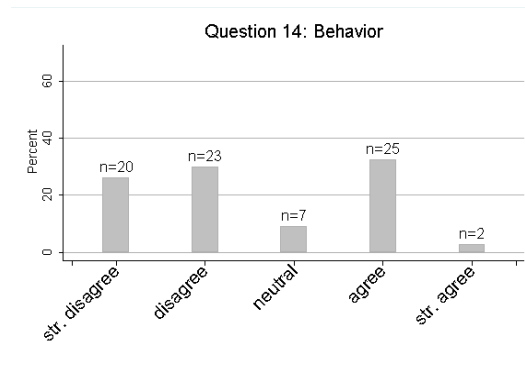
Figure IV -18: Question 14: Behavior

The issue of boys' behavior is a divisive one for teachers; 32% believed that it interfered with a teacher's ability to teach properly, but 54% took the opposing view. The mean response was 2.6 with a standard deviation of 1.26 (Figure IV -18), indicating that the bare majority of teachers agree that African American boys' behavior does not interfere with the teachers' ability to create a learning environment in the classroom.

Motivation

Question 3: I believe that African American students do not apply themselves.
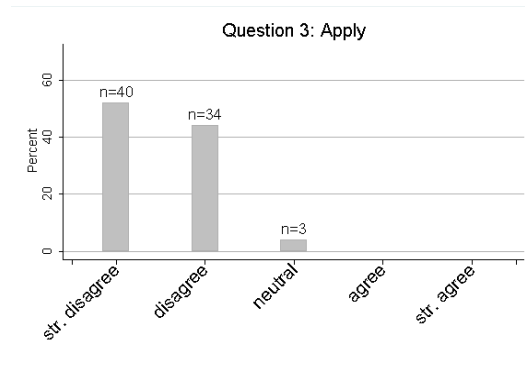
Figure IV -19: Question 3: Apply

This question relates to the perceived effort of the African American student in the classroom. The mean response was 1.5 and the standard deviation was 0.58 (Figure IV -19), which indicates that, on average, teachers perceive that African American students are applying themselves at the third grade and fourth grade levels. The relatively small standard deviation indicates that most of the teachers share a common view on this issue.

Question 7: My African American students do not want to work hard.
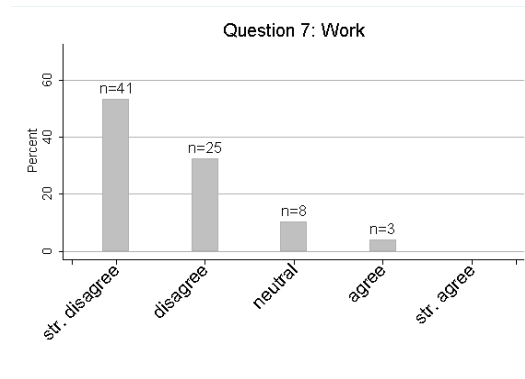
Figure IV -20: Question 7: Work

The mean response to this question was 1.6 and the standard deviation was 0.82

(Figure IV -20), which indicates that, on average, teachers perceive that African

American students do not avoid hard work.

Question 19: It is a challenge for my African American students to stay on task.
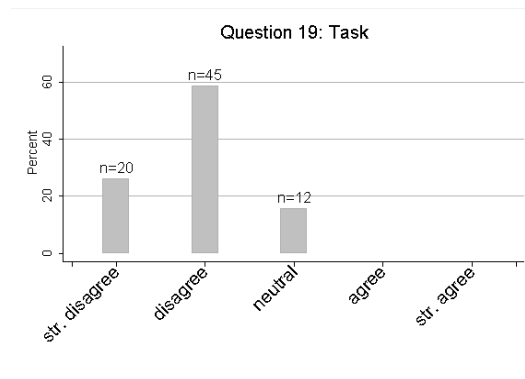
Figure IV -21: Question 19: Task

The strong level of disagreement with this question indicates that teachers perceive African American students can stay on task. The mean response was 1.9 with a standard deviation of 0.65 (Figure IV -21).

Question 12: In general, African American students in my building do not want to be enrolled in the gifted and talented classes.
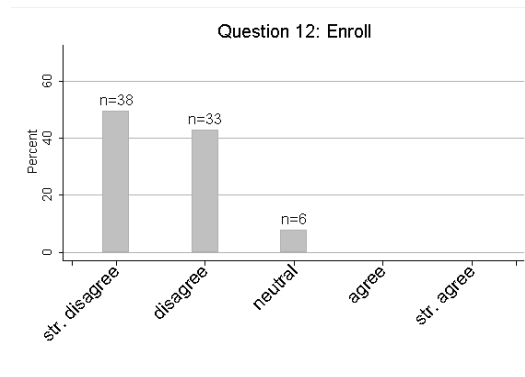
Figure IV -22: Question 12: Enroll

The mean response for this question was 1.6 with a standard deviation of 0.63 (Figure IV -22), indicating that 71 teachers strongly agree that African American students want to enroll in gifted and talented classes. The small standard deviation shows that teachers do not vary much in their opinion on this issue.

Question 25: I believe African American students do not participate in enrichment activities outside the classroom.
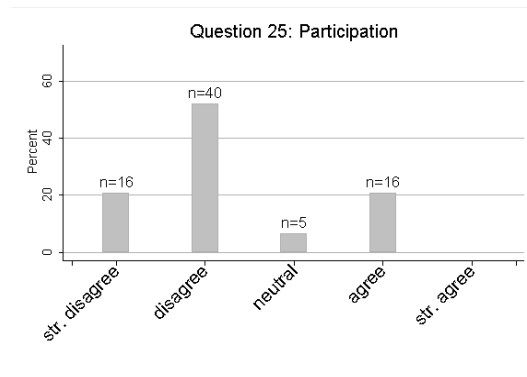
Figure IV -23: Question 25: Participation

This question relates to the teachers' perceptions of the level of involvement that African American students have with school. Involvement in enrichment activities is a good indicator of engagement with the school and is considered by many to be a characteristic of a motivated student. The mean response was 2.3 with a standard deviation of 1.02 (Figure IV -23). Thus, there is overall disagreement with the statement, and Figure IV -23 shows that few teachers are divided on this matter. While 52% of teachers think that African American students are involved in extracurricular activity, 21% do not.

Question 22: My African American students have high attendance rates.
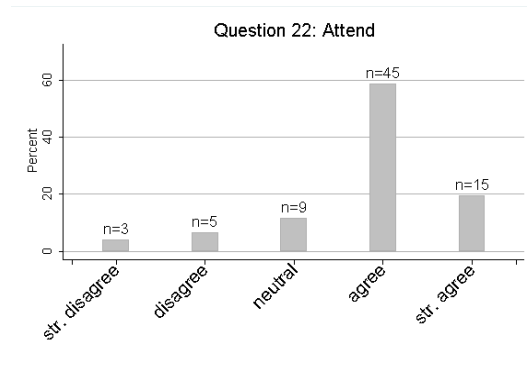
Figure IV -24: Question 22: Attend

This question asks whether the respondent perceives that African American students, on average, attend school regularly. The mean response was 3.8 with a standard deviation of 0.95 (Figure IV -24), indicating that teachers believe that African American students at the third and fourth grade level have no particular problems with attendance, in general.

Expectations

Question 10: My African American students need to be challenged more.
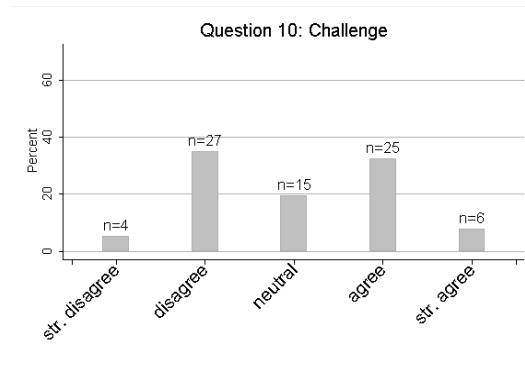
Figure IV -25: Question 10: Challenge

Respondents were divided in their opinions of whether African American students need more challenging work. The mean response was 3.0 and the standard deviation was 1.10 (Figure IV -25). Thirty-one of the respondents agree and 31 of the respondents disagree, with a substantial minority (20%) remaining neutral.

Question 6: In general, African American parents believe their children are gifted in the arts and not in academic subjects.
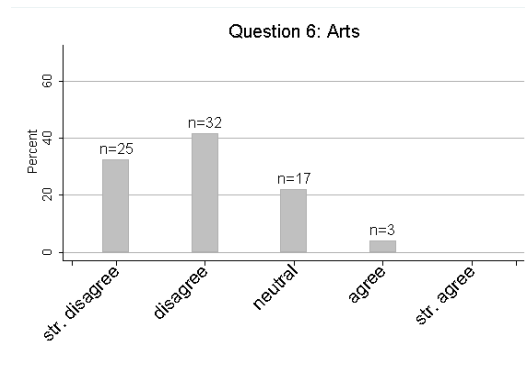
Figure IV -26: Question 6: Arts

This question relates to teachers' perceptions of the parents' capability to judge the abilities of their children. The mean response was 2.0 and the standard deviation was 0.84 (Figure IV -26), which indicates that, on average, teachers disagree with this statement. That is, they do not perceive that African American parents think their children are only gifted in the arts.

Question 17: I believe most African American students should attend a 4-year college.
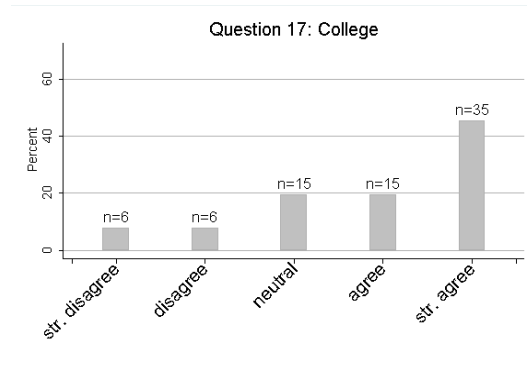
Figure IV -27: Question 17: College

This question probes the teacher's perception of African American students' educational goals. The mean response for this question was 3.9 with a standard deviation of 1.29 (Figure IV -27), indicating that survey respondents agreed that most African American students should or could attend a 4-year college.

Question 2: In general, my African American students appear to be headed to a 2-year college.
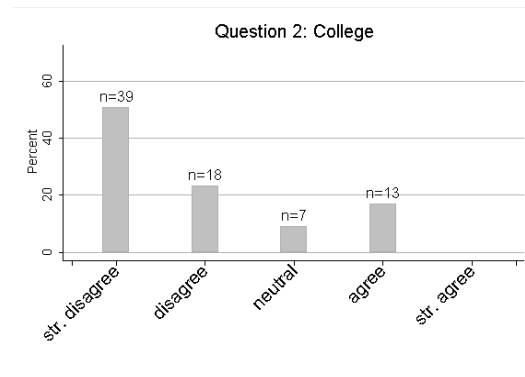
Figure IV-28: Question 2: College

This question relates to the perceived future educational goals of the African American student. The mean response was 1.9 and the standard deviation was 1.13 (Figure IV-28), which indicates that, on average, teachers perceived that African American students are not preparing to attend a 2-year college, which may be because they expect students to attend a four-year institution or not attend college at all.

To further examine the responses to Questions 2 and 17, the responses were re-categorized into three groups: disagree, neutral and agree. Out of the nine possible categories, responses were only in six of the categories.
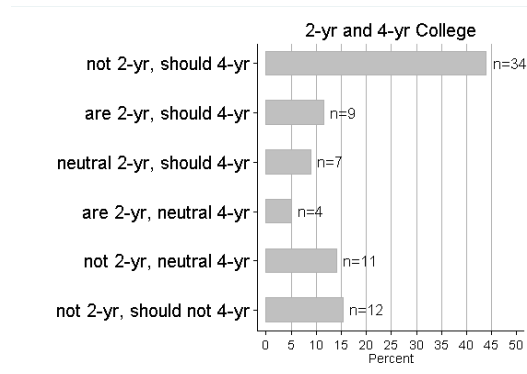
Figure IV-29: Questions 2 and 17: College

Figure IV-29 shows this compilation of the answers to questions 2 and 17. The responses indicate that all 12 respondents who agreed that African Americans shouldn't go to a 4-year college also agreed that African Americans do not appear to be headed to a 2 year college. This could be interpreted to mean that 16% of the respondents perceived that African Americans should not or will not attend either type of college. More optimistically, 50 of the 77 (65%) respondents perceived that African Americans should or will attend a 4-year college, regardless of the teacher's current perception of the student's direction with respect to a 2-year college.

A summary of the results of each question is shown in Table IV-4.

Table IV-4: Response Distribution and Descriptive Statistics[a]

Survey Question Number and Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Standard Dev.	Median
1 – Academic success limited by family lack of resources	58.44	24.68	3.90	12.99	0.00	1.71	1.04	1
2-Afr. Americans attend 2-year college	50.65	23.38	9.09	16.88	0.00	1.92	1.13	1
3- Afr. Americans do not apply themselves	51.95	44.16	3.90	0.00	0.00	1.52	0.58	1
4- Gifted talented programs do not encourage enroll	49.35	33.77	3.90	9.09	3.90	1.84	1.11	2
5 – Academic success limited by school lack of resources	9.09	22.08	0.00	45.45	23.38	3.52	1.31	4
6- Parents think children gifted in arts, not in academics	32.47	41.56	22.08	3.90	0.00	1.97	0.84	2
7- Afr. American students do not want to work hard	53.25	32.47	10.39	3.90	0.00	1.65	0.82	1
8-Poor Afr. Am. students not as successful as middle class students	64.94	28.57	0.00	2.60	3.90	1.52	0.94	1
9-Afr. American parents search for Afr. Am. teachers	33.77	35.06	12.99	18.18	0.00	2.16	1.09	2
10- Afr. American students need to be challenged more	5.19	35.06	19.48	32.47	7.79	3.03	1.10	3
11- In general, I believe poor Afr. Am. students lack essential knowledge	35.06	37.66	2.60	19.48	5.19	2.22	1.26	2
12 Afr. Am. Stud. in my building do not want to enroll in GT classes	49.35	42.86	7.79	0.00	0.00	1.58	0.64	2
13- Other teachers do not recognize the talents Afr. Am. students	33.77	49.35	11.69	5.19	0.00	1.88	0.81	2
14- Afr. Am. boys' behavior deters teachers from effectively teaching	25.97	29.87	9.09	32.47	2.60	2.56	1.26	2
15- Poor Afr. American students usually lack parental involvement.	10.39	29.87	2.60	44.16	12.99	3.19	1.29	4
16- Afr. American girls are more attentive than Afr. American boys	7.79	31.17	24.68	33.77	2.60	2.92	1.04	3
17- Most Afr. American students should attend a 4-year college	7.79	7.79	19.48	19.48	45.45	3.87	1.29	4
18- Afr. American boys are more vocal than Afr. American girls	15.58	41.56	23.38	14.29	5.19	2.52	1.08	2
19- Challenge for my Afr. American students to stay on task	25.97	58.44	15.58	0.00	0.00	1.90	0.64	2
20- Teachers in building are prepared to teach Afr. Am. students	10.39	6.49	11.69	49.35	22.08	3.66	1.20	4
21- Afr. Am boys more successful in academics than Afr. Am. girls.	27.27	37.66	32.47	2.60	0.00	2.10	0.84	2
22- My Afr. American students have high attendance rates.	3.90	6.49	11.69	58.44	19.48	3.83	0.95	4
23- I believe curriculum includes Afr. Am. content throughout year	3.90	35.06	5.19	42.86	12.99	3.26	1.19	4
24- Afr. American boys think quicker than Afr. American girls	14.29	48.05	31.17	6.49	0.00	2.30	0.80	2
25- Afr Am students do not participate enrichment act. outside classroom	20.78	51.95	6.49	20.78	0.00	2.27	1.02	2

Complete Survey Responses N = 77. [a] Rating may not sum to 100 because of rounding imprecision.

Research Question One

What are teachers' perceptions of school culture and expectations of African

American students? What are the teachers' perceptions regarding students'

motivation, gender, and social class that may affect the selection of African American

students to the gifted and talented program?

School Culture

Table IV-5: School Culture: Descriptive Statistics

Survey Question Number and Statement	Mean	Standard Dev.	Median
23- I believe curriculum includes Afr. Am. content throughout yr.	3.26	1.19	4
4- Gifted talented programs do not encourage enrollment	1.84	1.11	2
20-Teachers in building prepared to teach Afr. Am. students	3.66	1.20	4
13- Other teachers do not recognize the talents Afr. Am. Students	1.88	0.81	2
9- Afr. Am. parents search for Afr. Am. Teachers	2.16	1.09	2
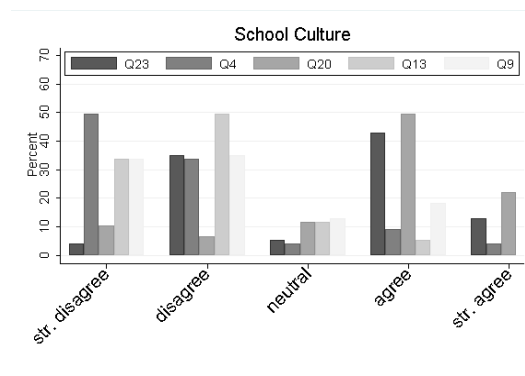
Figure IV-30: School Culture

Responses to these questions show that, on average, teachers perceive the gifted and talented program is presented in a way that appeals to African American students, that other teachers do recognize the talents of their students, that other teachers are adequately prepared to teach African American students and that the curriculum includes African American content throughout the year (Table IV-5, Figure IV-30). Also, teachers do not perceive that parents search for African American teachers to teach their children. In general, then, teachers perceive that their school culture is inclusive of African American students and teachers would, on average, agree with these statements regarding African American students in the third and fourth grade:

- The gifted and talented program *is* presented in a manner that encourages African American students to enroll.

- Our curriculum *does* include African American content throughout the year.

- African American parents *do not* search for African American teachers to instruct their children.

- Teachers *do* recognize the talents of African American students.

- Teachers a*re* adequately prepared to teach African American students.

Social Class

Table IV-6: Social Class: Descriptive Statistics

Survey Question Number and Statement	Mean	Standard Dev.	Median
5 – Academic success limited by school lack of resources	3.52	1.31	4
1 – Academic success limited by family lack of resources	1.71	1.04	1
15- Poor students lack parental involvement	3.19	1.29	4
8-Poor Afr. Am. students not as successful as middle class students	1.52	0.94	1
11- Poor students lack essential knowledge	2.22	1.26	2
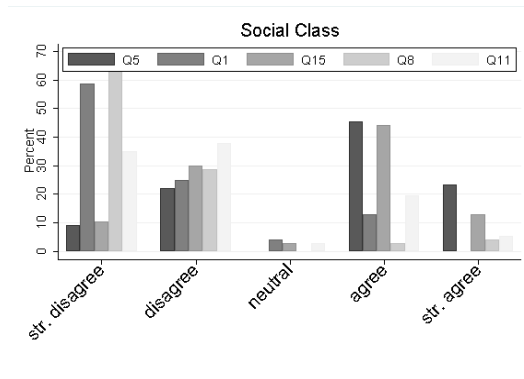
Figure IV-31: Social Class

Teachers perceive that, on average, a lack of family resources does not limit student

success, but that a lack of school resources does limit student success (

Table IV-6, Figure IV-31). Also, they perceived that poor African American students do

not lack essential knowledge but that they do lack parental involvement. Thus, on

average, teachers would agree with the following statements regarding African

American students in the third and fourth grade:

- Lack of family resources *does not* limit African American student success.

- Lack of school resources *does* limit African American student success.

- Poor African American students *do not* lack essential knowledge.

- Poor African American students *do* lack parental involvement.

Gender

Table IV-7: Gender: Descriptive Statistics

Survey Question Number and Statement	Mean	Standard Dev.	Median
16- Afr. Am. girls are more attentive than Afr. Am. boys	2.92	1.04	3
18- Afr. American boys are more vocal than African Am. girls	2.52	1.08	2
24- Afr. American boys think quicker than Afr. Am. girls	2.30	0.80	2
21- Afr. American boys more successful in academic than girls	2.10	0.84	2
14- Afr. Am. boys' behavior deters teachers from effective teaching	2.56	1.26	2
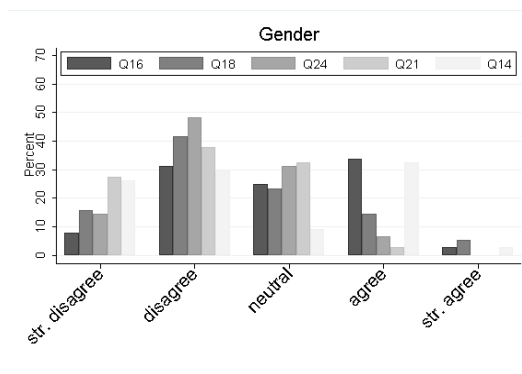
Figure IV-32: Gender

Teachers disagreed with or were neutral for all these statements, except that girls are more attentive than boys (Table IV-7, Figure IV-32). Thus, teachers do not show, on average, any gender bias in these respects, and they would agree with the following statements regarding African American students in the third and fourth grade:

- The behavior of African American boys *does not* deter effective teaching.

- African American boys *are not* more vocal than girls.

- African American boys *are not* more successful in academics than girls.

- African American boys *do not* think more quickly than girls.

Motivation

Table IV-8: Motivation: Descriptive Statistics

Survey Question Number and Statement	Mean	Standard Dev.	Median
3- Afr. American students do not apply themselves	1.52	0.58	1
7- Afr. Am. students do not want to work hard	1.65	0.82	1
19 – Challenge for my Afr. Am. students to stay on task	1.90	0.64	2
12- Afr. American students do not want to enroll in GT classes	1.58	0.64	2
25 – Afr. Am. students do not participate outside classroom	2.27	1.02	2
22- My Afr. Am. students have high attendance rates	3.83	0.95	4
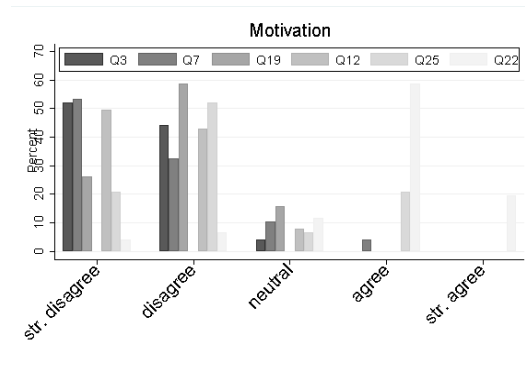
Figure IV-33: Motivation

The responses indicated that the survey participants perceived African American students as being very motivated (Table IV-8, Figure IV-33). Thus, on average, teachers would agree that African American students in the third and fourth grade:

- *do* work hard, apply themselves and stay on task;

- *do* have high attendance rates;

- *do* participate in enrichment activities outside the classroom; and

- *do* want to be enrolled in the gifted and talented program.

Expectations

Table IV-9: Expectations: Descriptive Statistics

Survey Question Number and Statement	Mean	Standard Dev.	Median
10- Afr. American students need to be challenged more	3.03	1.10	3
6- Afr. Am. parents think children gifted in arts, not in academics	1.97	0.84	2
17- Most Afr. American students should attend a 4-year college	3.87	1.29	4
2 – Afr. Americans headed towards 2-year college	1.92	1.13	1
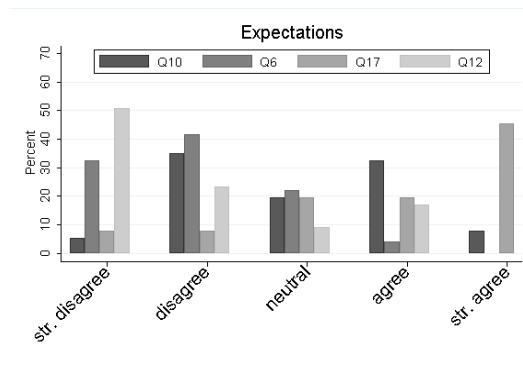
Figure IV-34: Expectations

Although teachers were on average neutral on the issue of students needing to be challenged more, they have, over all, positive expectations for their African American students (Table IV-9, Figure IV-34). Thus, teachers on average, agree with the following statements regarding African American students in the third and fourth grade:

- African American students *are not* only headed for two-year colleges but also they *should* attend four-year colleges.

- African American parents *do not* think their children are gifted only in the arts and not in academics.

In summary, the findings on research question one are:

- Teachers perceive their school cultural environment is conducive to providing African American students with a quality education.

- Teachers, on average, perceive that poverty is not a barrier to academic success and poor African American students have adequate knowledge for academic success.

- On the other hand, lack of school resources does limit academic success and African American students lack parental involvement in their academics.

- Teachers perceive that African American boys are not more vocal, are not more successful and do not think more quickly than girls. Their behavior does not deter effective teaching.

- Teachers perceive African American students as being highly motivated at school.

- Teachers perceive that African American students are not just headed towards a two-year college and should attend a four-year college. But they are neutral regarding the issue of African American students needing to be challenged more.

Research Question Two

Are teachers' perceptions of these factors related to the ethnicity of the teacher?

A MANOVA was conducted using the ethnicity of the teacher as the independent variable and the question responses as the dependent variables. The results show that

there was a significant difference between the responses of African American and

European American teachers, since the *p*-value was less than 0.05 (Table IV-10).

Table IV-10: MANOVA for Ethnicity

Ethnicity Effect	Ethnicity degrees-of-freedom	Error degrees-of-freedom	F test statistic	*p*-value
Pillai's Trace	103.83	1	0.9807	0.000
Hotelling's	103.83	1	50.8958	0.000
Wilks' Lambda	103.83	1	0.0193	0.000
Roy's	103.83	1	50.8958	0.000

Given the MANOVA revealed a significant difference in the responses by

ethnicity, it is desirable to identify the questions with different responses. This can be

addressed by looking at the results for the Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test for each

question; if the *p*-value was less than 0.05, then the populations were different. If, in

addition, the means and medians were different, then there is a significant difference in

the teacher responses, on average.

Table IV-11 shows the median and mean rating for the two ethnic groups and the

responses in percentages for each question based upon the ethnicity of the respondent.

Table IV-11: Response Distribution and Descriptive Statistics by Ethnicity[a]

Survey	African American							European American						
Question	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Median	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Median
1	60.0	15.0	7.5	17.5	0.0	4.1	1	56.8	35.1	0.0	8.1	0.0	4.4	1
2	50.0	20.0	5.0	25.0	0.0	3.9	1	51.4	27.0	13.5	8.1	0.0	4.2	1
3	47.5	52.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.4	2	56.8	35.1	8.1	0.0	0.0	4.4	1
4	55.0	30.0	7.5	0.0	7.5	4.2	1	43.2	37.8	0.0	18.9	0.0	4.0	2
5	0.0	12.5	0.0	52.5	35.0	1.9	4	18.9	32.4	0.0	37.8	10.8	3.1	2
6	45.0	40.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	4.3	2	18.9	43.2	29.7	8.1	0.0	3.7	2
7	55.0	30.0	7.5	7.5	0.0	4.3	1	51.4	35.1	13.5	0.0	0.0	4.3	1
8	57.5	30.0	0.0	5.0	7.5	4.2	1	72.9	27.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.7	1
9	32.5	42.5	7.5	17.5	0.0	2.1	2	35.1	27.0	18.9	18.9	0.0	2.2	2
10	10.0	12.5	12.5	50.0	15.0	3.4	4	0.0	59.4	27.0	13.5	0.0	2.5	2
11	55.0	32.5	0.0	12.5	0.0	4.3	1	13.5	43.2	5.4	27.0	10.8	3.2	2
12	67.5	25.0	7.5	0.0	0.0	4.6	1	29.7	62.2	8.1	0.0	0.0	4.2	2
13	47.5	40.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	4.3	2	18.9	59.4	10.8	10.8	0.0	3.8	2
14	25.0	15.0	7.5	47.5	5.0	3.0	4	27.0	45.9	10.8	16.2	0.0	3.8	2
15	12.5	35.0	5.0	40.0	7.5	3.0	3	8.1	24.3	0.0	48.6	18.9	2.5	4
16	15.0	15.0	27.5	37.5	5.0	3.0	3	0.0	48.6	21.6	29.7	0.0	2.8	3
17	10.0	0.0	25.0	7.5	57.5	4.0	5	5.4	16.2	13.5	32.4	32.4	3.7	4
18	20.0	22.5	30.0	17.5	10.0	2.7	3	10.8	62.2	16.2	10.8	0.0	2.2	2
19	42.5	42.5	15.0	0.0	0.0	4.2	2	8.1	75.7	16.2	0.0	0.0	3.9	2
20	17.5	7.5	15.0	37.5	22.5	3.4	4	2.7	5.4	8.1	62.2	21.6	3.9	4
21	25.0	27.5	47.5	0.0	0.0	3.7	2	29.7	48.6	16.2	5.4	0.0	4.0	2
22	7.5	7.5	17.5	47.5	20.0	3.6	4	0.0	5.4	5.4	70.3	18.9	4.0	4
23	7.5	37.5	0.0	30.0	25.0	2.7	4	0.0	32.4	10.8	56.8	0.0	2.7	4
24	15.0	35.0	42.5	7.5	0.0	3.5	2	13.5	62.2	18.9	5.4	0.0	3.8	2
25	32.5	55.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	4.0	2	8.1	48.6	13.5	29.7	0.0	3.3	2

Complete Survey Responses N = 77. [a] Rating may not sum to 100 because of rounding imprecision.

School Culture

Table IV-12: School Culture, Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney Test by Ethnicity

Question	African American			European American			
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Med.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Med.	*p*-value
23- Curriculum includes Afr. Am. content throughout year	3.28	1.40	4	3.24	0.93	4	0.68
4- Gifted talented programs do not encourage enrollment	1.75	1.13	1	1.95	1.10	2	0.33
20-Teachers in building prepared to teach Afr. Am. Students	3.40	1.39	4	3.95	0.88	4	0.11
13- Other teachers do not recognize talents Afr. Am. students	1.65	0.70	2	2.13	0.86	2	0.01
9- Afr. Am. parents search for Afr. Am. teachers	2.10	1.06	2	2.22	1.13	2	0.70
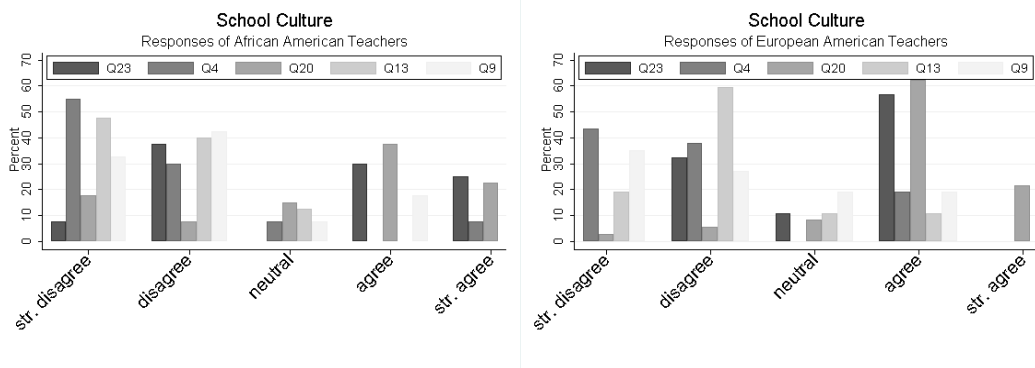
Figure IV-35: School Culture Responses by Ethnicity

Significant evidence of a difference in responses was found in only one of the questions on school culture, question 13, which states that other teachers do not recognize the talents of my African American students (Table IV-12, Figure IV-35). However, the medians of the responses for African American and European American teachers are the same, indicating that both groups disagree with the statement. Thus, the difference is only in the distribution of the responses about the median. The smaller

standard deviation for African American teachers' responses indicates that their

responses were more similar to one another, compared to their European American

counterparts.

African American and European American teachers agreed that the gifted and

talented program was presented in an appealing way for African American students,

African American content was present in the curriculum throughout the year, African

American parents do not seek out African American teachers and other teachers in their

building are prepared to teach African American students.

Social Class

Table IV-13 : Social Class, Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney Test by Ethnicity

Question	African American			European American			
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Med.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Med.	*p-* value
5 – Academic success limited by school lack of resources	4.10	0.93	4	2.89	1.39	2	0.00
1 – Academic success limited by family lack of resources	1.83	1.17	1	1.59	0.86	1	0.75
15- Poor Afr. Am. students lack parental involvement	2.95	1.26	3	3.46	1.28	4	0.07
8-Poor Afr. Am. students not as successful as middle class students	1.75	1.19	1	1.27	0.45	1	0.09
11- Poor Afr. Am. students lack essential knowledge	1.70	0.99	1	2.78	1.29	2	0.00
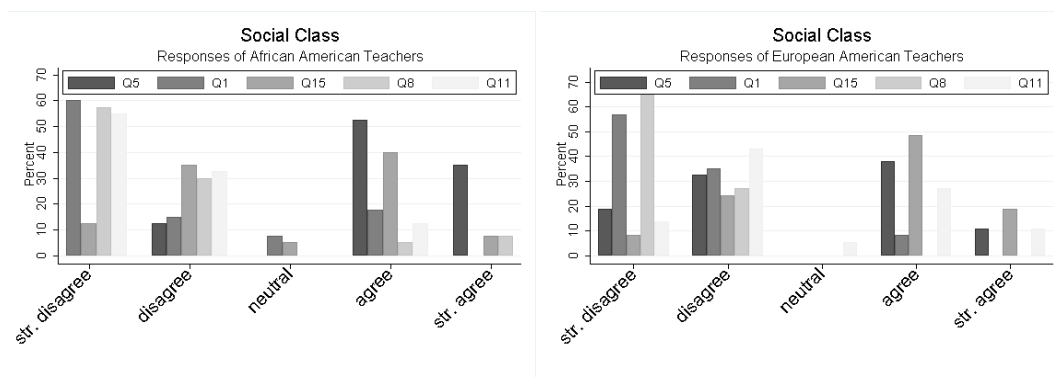
Figure IV-36: Social Class Responses by Ethnicity

Both African American and European American teachers agree, on average, that a lack of family resources does not affect student success, poor African American students can be as successful as middle class students, and both groups of teachers are relatively neutral on the subject of whether African American students lack parental involvement (Table IV-13, Figure IV-36). The responses indicate a significant difference between the two groups, but not a difference in the direction of the responses, as follows:

- African American teachers strongly agree, while European American teachers only mildly agree, that African American students have essential knowledge.

For one question on social class was there a difference in the direction of the opinion between African American and European American teachers:

- African American teachers strongly agree, while European American teachers mildly disagree, that students attending schools lacking resources will have less opportunity for academic success.

Gender

Table IV-14: Gender, Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney Test by Ethnicity

	African American			European American			
Question	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**Med.**	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**Med.**	**_p-_value**
16- Afr. Am. girls are more attentive than Afr. Am. Boys	3.02	1.17	3	2.81	0.88	3	0.27
18- Afr. American boys are more vocal than African Am. Girls	2.75	1.26	3	2.27	0.80	2	0.07
24- Afr. American boys think quicker than Afr. Am. girls	2.42	0.84	2.5	2.16	0.73	2	0.10
21- Afr. American boys more successful in academic than girls	2.23	0.83	2	1.97	0.83	2	0.12
14- Afr. Am. boys' behavior deters teachers from effective teaching	2.92	1.37	4	2.16	1.01	2	0.02
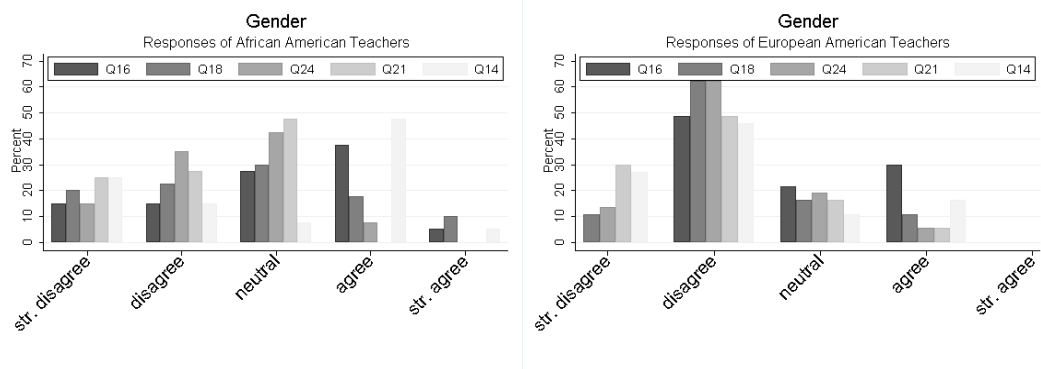
Figure IV-37: Gender Responses by Ethnicity

On average, African American and European American teachers disagreed with the following statements concerning African American boys and girls: boys think quicker than girls, girls are more attentive than boys, boys are more vocal than girls, and boys are more successful at academics than girls (Table IV-14, Figure IV-37).

- European American teachers disagreed, while African American teachers were more divided on the issue, that African American boys' behavior does deter effective teaching.

Motivation

Table IV-15: Motivation, Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney Test by Ethnicity

Question	African American			European American			
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Med.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Med.	*p*-value
3- Afr. American students do not apply themselves	1.53	0.51	2	1.51	0.65	1	0.67
7- Afr. Am. students do not want to work hard	1.68	0.92	1	1.62	0.72	1	0.91
19 – Challenge for my Afr. Am. students to stay on task	1.73	0.72	2	2.08	0.49	2	0.01
12- Afr. American students do not want to enroll in G&T classes	1.40	0.63	1	1.78	0.58	2	0.00
25 – Afr. Am. students do not participate outside classroom	1.93	0.92	2	2.65	1.01	2	0.00
22- Afr. Am. students have high attendance rates	3.65	1.12	4	4.03	0.69	4	0.15
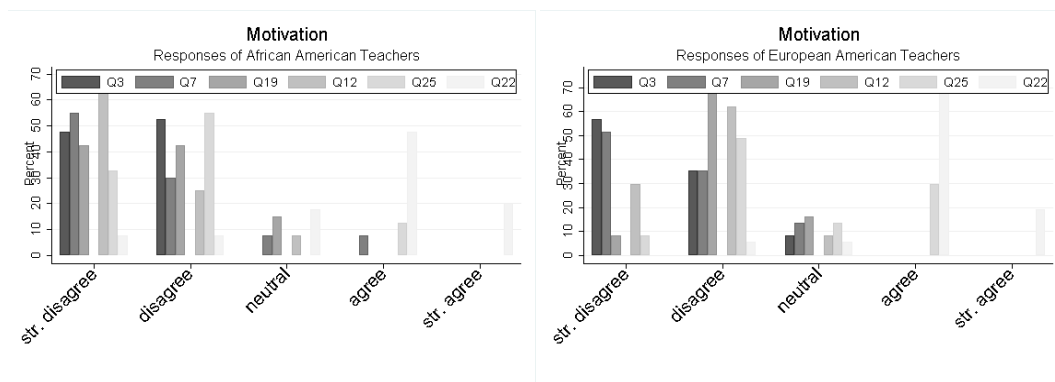
Figure IV-38: Motivation Responses by Ethnicity

On average, both African American and European American teachers agreed that African American students in the third and fourth grades have high attendance rates, want to apply themselves and want to work hard (Table IV-15, Figure IV-38). For two questions where there were significant differences in responses, there was no difference in the median, thus the test is detecting a difference in the distribution of the responses and not the central value of the responses. These two questions were: African American students stay on task and are involved in enrichment activities. The teachers agreed with these statements. The most significant finding on motivation was the following:

- African American teachers agreed more strongly than European American teachers that African American students do want to be enrolled in gifted and talented classes.

Expectations

Table IV-16: Expectations, Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney Test by Ethnicity

| Question | African American | | | European American | | | |
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Med.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Med.	p-value
10- Afr. American students need to be challenged more	3.48	1.20	4	2.54	0.73	2	0.00
6- Afr. Am. Parents think children gifted in arts, not in academics	1.70	0.72	2	2.27	0.87	2	0.00
17- Most Afr. American students should attend a 4-year college	4.03	1.33	5	3.70	1.24	4	0.13
2 – Afr. Americans headed towards 2-year college	2.05	1.26	1.5	1.78	0.98	1	0.51
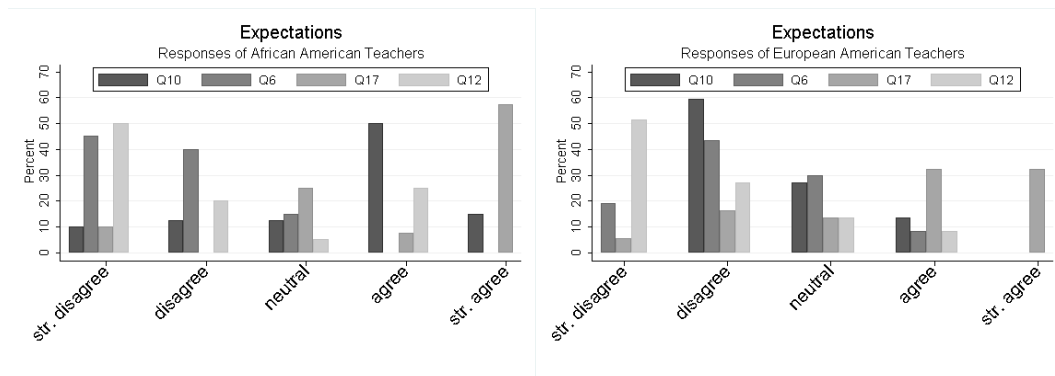
Figure IV-39: Expectations Responses by Ethnicity

There was a significant difference in the distribution, but no difference in the median, of the responses to the statement that African American parents think their children are only gifted in the arts, and not gifted academically. Both groups of teachers disagreed with that statement.
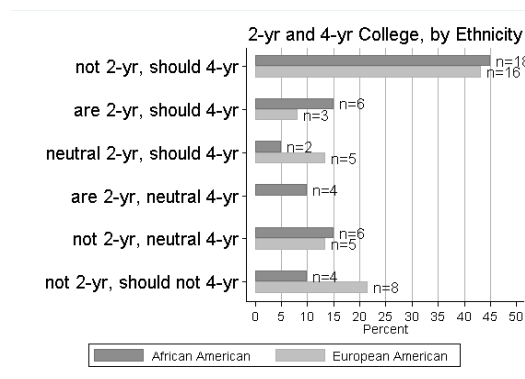
Figure IV-40: Questions 2 and 17 by Ethnicity

Figure IV-40 shows a compilation of the responses to Questions 2 and 17 by ethnicity. Although European Americans respondents outnumbered African Americans respondents by a factor of two-to-one, amongst those who perceived that African Americans should not go to college, a Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test showed no evidence of a statistically significant difference in the responses by ethnicity (*p-*

value=0.51). Thus, it cannot be inferred to the population that there is a difference along ethnic lines in teachers' perceptions of African Americans two-year and four-year college attendance.

Both African American and European American teachers agreed, on average, that African American students are not just headed towards enrolling in a two-year college, but should aim towards attending a four-year college (Table IV-16, Figure IV-39). A significant difference in the directionality of the opinion of African American and European American teachers was found on one question concerning teachers' expectations:

- African American teachers agreed that African American students need to be challenged more, whereas European American teachers disagreed with this statement.

In summary, the findings for the second research question were:

- African American teachers strongly agree, while European American teachers only mildly agree, that African American students have essential knowledge.

- European American teachers agreed, while African American teachers were neutral on the issue, that African American boys' behavior does not deter effective teaching.

- African American teachers agreed more strongly than European American teachers that African American students do want to be enrolled in gifted and talented classes.

On two questions there was a difference in the direction of the opinion held:

- African American teachers strongly agree, while European American teachers mildly disagree, that students attending schools lacking resources will have less opportunity for academic success.

- African American teachers agreed that African American students need to be challenged more, whereas European American teachers disagreed with this statement.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Results

The purposes of this study were to record, document and explore the perceptions of teachers about the factors relating to the selection process of African American students to the third and fourth grade gifted and talented programs. The study sought to determine:

1. what are teachers' perceptions of school culture and expectations of African American students? What are the teachers' perceptions regarding students' motivation, gender, and social class that may affect the selection of African American students to the gifted and talented program?

2. whether the teachers' perceptions of the factors are related to the ethnicity of the teacher.

Approximately 33% of the students enrolled in the urban school district selected for the study were African American, while the percentage of African American students enrolled in gifted and talented in 2003, was only 28%. This gives an underrepresentation ratio for African Americans of 0.85. However, compared to national averages, this school district's underrepresentation problem is not severe since most states have an underrepresentation nearing 0.50. Furthermore, there has been a significant improvement since 1984, when the ratio was just 0.26 (Office for Civil Rights, 2008). Thus, it can be

expected that the results of the study will reveal that the district's teachers hold positive perceptions of African American students.

Most of the respondents, 71, in this population were female, which is consistent with gender proportions of teachers in public schools, where 79% of teachers, in 2001, were females (Snyder et al., 2009, p. 104, Table 69). Respondents were also, for the most part, younger than 40 years of age, which is younger than expected, since the median age of teachers, nationally, is 46 (Snyder et al., 2009, p. 104, Table 69). It was somewhat unexpected that the sample consisted of 51.9% African American and 48.1% European American teachers. Figures from the Digest of Education Statistics indicate that, in 2003, the majority of elementary teachers were European American, 57.8%, and only 17.7% were African American (Snyder et al., 2009, p. 161, Table 101).

Overall, teachers perceived their school culture is inclusive of African American students and teachers would, on average, agree the gifted and talented program is presented in a manner that encourages African American students to enroll, and the curriculum does include African American content throughout the year. European American teachers agreed that other teachers recognize the talents of African American students, while African American teachers agreed with this statement more strongly.

On average, teachers perceived that a lack of family resources does not limit student success. However, when the effect of school resources is considered, African American teachers strongly agreed, while European American teachers mildly disagreed, that African American students attending schools lacking resources will have less opportunity for academic success. In addition, African American teachers strongly

disagreed, while European American teachers only mildly disagreed, that poor African American students lack essential knowledge.

In general, teachers disagreed with all the gender difference statements. However European American teachers disagreed, while African American teachers were more divided on the issue that African American boys' behavior does deter effective teaching. Thus, teachers did not show, on the whole, any gender bias in terms of their behavioral or academic perceptions of students.

Teachers were in agreement that third and fourth grade African American students are motivated about their academics. African American teachers agreed more strongly than their European American counterparts that African American students do want to be enrolled in gifted and talented classes. Both groups of teachers agreed that African American students can stay on task, and African American students do participate in enrichment activities outside the classroom. Thus, overall, teachers agreed that African American students show motivation at school.

Both African American and European American teachers agreed that African American students are not just headed towards enrolling at a two-year college and should aim to attend a four-year college. They also disagreed that African American parents think their children are only gifted in the arts, and not gifted academically. However, a significant difference in opinion was found on the issue of students being challenged: African American teachers agreed that African American students need to be challenged more, whereas European American teachers mildly disagreed with that statement.

Some questions were seen as being divisive, in that teachers either agreed or disagreed, with very few having a neutral point of view. Seventy percent of respondents agreed that a lack of school resources impedes academic success, but the other 30% disagreed, with no respondents remaining neutral on the issue. Seventy two percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement that African American students lack essential knowledge, but the other 25% agreed, and just 3% of the respondents were neutral on the issue. Fifty seven percent of the respondents agreed that poor African American students lack parent involvement, but the other 40% disagreed and only 3% of the respondents were neutral on the issue.

There were two issues in which there was a significant difference in the directionality of opinion between African American and European American teachers: African American teachers strongly agreed, while European American teachers mildly disagreed, attending a school lacking in supplies or resources will weaken an African American student's chance for academic success. Also, African American teachers agreed African American students need to be challenged more, whereas European American teachers disagreed with this statement.

School Culture

In general, teachers perceived that their school culture is inclusive of African American students. Teachers reported that the gifted program was presented in a way that encourages African American students to apply, and that other teachers do recognize

the talents of African American students. According to Harris et al. (2004), such a positive learning environment may include culturally appropriate learning styles that can lead to increased student motivation and success and may be part of the improvements seen in the underrepresentation of African American in gifted and talented in this school district.

It was also found that teachers on average believe that African American parents do not seek African American teachers to instruct their children. This finding is in accordance with Thompson (2003, p. 85) who asserts that, for the most part, African American parents' interests are geared towards finding teachers who care about their children and can help them learn and get an adequate education, as opposed to specifically finding an African American teacher.

Responding teachers perception that the curriculum contains African American content throughout the year and that the gifted and talented program is presented in a manner that encourages African American enrollment into the program, is, according to Bernal (2002), likely to have a positive effect on African American representation in gifted and talented: "to establish a foundation for ethnic diversity in the gifted and talented program, the gifted and talented curriculum must become multicultural, else the program may unwittingly become an instrument of acculturation for the children on non-dominant ethnic groups" (p. 85). These positive teacher perceptions may have contributed towards the improvement in representation of African American students in the gifted and talented program in the urban school district studied observed in the last ten years.

The teachers' perception that other teachers are prepared to teach African American students is somewhat at odds with the enrollment numbers for multicultural and urban education reported by the respondents: only 35% of the teachers had taken courses in multicultural or urban education. Thus, their belief that teachers are adequately prepared may be based on teaching experience rather than education. In other words, they believe other teachers are adequately prepared to teach African American students because those other teachers have had many years experience teaching a diverse group of students, rather than because they know those other teachers have had multicultural education or are incorporating the main principles of high-quality multicultural education in their classrooms. Another possibility is that African American teachers may believe they do not need education on racial issues since they have experienced it personally. However, it may be that teachers believe that no specific education on cultural responsive teaching is necessary or that the courses they have completed in regard to this subject were not helpful. Gay and Kirkland (2003) have observed that pre-service teachers avoid engaging in discussions of racial issues in education in their courses, but, when pressed, they express opinions that indicate lack of understanding of the importance of racial and cultural issues in education today. For example, a common teacher attitude of "treating all students the same regardless of who they are" shows a lack of appreciation of variation within the student body. Such a lack of awareness of multicultural issues in schools may be a contributing factor to the underrepresentation of African American students in the gifted and talented program in this school district.

Social Class

On the whole, teachers perceived that a lack of family resources does not necessarily limit African American student success. But this finding is contrary to the results of an extensive meta-analysis conducted by Baron, Tom and Cooper (1983, pp. 263-264), which found that teachers have higher expectations of middle-class students than lower-class students. This ignores the fact that children living below the poverty line have, on average, lower scores in reading and math than those above the poverty line (Snyder et al., 2009, Table 114). This misconception may lead a teacher to fail to provide the support that would benefit a student belonging to a lower socio-economic group. On the other hand, this viewpoint may be beneficial in that a teacher would not perceive that a student's economic status is a barrier to gifted and talented.

Teachers disagreed, African American more strongly so, that poor African American students usually lack essential knowledge. This is at odds with the claim of Callahan (2005) that there is a strong (yet erroneous) belief that most minority children are so lacking in prerequisite basic skills or abilities that the development of gifted behaviors is highly unlikely. This positive teacher perception, that these students have the appropriate foundation on which to build their basic education during the elementary school years, may have positive impact on the nomination of poor African Americans to the gifted and talented program.

Teachers mildly agreed that poor African American students usually lack parental involvement. This response may be the result of teachers having a preference

for more parental involvement. On the other hand, this response may simply be the teachers' perception of the fact of the matter rather than a reflection of their desire for more parental involvement. Lareau and Horvat (1999) reported that some teachers are resistant to the involvement of African American parents in school. They found that while teachers believed they enthusiastically welcomed parental involvement, in reality they accepted only a narrow band of parents with acceptable behaviors, such as, being supportive, empathetic and deferential. Due to the historical legacy of discrimination against African Americans in education, many African American parents approach the school with open criticism (Lareau & Horvat, 1999, p. 43). Since parental involvement is linked to student success (Epstein, 1987), this teacher viewpoint on African American parental involvement may give rise to some bias against poor African American students' nomination to gifted and talented programs. Another explanation for the lack of African American parental involvement may be that poverty is more often felt by African American families. When African American families experience poverty, they are less likely to be able to visit the schools due to working longer hours or having working commitments that are less flexible.

The African American respondents agreed strongly that lack of school resources impedes student academic success. This perception is in agreement with the arguments presented by researchers, who stressed the importance of having a school facility that is conducive to creating a positive and safe learning environment (Glass, 1991; Waxman & Padron, 1995). However, the European American respondents mildly disagreed with this statement. This may be because more of the European American teachers, when students

themselves, attended well funded suburban schools, and therefore are personally unaware of the detriment to learning that an impoverished environment can inflict, as suggested by Gomez (1993).

Gender

In general, teachers disagreed with all the gender difference statements, except in one instance: European American teachers disagreed, while African American teachers were more divided, that African American boys' behavior deters effective teaching. The literature on the difficulties boys encounter in the education system is extensive (Herrstein & Murray, 1994). For example, African American boys have been documented as having more referrals than girls (Martin et al., 2007). Thus it would be expected that teachers report some difficulties with African American boys in the classroom. It may be speculated that some European American teachers did not want to acknowledge the existence of these problems with African Americans boys in their classrooms, as a difficulty with dealing with them may be equated with being a poor teacher. Or, instead of "telling it like it is", teachers felt some obligation to expound a politically correct view that they perceive they should advocate. In any case, the results of this study supply no evidence that gender bias contributes to an explanation for underrepresentation of African American students in gifted education.

Motivation

On the topic of student motivation, teachers were in agreement that third and fourth grade African American students are motivated. The teachers perceive African American students have high attendance rates, apply themselves and want to work hard. They agreed that African American students do want to be enrolled in gifted and talented classes, can stay on task and do participate in enrichment activities outside the classroom. This finding agrees with results obtained by Cokley (2003, p. 553) that African American students do not lack academic motivation and their self-esteem and academic self-concept is not lower than their European American counterparts. High motivation is a characteristic of a gifted child (Colangelo & Davis, 2002; Glass, 2004). So, according to these results, teachers' perception of the motivation of African American students is not an explanation for the underrepresentation of African Americans in gifted education. This positive and accurate teacher perception may actually be part of the reason why the school district studied has a higher representation of African Americans in gifted and talented than would be expected, according to national averages.

Expectations

On average, teachers had high expectations of their African American students. They agreed that African American students seek to attend a four-year college. In 2006, when the population was approximately 75% European American, 12% African

American, 15% Hispanic and 4% Asian (Center for Disease Control, 2009), the proportion of the population obtaining Associate Degrees was: 67.5% European American, 12.6% African American, 11.7% Hispanic and 5.1% Asian. The proportions of those obtaining bachelors degrees were: 75% European American, 10% African American, 7.8% Hispanic and 7.2% Asian (Snyder et al., 2009, Tables 281, 285). Thus, teacher perceptions that African American students should go on to college are in alignment with the fact that African American students are just as likely to go to college as their European American counterparts.

However, the lack of statistically significant evidence of a difference between the opinion of African American and European American teachers on the college-bound issue is somewhat at odds with past research. It has been shown that European American teachers do not expect that African American students will enter and complete college at the same rate as European American students (Elhoweris et al., 2005, p. 29; Matre et al., 2000). The positive finding of this study may result from teachers having a high proportion of African American colleagues in this school district, so they have firsthand knowledge of African Americans who have been successful in college. This may, in turn, be part of the process that has been behind the improvement in the representation of African Americans in the gifted and talented program in this school district.

There was one area of disagreement between the African American and European American teachers: The African American respondents agreed that African American students need to be challenged more, but European American respondents mildly disagreed. These findings are in accordance with the finding that African

American teachers have more positive ratings of all students (Pigott & Cowen, 2000). This negative perception of European American teachers agrees with reports in the literature of teachers' low expectations of African American students. According to Tennanbaum and Ruck (2007), teachers use less positive speech towards African American students. Thus, the European American teachers' perceptions that African American students do not need more challenging work may be evidence of deficit thinking, which would agree with the assertion that deficit thinking may be a factor contributing to bias against African Americans in nominations to the gifted and talented program (Ford et al., 2002). On the other hand, this difference in perceptions between African American teachers and European American teachers may be due to African American teachers wanting to drive African American students to a higher performance level since they understand the challenges that an African American must overcome in order to be successful in the educational system.

Final Conclusion

This study is the first one on the subject of teachers' perceptions of African American students in an urban school district with a relatively high representation of African American students in the gifted and talented program at the third and fourth grade levels. The results reveal that third and fourth grade teachers, on average, perceive their school environment is conducive to the effective education of African American students which could explain the relatively high representation in this district, although this perception could be a symptom of the teachers' lack of awareness of multicultural

issues in education. The teachers see that African American students are highly motivated at school, and they have high expectations of their African American students, which could be the result of the high number of African American teachers in this district.

In addition, teachers perceive that having a low income background will not impede the academic success of an African American student, which is contrary to the fact that students in general who are in poverty have lower reading and math scores and are less likely to attend college. While this perception reveals that teachers are not biased against low income students with respect to gifted and talented nominations, it also reveals that they do not recognize the damage that poverty causes and, as a result, poor students may not be receiving the additional support they need to ameliorate the effects of poverty on their education. On average, teachers agree that poor African American students do not lack essential knowledge and the teachers indicated there is no gender bias in their perceptions of African American students. These findings of positive teacher perceptions of African American students may explain why this school district has a higher representation of African American students in its gifted and talented program than would be expected, in comparison to national averages.

However, although the study results, in general, presented a positive picture, there were some negative findings: African American teachers strongly agreed, while European American teachers mildly disagreed, that students attending schools lacking resources will have less opportunity for academic success. Furthermore, European American teachers disagreed that African American students need to be challenged

more, while African American teachers agreed that African American students need to be challenged more. This response may be due to African American teachers understanding of the significance of African American students benefiting from the challenging work that is required for African Americans to succeed. These viewpoints may impact nominations of African American students to gifted and talented programs by European American teachers, because of their lower expectations of African American students (Ford et al., 2002).

The study also found that one-third of the teachers in the sample had not received education in urban or multicultural education. This raises the possibility that the teachers' positive perception of a culturally accepting school environment being based more on personal experience than an understanding of the effects of multiculturalism in schools and the need for culturally responsive teaching. This lack of education may also contribute to the underrepresentation of African Americans in the gifted and talented program as some teachers may be unaware of culturally different language and behavior and, therefore, may be more likely to interpret African American students' language and/or behavior negatively (Boykin, 1994; Ford & Harmon, 2001).

Implications for Current Practice

The results of this empirical study show the improvement in African American representation in gifted and talented programs that results from positive teacher perceptions of African Americans. These positive teacher perceptions may be due, at

least in part, to the high proportion of African American teachers in the school district studied. Thus, these results suggest a possible link between an increased proportion of African American teachers, positive teacher perceptions of African American students and an improvement in African American representation in gifted and talented programs. Educational public policy should strive towards increasing the proportion of African American teachers in the U.S. This can be achieved by changing the standardized tests used for certification of teachers, which are biased (Branch, 2001) against minority cultures, and create recruitment plans that are used by universities to attract African American students to their education programs.

The results of this study also reveal the need for increased levels of multicultural and urban courses as a standard part of pre-service teacher education. Quality instruction in these areas can contribute towards a greater understanding among teachers of the effect of culture in the classroom, thereby reducing the tendency shown to exist amongst teachers to form low expectations of African American students (Tenanbaum & Ruck, 2007). This indulgence in deficit thinking needs to be addressed by an aggressive intervention prior to prospective teachers entering the classroom and potentially propagating the detrimental effects of low teacher expectations on another generation of African American students (Jacobson & Rosenthal, 1968).

Increased levels of multicultural and urban education among teachers can also help teachers understand how to interact with African American and other students of color parents in a positive and constructive manner (Lareau & Horvat, 1999). This is an important step in creating a school environment, which encourages parental school

involvement and, thereby, allows African American students to more readily enjoy the benefits of parental involvement in their academics.

The lack of understanding of the detrimental effect on student success of inadequate school resources (Piccigallo, 1989) among European American teachers can also be addressed by increased levels of education on urban issues. Since more African American students attend urban schools and urban schools typically lack the resources found in suburban and majority-white schools, it is essential to combat racial ignorance by enhancing the understanding among European American teachers of the impact of lack of school resources and the realities of education in an impoverished urban school.

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations were identified:

1. Only teachers who had taught third and fourth grade gifted and talented classes participated in this study therefore inferences can only be made regarding third and fourth grade teachers of gifted and talented students.

2. The instrument only asked if the teacher had completed a multicultural and/or urban course. This did not allow the study to identify the different effects of different types of education for example, pre-service compared to staff development.

3.   The school district used in the study did not exhibit severe

underrepresentation in their gifted and talented program, which may have

limited the study's ability to identify the causes of underrepresentation.

Future Research

The impact of the results from this study could be strengthened by repeating the

study in a school district with a greater underrepresentation of African American

students in the gifted and talented program. It would be advantageous to have a wider

sample of teachers who nominate students to gifted and talented programs. This would

allow for a more comprehensive examination of teacher perceptions regarding the

nomination of African American students to the gifted and talented program.

In addition, obtaining more information regarding the level of education of the

participants, with respect to multicultural, urban, gifted and talented education, pre-

service, and staff development, would enable researchers to determine whether different

types of teacher education have beneficial effects on teachers' perceptions of African

American students. Given the beneficial positive effects of teachers' perceptions that

have been found in this study, an underrepresentation of African American students in

the gifted and talented program remains. Further research is needed into the possible

causes of the problem of underrepresentation. For example, culture bias, which has been

identified in the achievement tests for giftedness, may be a possible cause of the

underrepresentation of African American students to the gifted and talented program.

African American students play a significant role in our society. When teachers acknowledge and support the gifts and talents of African American students, this may contribute to further advancements toward additional conveniences to society. The gifts and talents of African American students may also contribute to providing solutions and cures to the fields of science, medicine and education.

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APPENDIX A

THE INSTRUMENT

Teacher Perceptions of Enrollment of African American Students in Third and

Fourth Grade Gifted and Talented Classes Survey

Please answer the following questions as it relates to you as an elementary teacher of

gifted and talented classes.

_____ Gender   _____ Grade You Teach   _____ Age

 Please circle your ethnicity.

     Asian   African American

     European American/Non-Hispanic

     Hispanic   Native American

     Please list specific ethnicity if it is not listed above _____

_____ Number of years teaching gifted and talented classes

_____ Do you have an endorsement in gifted and talented?

     Please answer yes or no

     If yes, where did you earn your endorsement? _____

_____ Do you have 30 hours of certification?

     Please answer yes or no.

     If yes, where did you receive your certification? _____

_____ Have you been enrolled in a multicultural course?

     Please answer yes or no.

_____ Have you been enrolled in an urban course?

     Please answer yes or no.

Please circle the answer that best describes your perceptions of African American students.

1.   I believe poor African American students cannot be as academically successful as middle class students because their families lack resources.
      Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

2.   In general, my African American students appear to be headed to a 2-year college.
      Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

3.   I believe that African American students do not apply themselves.
      Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

4.   The gifted and talented program is not presented in a manner that encourages African American students to apply for enrollment.
      Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

5.   I believe that African American students who attend schools lacking supplies and resources weaken African Americans chances for academic success.
      Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

6.   In general, African American parents believe their children are gifted in the arts and not in academic subjects.
      Strongly Agree   Agree Disagree   Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

7.   My African American students do not want to work hard.
      Strongly Agree   Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

8.   I believe poor African American students cannot be as successful as middle class students.
      Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

9.   In general, African American parents search for African American teachers to instruct their children.
       Strongly Agree   Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

10.   My African American students need to be challenged more.
      Strongly Agree   Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

11.   In general, I believe poor African American students lack essential knowledge.
  Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

12.   In general, African American students in my building do not want to be enrolled in the gifted and talented classes.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

13.   Other teachers in my building do not recognize the talents of my African American students.
  Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

14.   I believe African American boys' behavior deters teachers from effectively teaching them in the classroom.
Strongly Agree   Agree Disagree   Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

15.   I believe poor African American students usually lack parental involvement.
  Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

16.   I believe African American girls are more attentive than African American boys.
  Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

17.   I believe most African American students should attend a 4-year college.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

18.   I believe African American boys are more vocal than African American girls.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

19.   It is a challenge for my African American students to stay on task.
  Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

20.   Teachers in my building are prepared to teach African American students
  Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

21.   I believe African American boys are more successful in academics than African American girls.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

22.   My African American students have high attendance rates.
  Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

23.   I believe our curriculum includes African American content throughout the year.
  Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

24.   I believe African American boys think quicker than African American girls.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

25.   I believe African American students do not participate in enrichment activities
outside the classroom.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

APPENDIX B

ADMINISTRATOR CONSENT FORM

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a study about teacher perceptions of African American students in gifted and talented classes at the 3rd and 4th grade level in one urban school district. My name is Ruth Brazile. I am a doctoral student at Texas A&M University Teaching, Learning and Culture department. I am requesting your help with a research project that focuses on the teacher perceptions of African Americans in gifted and talented classes in grades 3 and 4. This research will explore what teaches perceive to be the factors that represent the enrollment of African American students in the gifted and talented classes. When studying the elementary schools in the district, there are vast representations of African American students in grades 3 and 4 gifted and talented classes.

Your participation is voluntary. If you decide to participate, I will contact you to set up an appointment for an introductory meeting at a time that is convenient for you. By using a survey approach, teachers will be asked to complete a questionnaire. This study will provide valuable information for educators serving diverse populations. Information from this study will remain confidential. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue your participation at any time. The data generated will be kept confidential by not identifying the participants by their names.

If you have any questions, please call me at   . For additional questions, you

may contact my professor, Dr. Norvella Carter at Texas A&M University at College

Station. You may e-mail her at   or call her at

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board –

Human Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or

questions regarding subjects' rights, the Institutional Review Board may be contacted

through Dr. Michael W. Buckley, Director of Research Compliance, Office of the Vice

President for Research at   Only my committee,

Dr. Carter, and I will have access to the information contained in this study.

I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions

answered to my satisfaction and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Initial _____Date _____

_____ Yes, I give consent for the campus and staff at this elementary school to participate in the proposed study which involves a survey for research purposes.

_____ No, I do not give consent for the campus and staff at this elementary school to participate in the proposed study which involves a survey for research purposes.

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

_____   _____

Signature of Investigator Date

TEACHER CONSENT FORM

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a study about teacher perceptions of African American students in gifted and talented classes at the 3rd and 4th grade level in one urban school district. My name is Ruth Brazile. I am a doctoral student at Texas A&M University Teaching, Learning and Culture department. I am requesting your help with a research project that focuses on the teacher perceptions of African Americans in gifted and talented classes in grades 3 and 4. This research will explore what teaches perceive to be the factors that represent the enrollment of African American students in the gifted and talented classes. When studying the elementary schools in the district, there are vast representations of African American students in grades 3 and 4 gifted and talented classes.

Your participation is voluntary. If you decide to participate, I will contact you to set up an appointment for an introductory meeting at a time that is convenient for you. By using a survey approach, teachers will be asked to complete a questionnaire. This study will provide valuable information for educators serving diverse populations. Information from this study will remain confidential. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue your participation at any time.

If you have any questions, please call me at _____ . For additional questions, you may contact my professor, Dr. Norvella Carter at Texas A&M University at College Station. You may e-mail her _____ or call her at _____ .

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board –
Human Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or
questions regarding subjects' rights, the Institutional Review Board may be contacted
through Dr. Michael W. Buckley, Director of Research Compliance, Office of the Vice
President for Research at   Only my committee,
Dr. Carter, and I will have access to the information contained in this study.

I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions
answered to my satisfaction and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I have been given a copy of this consent form.

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

_____   _____

Signature of Investigator Date

VITA

Name: Ruth Delories Brazile

Address: Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture
Texas A&M University
308 Harrington Tower Mailstop 4232
College Station, Texas 77843

Education: Bachelor of Science, Elementary Education
Wiley College, Marshall, Texas, 1994

Master of Arts, Counseling
Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View, Texas, 1999

Doctor of Philosophy, Curriculum and Instruction
Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas, 2010

Experience:

Klein Independent School District, Klein, Texas
Counselor, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth Grades, 2007- Present

Klein Independent School District, Klein, Texas
Teacher, Eighth Grade Science Regulars and Honors
Substitute Teacher, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth Grades, 2007-2007

Aldine Independent School District, Houston, Texas
Teacher, First Grade Self-Contained Regular and Gifted Talented
Second Grade Self-Contained and Inclusion
Third Grade Reading/Language Arts Regular
Fourth Grade Science/Social Studies Regular, 1996-2006