

**RECRUITING AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE TEACHERS IN K-12 SCHOOLS:  
A CASE STUDY IN ONE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT**

A Dissertation

by

JESSE JERMOINE WATSON

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

December 2011

Major Subject: Curriculum and Instruction

Recruiting African American Male Teachers in K-12 Schools: A Case Study in One

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**ABSTRACT**

Recruiting African American Male Teachers in K-12 Schools: A Case Study in One  
Urban School District. (December 2011)

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A case study of the experiences of six African American male teachers in a southern K-12 school district is presented in this study. The purpose of this study was: 1) to hear the voices of African American male teachers in a selected urban school district; 2) to identify the factors that contribute to their job acceptance decisions; 3) to gain an in-depth understanding of why teachers chose teaching as a profession; 4) to determine and understand the nature of the professional lives of these teachers; and finally, 5) to advance our existing knowledge base in attracting African American males to our nation's classrooms. The data collection process consisted of one-on-one, open-ended interview questions with six highly qualified African American male public school teachers in a K-12 school district in the Southern region of the United States.

The key themes which emerged through data analysis include: (1) nobility associated with the teaching profession; (2) compassion associated with the teaching

profession; (3) stability associated with the teaching profession; (4) family and community influences; (5) life experiences and (6) I was not recruited: I chose this district. Ethic of Care and Critical Race theoretical frameworks were the foundation for the study.

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation could not have been completed without the grace and mercy of my Lord and Savior. I dedicate this dissertation to my heroes, my mother and father, Darlene Marie Watson and Harrington Watson, Jr. You both built a solid foundation and nourished my academic ability beyond excellence. I am forever grateful for your relentless love and support. I hope that my accomplishments will encourage and inspire my future offspring to achieve greatness despite life's obstacles.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Thank you GOD for granting me the fortitude to complete this monumental task. This journey has been a long, hard, and lonely process, but you made sure that I was prepared for every step.

Special thanks to my mother and father for providing me with a firm foundation and unconditional support. I would also like to thank my brother for his constant words of encouragement and lending ears.

I thank my committee co-chairs, Dr. Lewis and Dr. Carter, and my committee members, Dr. Web-Hasan and Dr. Venzant-Chambers, for their guidance and support throughout the course of this research. There are no words to express my appreciation.

I also want to extend my gratitude to the six African American male teachers who were willing to participate in the study.

**NOMENCLATURE**

DAT	Dental Admission Test
HBCU	Historical Black Colleges and Institutions
NCLB	No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
PWI	Predominantly White Institution
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
TAMU	Texas A&M University
TLAC	Department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture
USDE	United States Department of Education



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Chapter I provides an overview of the study and introduces the rationale for investigating the underrepresentation African American male teachers in K-12 schools. Chapter I also presents and introduces the theoretical framework, statement of the problem, research design and definitions of terms for the study.

One of the most actively discussed and sometimes vigorously debated issues in the field of education, particularly in the K-12 educational arena since the late 1950's, has been the declining social, economic, and educational status of young African American males in our society (Garibaldi, 1992; Talbert-Johnson, 2001; Vail, 1998). The demographic composition of the nation's youth population is changing and these changes are making new demands on the public K-12 educational system. In an examination of the latest reports, the proportion of students of color in the United States school-aged population (ages 5-to-17) is expected to increase to 44 percent by 2020 and to 54 percent by 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002; Chmelynski, 2006). Based on enrollment data from the state departments of education (Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia) for the 2008-2009 school year, students of color made up 51 percent of the South's public schoolchildren (Southern Education Foundation, 2010). Additional research by the Southern Education Foundation (2007), reports that

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This dissertation follows the style of *Urban Education*.

more than half of the South's public school children come from low-income families.

Lynn, Johnson, and Hassan (1999), suggest these students must be prepared not only for the occupations requiring basic skills, but also for a wide range of highly-skilled professions. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2009), among the 1,949,000 Black women from ages 18 to 24 completing high school in 2008, 33 percent enrolled in college while of the 1,701,000 Black males from age 18 to 24 completing high school in 2008, only 25 percent entered college. Based on these statistics, many African American males are not choosing to enter higher education. Of the relatively few that decide to pursue this option, fewer than ever are choosing to enroll in a teacher preparation programs. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2009), of the 107,238 education degrees conferred in 2009, a majority (91,279) were awarded to White teachers nationally while African Americans received 6,864. Even more dismal, African-American men received 1,693 of the degrees.

Education is arguably more important today than at any other time in American history. Quality of life tends to be highly correlated with one's educational attainment (Howard, 2002a). It determines, in large measure, the degree of social mobility one has or will have in American society. Minority males, in particular African American males, are often categorized as a population at-risk in education (Howard, 2003b). According to Tennessee State Board of Education (2005), African American males face an incredibly bleak future, but interventions such as mentorship and counseling can help rescue them. Since a school's culture as well as its curriculum, are largely shaped by the administrators and teachers, a diverse training force crucial (Kane & Orsini, 2003).

African American men are needed as teachers in our schools at both the elementary and secondary levels, influencing the gender constructions of students (Polite & Davis, 1999). Diversity in the front of the classroom is just as important as diversity in the students' seats. African-American teachers are needed urgently to provide positive male role models often not present in urban households (Kunjufu, 2006).

This case study dissects the current strategies used to recruit African American male teachers into K-12 schools while offering recommended solutions to this dilemma. The findings of this study can be described as transformative for both students and teachers (Peace-Alvarez & Schechter, 2005). According to Caldwell and Spinks (2007), the quality of the teaching force is the most important resource of all, and school systems and other organizations and institutions should place the highest priority on attracting, preparing, placing, rewarding, and retaining the best people for service in the profession. the goal of this case study was to gain insight into the factors that influence African American male to become K-12 teachers. This goal was accomplished by eliciting stories of recruitment from African American male teachers. Their lived experiences were recorded, analyzed, and reported. Sharing the stories of these African American male teachers, hopefully, will assist in increasing the limited number of African American male teachers in K-12 schools.

### **Personal Story**

I was born in Monroe, Louisiana, March 10, 1980. I am an educator. I was called to be an educator. Much like those that are called to the clergy, I ran from my calling for far too long. Since accepting this calling, my life has been complete. I feel that I am

needed in the field of education and even more so, I have pledged to be there for others. My focus is to instill in individuals that they can do great things in spite of life's obstacles.

I am a product of African Americans that believed education to be an integral part of life. My grandfather was a K-12 educator of over thirty years. He served in WWII and traveled to many countries while serving in the United States Army. Though he was college educated, he never shared a classroom with anyone other than a student of color. My parents are both retired educators with over eighty years of experience between them. My father worked over 40 years as a teacher, coach, counselor, assistant principal, and principal. My mother spent thirty-three years as a second grade teacher. They were products of segregated schools. This not only gave me insight into the educational setting but shows that my roots run deep in the fertile soil of education. My father is a Vietnam Marine veteran. He was a first generation college student. His hard work ethics have been instilled in me. I value the instruction and discipline that my father imposed. I would not be the person that I am today if I did not have him in my life. My parent's guidance and many teachable moments instilled in me a tenacious work ethic and a caring attitude while nurturing and influencing me with the characteristics to become a great educator.

I have a vested interest in the academic success of African American students. More specifically, my current academic research is on recruiting African American male teachers in K-12 schools. As a public school student, I had only one African American



male teacher in free enterprise, a one-semester course. I did not see African American educators again until I enrolled in Southern University and A&M College.

It was at Southern University where African American male professors continued to, both directly and indirectly influenced my decision to choose teaching as a profession. From the onset of my career I have enjoyed teaching and giving back to underserved youth. In an effort to enhance my knowledge base, I have continuously sought to obtain higher education.

As a current Ph.D. Candidate in Urban Education at Texas A&M University, I am a few months away from my final academic hurdle as a doctoral student - a successful dissertation defense. I am now at the point in my academic journey where the “fork in the road” leads to two options: Higher Education or K-12 education.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Critical Race Theory**

Critical race theory (CRT) provides a theoretical lens by which to most effectively provide a space for the voices of the African American male teachers in this study. CRT is a way of looking at race relations, particularly within the United States, in a broader context than the traditional civil rights approach (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). The earliest writings on Critical Race Theory can be traced to the works of Derrick Bell in the 1960's. Critical race theory first emerged as a counter legal scholarship to the positivist and liberal legal discourse of civil rights (Ladson-Billings, 1999). Critical race theory has been used as a framework for examining: (a) persistent racial inequities in education, (b) qualitative research methods, (c) pedagogy and

practice, (d) the schooling experiences of marginalized students of color, and (e) the efficacy of race-conscious education policy (Lynn, 2006a). The theory began sometime in the mid-1970s, as a number of people in the legal profession began to worry about the slow rate at which laws were changing to promote racial equality. Recognizing that the advances of the civil rights movement of the 1960s are stagnating, if not retreating, legal scholars of color seek to embrace a different race-consciousness, one that challenges the ways in which race is constructed and represented both in our society and in the legal system that helps to define it.

Ladson-Billings (1998) notes that “despite the scientific refutation of race as a legitimate biological concept and attempts to marginalize race in much of the public (political) discourse, race continues to be a powerful social construct and signifier.”

Morrison (1992) notes the following:

Race has become metaphorical- a way of referring to and disguising forces, events, classes, and expressions of social decay and economic division far more threatening to the body politic than biological “race” ever was. Expensively kept, economically unsound, a spurious and useless political as set in election campaigns, racism is as healthy today as it was during the enlightenment. It seems that it has a utility far beyond economy, beyond the sequestering of classes from one another, and has assumed a metaphorical life so completely embedded in daily discourse that it is perhaps more necessary and more on display than ever before. (p. 63)

Sociologist Sharon Lee (1993) suggests that “questions of race have been included in all U.S. population censuses since the first one in 1790” (p. 86).

Many scholars argue for a critical race theoretical perspective in education analogous to that of critical race theory in legal scholarship by developing three propositions: (1) race continues to be significant in the United States; (2) U.S. society is based on property rights rather than human rights; and (3) the intersection of race and property creates an analytical tool for understanding inequity (Ladson-Billings, 1999). According to Solorzano and Yosso (2001), CRT centers around five fundamental points: (a) the centrality and intersectionality of race and racism, (b) the challenge to the dominant ideology of racial neutrality, (c) the commitment to social justice, (d) the importance of experiential knowledge, and (e) the reliance and use of interdisciplinary perspectives.

Lynn’s (2002) expanded definition of Critical Race Theory further supports this study’s basis in that theory. Critical race research and theory: 1) offers a systematic critique of the legal and social system in the United States; 2) It calls attention to the enduring legacy of racism in past and contemporary American society; 3) adopts a postmodern stance with regard to Western claims of neutrality, objectivity, rationality and universality; 4) is theoretically driven but experientially-based because of the extent to which it grounds its analysis within the racialized narratives of peoples of color; 5) is interdisciplinary because of its reliance on philosophical, historical and sociological traditions in academe; and 6) calls for the elimination of racial oppression in the United

States through a multilayered examination of race that explores the links between race, gender and class (p. 120).

Gay and Kirkland (2003), argue that CRT for ethnically diverse students should be a fundamental feature of teacher preparation and classroom practice. CRT involves using the cultures, experiences, and perspectives of African, Native, Latino, and Asian American students as filters through which to teach them academic knowledge and skills.

A theory is critical to the extent that it seeks human emancipation, “to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them” (Horkheimer, 1982). Race and race relations have been important in the scheme of American history. This was most recently apparent in the 44th United States presidential election. Being that critical race theory views legal, political, and social issue through the lens of race and racial inequality, they are attempting transform society by challenging the policies that have created institutionalized racism (Ladson-Billings, 1999). Critical race theorists seek to move toward anti-racist practices and dispute the existing power structures in America.

In contemporary American society, race is both a matter of social identity and institutionalized social structures. Critical race theorists are looking to see how law intersects with race and culture (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). In order to understand critical race theory, you have to understand how critical race theorists view race relations in America. They believe that most Americans view race in the contemporary society as simply existing in a color-blind paradigm. This is a paradigm in which race no longer matters in America. Other thoughts are that America society is a meritocracy and that

everyone has equal rights while the playing field is level (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). This viewpoint perpetuates existing racial structures since colorblindness alone cannot account for the inequities education.

### **Ethics of Care**

An ethic of care calls educators' attention to the need for the processes of education to foster the kind of relationships in which students can learn to care (Noddings, 1984, 1992, 2002a, 2002b). The explanation of care theory, relationship and ethical principles are at the heart of ethics of care (Noddings, 2002a). A review of the teacher education literature shows that much pre-service teacher preparation focuses on behavioral objectives while often ignoring the ethical or intellectual aspects of teaching (Beyer, 1997; Cambron-McCabe, 2000; Cummings, Dyas, Maddux, & Kochman, 2001; Doyle & Doyle, 2003; Ducharme & Ducharme, 1999; Goodlad, Soder, & Sirotnik, 1990, 1992; Huebner, 1996; Lake, Jones, & Dagli, 2004; Schwartz, 1998; Socket & Le Page, 2002; Stengel & Tom, 1995, Yost, 1997). Teacher empathy, positive school climate, attentiveness, and trusting relationships have been identified as elements of care. These circumstances permit environments for effective learning to arise. Noddings (2002a) refers to the particular attentiveness necessary in order to care, as engrossment:

In a phenomenological analysis of caring... there is a special form of attentiveness, which I have called engrossment; this form of attention is acutely receptive and is directed at the cared-for. (p. 28)

Teacher educators (Arnstine, 1990; Bulach, Brown, & Potter, 1998; Goldstein, 2002; Knight, 2004; Lake et al, 2004; Schwartz, 1998; & Yost, 1997) have begun to

consider how care might inform teacher preparation. Goldstein (1999) noted that there are challenges of teaching about care in teacher preparation. Vogt (2002), noted that teaching about care ethics is complicated by the fact that novice teachers tend to consider care an essentialist personality trait or a warm-fuzzy feeling, as opposed to an ethical stance. Goldstein (2002) found in her examinations of pre-service teachers that they often oversimplified and idealized care. In Vogt's (2002) exploration teachers' conceptions of professional identity, she found elementary school teachers considered care gendered to the extent that it was exclusive to the domain of motherhood. Goldstein (1998) expresses the conception of care as a moral stance that leads to ethical action:

The feminist interpretation of caring – an action rather than an attribute, a deliberate moral and intellectual stance rather than simply a feeling – offers a powerful alternative to the conceptions of caring currently shaping our thinking about the term. (p. 18).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The scarcity of African American male teachers in our nation's K-12 public schools has been well documented (Dortch, 2001; Holman, 1996; Lewis, 2006; Lynn, 2003; NCES, 2009b; NEA, 2003; Smiles, 2002). According to the research literature, 40 percent of students in our nation's public schools are students of color (Southern Education Foundation, 2007). Among the 3.8 million teachers in America's public schools, 214,000 (6.7%) are African American (NCES, 2009c). Even more dismal, African American male teachers currently compromise only 1% of the teaching population nationally (Lewis, 2006). Students in K-12 educational settings need contact

with African American male teachers to help prepare them to live and work in an increasingly multicultural and multiethnic society (Alston, 1988). Major efforts to recruit African American male teachers are warranted throughout our nation's K-12 school systems. There is also limited research on the recruitment of African American male teachers in particular. Therefore additional studies are warranted on the recruitment of African American male teachers into our schools. If not urgently addressed, this crisis could lead to a failure of all African American students to learn the academic, personal, and social skills they need in the multicultural workplace of the future (Brown, 2005; Milner, 2004).

### **Purpose of the Study**

There is a body of research on the recruitment strategies for teachers in K-12 schools (Lewis, Garrison-Wade, Scott, Douglas & Middleton, 2004; Lewis 2006; Lynn, 2006b; Milner, 2003; Milner & Howard, 2004). As a result, multiple purposes were conceptualized for this study: 1) to hear the voices of African American male teachers in a selected urban school district; 2) to identify the factors that contribute to their job acceptance decisions; 3) to gain an in-depth understanding of why teachers chose teaching as a profession; 4) to determine and understand the nature of the professional lives of these teachers; and finally 5) to advance our existing knowledge base in attracting African American males to our nation's classrooms.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study will be the insights that will be gained and contributed to educators as they recruit African American male teachers in our nation's

classrooms. Additionally, this study will share the voices of African American male teachers and the factors that contribute to successful recruitment in the K-12 setting. The underrepresentation of African American male teachers in our nation's school systems and examines the reasons they are drawn into the teaching profession. The findings from this study may augment the hiring practices used by states and local school districts to recruit African American male teachers. Local school districts may increase their probability of appointing African American male school teachers if they focus on the facts revealed in this study.

### **Research Questions**

In this study, the professional stories of teachers will be solicited. The following research questions served as a guide for this study:

1. How do African American male teachers describe personal characteristics attributed to their interest in becoming a teacher?
2. How do African American male teachers describe factors that lead to their job acceptance decision?
3. How do African American male teachers describe their recruitment process?

### **Definition of Terms**

The terms used in the study and their definitions are as follows:

***African American Male:*** Relating to members of the masculine gender of African ancestry or a combination of both African and American ancestry (Kunjufu, 2005).

***Career:*** a chosen pursuit; a profession or occupation (Inman & Marlow, 2004).



***Educational Pipeline:*** In the context of this study, the educational pipeline metaphor is used to describe and depict critical stages in the in the educational process for African Americans, both as students and professionals (Jackson, 2007).

***Role Model:*** A person who serves as a model in a particular behavioral or social role for another person to emulate (Jackson, 2007).

***School District:*** An agency administratively responsible for providing elementary and secondary instruction (Polite & Davis 1999).

***School to Prison Pipeline:*** A disturbing pattern of school disciplinary problems escalating from suspension to removal from school, juvenile justice system involvement, and school dropout (American Civil Liberties Union, 2010).

***Teacher:*** One who plans and guides the development of the learning experiences of students in a classroom environment and is responsible for the activities and conduct of pupils on a daily basis as governed by school district policy (Noddings, 2002).

***Underrepresentation:*** To represent in numbers that are fewer, or in a proportion that is less, than is statistically expected or warranted (Lewis, 2006).

### **Assumptions**

I assume that all the participants in this study will answer the questions to the best of their ability. However, because I am the instrument, there are automatically certain biases that are inherent in my study. I cannot separate myself from the data, and I realize that the findings are my interpretations of the participants' perspectives.

Although I am an African American male, I cannot separate myself from the biases

associated with that identity. Furthermore, I recognize that this research cannot be generalized to other situations. It is my interpretation of the experiences of these four African American male teachers, specifically. If another researcher were to conduct the same study with the same teachers, the emergent process of the study would be influenced, and differing interpretations would possibly result.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

With regard to the nature of the establishment of transferability in a qualitative study, there are some obvious limitations to my study. Through my case study of experiences of six African American male teachers, I am only examining and (re) interpreting these six men. I do not make claim that all African American male teachers will have the same experiences as those interviewed in my study. It is my hope, however, that school districts, teacher education programs, and researchers will discover for themselves ways in which the information in my study can be applied to other situations and perhaps be used to increase the limited presence of African American male teachers in K-12 schools.

The following delimitations helped to restrict the focus of the research; this study investigated the experiences of African American males in an urban school district in an area specific to North Louisiana, not the state of Louisiana or the nation as a whole. Also, participants represented a purposeful sample of African American male teachers with one to five years of teaching experience. Therefore, other African American male teachers with more than five years of teaching experience were not included.

## **Summary and Organization of the Dissertation**

This introductory chapter presented the background for the study that examined the recruitment of African American male teachers in US K-12 schools. The study also outlined . In Chapter I, I presented the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, and significance of the study.

In the Chapter II, relevant scholarship that informs the study is reviewed. This included issues related to pre-Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, post-Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, problems of facing African American males, African American male teacher recruitment efforts, and challenges of African American male recruitment. Chapter III describes the methodological perspectives and procedures. It also describes the techniques employed in analysis of the data (interviews).

Chapter IV presents a profile of the participants who were interviewed for their intimate knowledge as African American male school teachers. It provides information related to their personal and demographic backgrounds. The chapter also presents the findings from the study. The findings are organized by themes which emerged from the data. Six major themes emerged from the study: (1) nobility associated with the teaching profession, (2) compassion associated with the teaching profession, (3) stability of the profession, (4) family and community influences, (5) life experiences and (6) I was not recruited: I chose this district.

Chapter V presents a summary of the findings followed by a section which addresses the findings in relation to the six major research questions. This section is

followed by a discussion of the study's implications. A summary concludes the chapter which includes recommendations for future research.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **Introduction**

This study examines the recruitment of African American male teachers in K-12 schools in the United States. The purpose of this chapter is to develop a context that explains, by presentation of pertinent literature, the uniqueness of the study outlined in Chapter I.

Initially, the literature review focuses on the historical perspective of African American male teachers in K-12 schools in the United States. Second, literature discussing the problems facing African American males is presented. Third, the literature review explores African American male recruitment efforts across the United States. Finally, the literature review examines the current challenges of African American male teacher recruitment.

#### **Pre-Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas**

To understand the explanation the limited number of African American male teachers in the field of education one must understand the history of education in the United States. From the introduction of slavery (1661) throughout the first decade of the industrial revolution period (1885-1895), educational opportunities for African-Americans were either nonexistent or substandard; in addition, these opportunities were greater for free Blacks, northerners, and city dwellers than for slaves, southerners, and rural people (Sacher, 2007). The general policy of the slave system was to keep the slaves in ignorance as the safest way to perpetuate itself (Washington, 1900). Between

1800 and 1835, most of the southern states enacted legislation making it a crime to teach enslaved children how to read or write (Anderson, 1988). In Georgia, anyone caught teaching a slave or free Black to read or write they were subject to imprisonment and a \$500 fine (Williams, 2005). Slaveholders were permitted to whip and mutilate slaves as they saw fit, without concern that abuses would be regarded as criminal (Gates, 1993). These laws severely restricted the educational opportunity of African Americans in particularly in schooling.

By 1860, almost one third of the America's population consisted of African American slaves in the South (Gates, 1993). In 1863, the enslaved African Americans were emancipated whereby they temporarily joined the ranks of the nation's free citizens at the very moment that public educational systems were being developed into their modern form (Anderson, 1988). This Emancipation Proclamation signed by President Abraham Lincoln, transformed an established and developed subordinate class of beliefs that developed but had been constrained during several generations of government (Bell, 2004; Douglas, 2005).

According to Anderson (1998):

In 1880, 75.4 percent of the South's labor force was in agriculture with 40 percent being Black laborers. The planters' approach to labor control posed a formidable threat to Black ex-slaves educational movement. According to Freedman's bureau superintendent Alford, echoing the northern idea of universal schooling for the laboring classes, proclaimed to the South in 1866: "Popular

education cannot well be opposed; free labor is found to be more contended to its privileges” (p.20).

This was not shared by southern planters as it relates to free labor and popular education. According to Anderson (1998), when Carl Schurz, a German revolutionary, American Statesman and reformer, and Union Army General in the American Civil War tour the South in 1865, he found planters believing that “learning will spoil the nigger for work” (p. 21). The planters, with very few exceptions, viewed Black education as a distinct threat to the racially qualified form of labor exploitation upon which their agrarian order depended. Henry Bullock found that Virginia planters in 1865 were seeking to prevent Negro parents from sending their children to school by threatening to put them out of their homes. Similarly in 1869, the Freedmen’s Bureau school superintendent for Louisiana and northern Texas discovered that “many of the planters did not allow Black children to go on their places to go to school at all, even when we have started those which are convenient” (p.23). During this time there was not room for African American male teachers. This historical perspective identifies the reasons that African American males are not in teaching profession.

As the Civil War ended in 1865, Congress created the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Land, popularly known as the Freedmen's Bureau, to provide practical aid to 4,000,000 newly freed African Americans in their transition from slavery to freedom (Les Benedict, 1974). Throughout the South, the Freedmen's Bureau established schools and hospitals, helped negotiate labor contracts, leased or sold confiscated lands to the freedmen, and generally tried to protect them from former

masters (Huston, 2005). More than 1,000 Black schools were built and over \$400,000 spent to establish teacher-training institutions (Freedman's Bureau, 2010). The unpopularity of the Freedmen's Bureau among white Southerners caused President Andrew Johnson to veto an 1866 bill to extend the life of the bureau (Les Benedict, 1974). The veto outraged both moderate and radical Republicans in Congress and united them against the President (Cimbala, 1986). Congress passed the second Freedmen's Bureau Act over the President's veto and started down the collision course that would result in Johnson's impeachment in 1868 (Les Benedict, 1974). Although the Union Army and the Freedman's bureau were heavily involved in the education of ex-slaves, the long-term success of schooling depended mainly on African Americans (Anderson, 1988). Ex-slaves established a tradition of educational self-help that supported African Americans in schools. There was not room for African American male teachers during this period.

Being a Black teacher during the age of white supremacy demanded faith in the future when the present often seemed hopeless. No group felt the closure of Black schools more keenly than Black teachers- even though many accepted the desirability of integration. The failure of Black schools to continue as segregated played a pivotal in a teacher's position in the Black community. Despite islands of excellence and much touted evidence of progress, the conditions of most schools was about the same in 1940 as it had been in 1870. Approximately 82,000 African American teachers were responsible for the education of 2 million African American children (Hudson, 1994). According to Faircloth (2007), "For approximately one hundred years, from 1870



to 1970, Black teachers instructed the vast majority of Black children inside all-Black schools (p.5). Segregation cultivated leadership and cohesion in the Black community.

White southerners tried to suppress Black literacy under slavery, deplored the political activities of Black teachers during reconstruction, and continued to be deeply suspicious of Black schools. One of the most effective ways of policing Black education, and reducing its potential to contest White supremacy, would have been to install southern-born White teachers, preferably reliable Democrats, in Black schools (Fairclough, p.62). However, no organized effort to stop this trend was established. As a result, many white teachers were replaced with Black teachers. This replacement of the White teaching force in Black schools represented White supremacists' anticipation of the future deterioration of Black education.

The abolition of segregated Black schools weakened the strong sense of educational mission that had characterized the work of Black teachers. Black teachers identified with their schools to a far greater extent than their White counterparts. Due to integration, many Black teachers were dismissed or demoted. This was detrimental to the Black community. There continued to be a diminutive space for African American male teachers.

When the United States Supreme Court decided in 1954 that the segregated public schools were unconstitutional, it mortally wounded the system of White supremacy. This was a much needed decision that yielded unintended consequences. The failure of integrated schools to live up to their promise led to a belated recognition that

many segregated schools of the pre-Brown era had been successful institutions (Fairclough, 2007 p.6).

### **Post-Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas**

African American male teachers during the era of segregated schools are consistently remembered for their high expectations for student success, for their high dedication, and for their demanding teaching style (Douglas, 2005). African American teachers worked with the assumption that their job was to be certain that children learned the material presented (Bell, 2004; Walker, 1996). With desegregation came massive layoffs and demotions. Approximately 38,000 African Americans teachers and administrators in 17 states lost their positions between 1954 and 1965 (King, 1993). These numbers had far more underlined and damaging effects on the Black community. According to Foster (1997), “At the turn of the 20th century the number of Black teachers had risen close to 70,000.” Teaching was considered a prominent job in all African American circles. Between 1932 and 1948, the number of Black teachers doubled (Walker, 1996).

Ethridge (1979) identified the impact of the 1954 Supreme Court Decision on education employment of Black professionals for the first eleven years:

In my opinion, there is a five-fold reason for this. First, the Judges had before them the questions of inferior schools. Second, at that time judges were reluctant to invade the domain of the school boards and respected even their right to make errors in administration. Third, since the previous decisions in the field were against colleges and universities that had carried out Court orders, even though

with great reluctance, the Court had no experience with the kind of massive resistance which the Decision's devastating effects on teachers and students, as well as, was a lack of information on the result of the others. Fifth, the 1954 Decision was not really an education decision. It was the first in a long series of civil rights cases (p.217).

Since 1954 and the landmark decision *Brown vs. Topeka*, there has been a 66 percent decline in African American teachers (Kluger, 1975; Irons, 2002). In 1950, nearly half of the African-American professionals in the United States were teachers (Bell, 2004). Close to a third of these teachers lost their teaching positions after the *Brown*. Between 1984 and 1989, 21,515 African American male teachers lost their jobs (Hudson, 1994; Smith, 1987). Some would argue that this marked the beginning of the troubled cycle of underachievement for many African American male students and that their quality of education has not been the same since (Milner, 2004). Irvine and Irvine (1983), in their examination of many African American communities post-*Brown* described the school desegregation process as iatrogenesis, a medical concept which means that the intervention which was used to supposedly cure or heal a particular ailment turns out to have a more detrimental impact than the initial problem. For many African American students, African American teachers represented surrogate parent figures, acted as disciplinarians, counselors, role models, and overall advocates for their academic, social, cultural, emotional, and moral development (Anderson, 1988).

Samuel Ethridge (1979), notes that in 1965, a task force by the National Education Association concluded the following:

It is clear that in the past, Negro teachers were employed specifically and exclusively for the purpose of teaching Negro pupils in segregated schools. Segregated schools required segregated facilities. Since Negro teachers were employed to teach Negro pupils, there were relatively few positions for Negro teachers in a school system with few classes for Negroes. In a system with no classes for Negroes, there were simply no positions for Negro teachers. It has been, and still is, widely assumed by many school board members that Negroes, both students and teachers, are intellectually inferior. From this specious premise, it follows that "quality education" can be obtained only when schools, even after being integrated, remain in spirit and often in name "White schools." White schools are viewed as having no place for Negro teachers (p.218).

African American male teachers endured emotional strain and hardship through several experiences that were degrading and demoralizing (Douglas, 2005). Forty years after Brown, most U.S. students go through 12 years of schooling without ever having met a minority teacher, and approximately 70% of all minority students continue to attend predominantly or exclusively minority schools (Hawkins, 1994). For many African American teachers, desegregation of schools meant that their skin complexion was examined in order to decide whether they were "worthy" of being moved into all-White schools (Milner, 2004). As a result, many of the most talented African American male teachers were moved from Black schools to White schools (Martin, 1998).

## **Current Status of Teachers**

The shortage of African American male teachers is a nationwide problem. School districts hire about 350,000 new teachers every year, but the pool of minorities interested in the profession is small (NCES, 2009a). This is particularly acute in early-childhood and lower grades, and is partly pay-related. One in every 50 teachers is African American male. Most black boys may never be educated by someone who looks like them, and sadly, some African-American boys will never experience a black male role model in their public school classrooms. Since 1954, there's been a 66% decline in African American teachers. Fifty years ago, African American male educators were leading the charge for the education of African American children. Black men are only 6.5 percent of the U.S. population, and in 2008 they were only 5 percent of college students. Presently, 83% of America's teachers are white and female (Kunjufu, 2010).

The U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, called for the urgent need for more African American male teacher in the K-12 classroom. A national task force, 5by2015, was established in reference to this calling. The goal of the organization is to increase the number of black male teachers nationally to 5 percent by 2015. That means putting 80,000 black males both recent grads and career changers in teaching positions in the next four years.

## **Problems Facing African American Males**

### **African American Male Drop Outs**

According to the Alliance for Excellent Education (2009), a relatively small number of chronically underperforming high schools are responsible for more than half

of the nation's dropouts. Approximately two thousand high schools, 12 % of American high schools, produce more than half of the nation's dropouts. In these schools, the number of seniors enrolled is routinely 60 percent or less than the number of freshmen three years earlier (Balfanz, 2004). Eighty percent of the high schools that produce the most dropouts can be found in a subset of just fifteen states (Balfanz & Legters, 2004). The majority of high schools with high dropout rates are located in northern and western cities and throughout the southern states.

School failure has been shown to increase the risk that young people will turn to violence and delinquency (Rankin, 1980). In the one hundred largest cities in the United States, 58 percent or more of ninth-grade students in high-minority schools do not graduate four years later (Balfanz, 2003). While between 25 percent and 30 percent of America's teenagers, including recent immigrants, fail to graduate from high school with a regular high-school diploma, the dropout rate for African American males in many metropolitan areas is 50 percent (Kunjufu, 2005). Nationally, 50 percent of Black males (as compared with 61 percent of Black females, 80 percent of white males and 86 percent of white females) receive diplomas with their high-school cohort (Schott Foundation, 2010). In some urban districts, 30 percent of Black males are in special-education classes, and of the remaining 70 percent, only half or fewer receive diplomas. According to the U. S. Census Bureau (2000), the percentage of Black youths 16 to 19 neither employed nor in school was 24.7 percent, nearly twice the national average for this age group and six times the national unemployment rate. Even more depressing,

United States cuts Headstart funds, Chapter I monies and Pell grants for college, and advocates more money to prisons (Kunjufu, 2005, p.6).

More Black males receive the GED in prison than graduate from college (Kunjufu, 2005; Smith, 2004). For whites under 18, 105 out of every 100,000 are incarcerated; for Black youths the rate is three times as high, 350 per 100,000. Kunjufu (2005) notes, “More and more people are advocating building more prisons without fully understanding that 85% of released inmates return to incarceration. More alarming, many people are unaware that it costs \$2,300 to send a child to Headstart, \$7,500 to 10,000 for a college education, and \$18,000 to \$38,000 for a prison term.” (p.54)

### **School to Prison Pipeline**

Across the country, criminal justice advocates, civil and human rights groups, educators, and even law enforcement officials are highlighting the connection between the discipline practices in our schools and the growing number of Americans incarcerated (Tuzzolo & Hewitt, 2007). The “school-to-prison pipeline” refers to the policies and practices that push our nation’s school children, especially our most at-risk children, out of classrooms and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems (ACLU). Stiles and Thevenot (2010), note, “the ‘pipeline’ refers to a disturbing pattern of school disciplinary problems escalating from suspension to removal from school, juvenile justice system involvement, and school dropout” (p.1). This issue can be highlighted in various regions of the United States.

More than 30 years of research has consistently demonstrated the overrepresentation of African American youth in the exclusionary discipline

consequences of suspension and expulsion (Children's Defense Fund, 1975; Fenning & Rose; Gonzalez & Szecsy, 2004; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2000; Skiba & Peterson, 1999; Skiba & Rausch, 2006), with inconsistent findings for other minority groups, such as Hispanics (Gonzalez & Szecsy, 2004; Skiba et al., 2000). Tuzzolo and Hewitt (2006), note that many schools exhibit what students have referred to as a prison-like atmosphere while their discipline policies penalize and remove student instead of providing support and facilitating positive growth. Despite representing only 8.6 percent of public-school enrollments, Black boys comprise 22 percent of those expelled from school and 23 percent of those suspended.

The requirement for schools to meet federally mandated requirements for academic achievement has heightened the pressure for administrators to remove children who do not fit into the norms of the general student population (Fenning & Rose). Rising numbers of districts dump students, involuntarily, into disciplinary alternative schools - sometimes run by private, for-profit companies [similar to contracted mercenaries] - not subject to accountability or traditional school standards such as minimum hours and curriculum requirements, teachers and textbooks, diplomas upon graduation (Bennett, 2010).

Black youth are far more likely to be arrested at school than they were a decade ago (Wald & Losen, 2006). American schools no longer rely on teachers and administrators to handle minor student misconduct, but on law enforcement: full-time police officers or school resource officers untrained in working with youth (Bennett, 2010). Wald and Losen (2003) notes, "the result is a near doubling of the number of



students suspended annually from school since 1974 (from 1.7 million to 3.1 million), an increase in the presence of police in schools, and the enactment of new laws mandating referral of children to law enforcement authorities for a variety of school code violations.” (p.10) Children as young as five years old are being led out of classrooms in handcuffs for acting out or throwing temper tantrums (McFarlane, 2008). Students have been arrested for throwing an eraser at a teacher, breaking a pencil, and having rap lyric written in a locker.

Forty-seven percent of the prison population is African American male, while only 3.5% of African American males are college students. More and more people are advocating building more prisons without fully understanding that 85% of released inmates return to incarceration. On the other hand, many people are unaware that it costs \$2,300 to send a child to Headstart, \$7,500 to 10,000 for a college education, and \$18,000 to \$38,000 for a prison term. Yet the United States cuts Headstart funds, Chapter I monies and Pell grants for college, and advocates more money to prisons (Kunjufu, 2005, p.6).

### **Challenges of African American Male Teacher Recruitment**

#### **Salary**

Entry level teaching salaries exert enormous influence on the labor supply. When beginning salaries are high for a given profession, they provide a powerful incentive for the most talented workers to pursue these jobs. Teaching is not an exception. Approximately, 47 percent of all public school teachers reported being satisfied with their salaries in 2003-2004, yet 91 percent said that they were generally

satisfied with being a teacher (Snyder, Dillow, & Huffman, 2008). A report from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (2008), shows that offers to graduates seeking positions as teachers in K-12 settings ranged from a low of \$25,000 to more than \$40,000.

African American males are not choosing education as a major in college. One of the biggest factors in deciding which educational path to take is the amount of pay an individual has the opportunity to make with that degree. For most people figuring it out is almost impossible. Despite the many joyous experiences gained through the teaching profession, African American males have the responsibility of taking care of their families. Most African American male teachers have to take on a second job to supplement their teaching salary (Leibowitz, 2008; Eggers, 2004). Failure to move into the administrative and supervisory capacities where salaries become commensurate with professional degrees and experience is another challenge for the African American male educator.

In 2005, the U.S. Census Bureau published a report with data listing how much the average person earned in America. The average salary for a high school graduate in the U.S. was about \$2,532 per month. Individuals with a modest amount of college completed earned \$3,058 a month. Vocational certificate holder's income totaled around \$2,912 a month. The average income for individuals with a Bachelor degree was \$4,281, while a Master degree holder earned about \$5,207 per month (Ryan, 2005). According to a press release by the American Federation of Teachers (2007), the average teacher salary in South Dakota for the 2006-2007 school year was \$34,039. This total is up 2.4

percent from the previous year. South Dakota is ranked 50th in the United States for beginning teacher salary, at \$26,111, an increase of 3.5 percent from 2006. This equals a monthly income of \$2,175. Compared to the previously listed salary of an individual with only a high school diploma, these teachers' salary is \$356 less per month.

The variation in teacher salary by state is evident. The nation's large cities and schools districts are often the benchmark for setting U.S. teacher salaries well beyond their immediate geographic boundaries (American Federation of Teachers, 2007). States with the highest salaries are located in the North, Mid-Atlantic areas and on the West Coast. Starting salaries are also generous in Florida, Illinois and Texas. Utah, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota are ranked as the top states with the lowest beginning teacher salary. Each state's average beginning teacher salary was listed below \$30,000 (American Federation of Teachers, 2007).

So which type of degrees are the most valuable? Ryan (2005), lists the average income earnings by field for selected education levels (See Table 1). This illustrates that business degrees, computer science degrees and engineering degrees dominate the salary charts. Teachers earn close to 70 cent on the dollar of similar professions in terms of educational requirements. As a result, individuals considering a teaching career and reviewing the average salaries of educators versus those of similar professionals understand that this relates to almost \$22,000 per year, or about 30 percent of the average professional salary (Allegretto, Corcoran, & Mishel, 2008).

**Table 1**  
**Average Monthly Income Earnings by Field of Training**

Degree	Monthly Salary
Business Bachelor	\$4,815
Computer Bachelor	\$5,051
Engineer Bachelor	\$5,296
Liberal Arts Bachelor	\$3,443
Social Science/Law Bachelor	\$3,656
Science Medicine Bachelor	\$3,693
Education Bachelor Degree	\$3,433

SOURCE: Ryan, C. L. (2005). Average Monthly Income Earnings by Field of Training for Selected Education Levels in 2001. Washington D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau.

### **Perceived Lack of Masculinity**

Another challenge for African American male teachers lies in their perceived lack of masculinity. There is a growing body of evidence emerging about how men teachers engage with masculinities in their daily work (Roulston & Mills, 2000). This research is useful in identifying common concerns and experiences of male teachers of primary children. For example, themes that often occur in interviews include male teachers as role models and enforcers of discipline (Stroud et al., 2000). Male teachers have also suggested that female colleagues often doubt their ability to do the job

effectively in terms of nurturing/caring because they are men (Oyleret al., 2001). Issues of sexual orientation and child-sexual molestation for men teachers working with young children are frequently raised (Roulston & Mills, 2000). Many men believe that that they are not being hired or they can't get an interview because people think there is something wrong with a man who wants to work with children.

Since teaching is still largely perceived as a feminine activity, boys may associate male teachers with that perception and fail to identify masculinity as hegemonic. Furthermore, given that boys experience interaction with teachers in a restricted domain, they may adversely associate the male teacher's behavior only with the schooling domain and not relate it to the wider community (Connell, 2000). Although male teachers may provide a positive hegemonic masculinity, different gender scripts operate in the wider community. Boys are likely to aspire toward what they perceive as the more dominant masculinity (Connell, 2000). Thus, societal constructs of hegemonic masculinities may override the limited masculinity of the male teacher (Lesko, 2000).

### **African American Male Teacher Recruitment Efforts**

According to Powell (2007), "There are no federal guidelines for teacher recruitment", in particular for African American males (p.329). The U.S. constitution stipulates that anything not specifically addressed by it becomes a state issue. Consequently, state and local laws and practices affecting education vary from state to state, and from district to district within each state. Some of the issues addressed by state and local laws and policies include curriculum standards and assessment mandates as

well as funding governance. The guidelines for teacher certification are left up to the states, with some federal stipulations.

Many African American males graduate from college with accumulated debt from various tuition expenses (Baum & Steele, 2010). Twenty-seven percent of 2007-08 Black bachelor's degree recipients borrowed \$30,500 or more, compared to 16 percent of Whites, 14 percent of Hispanics/Latinos, and 9 percent of Asians. African Americans are also unlikely to escape college debt-free. Only about 19% do so, while 33% of Hispanic grads, 36% of white grads and 40% of Asian grads leave school without debt (Teal, 2010). African American males are more likely to enter a profession with a high starting salary, allowing them a greater opportunity to repay their academic department in the least amount of time.

There is also an absence of clear incentives for African American males to work with the poor and minority children (Lynn, 2006c). Offering tuition reimbursement in exchange for a minimal time of service can be a practical option for a school system. One effective strategy to retain teachers is the use of new teacher support programs. Even under the best of circumstances, the first few years of teaching can be a very difficult time. Most teachers face isolation from their colleagues. New teachers often are assigned to some of the most challenging courses and classrooms. In addition, some feel they have not received enough training to handle certain aspects of their job (Lewis et al., 1999).

Another solution to this problem includes recruiting and training African American males in the local community (U.S. Department of Education Initiative on

Teaching, 2000). Low-wealth, urban, and rural school districts often have difficulty attracting new teachers to their schools and keeping them there once they come. One response to this situation has been the “grow your own” teacher movement. Under this promising alternative, a school district might provide employees who have exemplary work records and a commitment to teaching with tuition and other support so they can complete a teaching degree (U.S. Department of Education Initiative on Teaching, 2000).

Working conditions, including professional teaching conditions, play a substantial role in decisions to leave teaching in a particular school or district, and they contribute to decisions to leave the profession altogether. National survey data show that teachers’ plans to remain in teaching are highly sensitive to their perceptions of their working conditions (Darling-Hammond, Berry, & Thoreson, 2001). The proportion of teachers who report that they plan to remain in teaching as long as they are able are strongly associated with how teachers feel about the administrative support, resources, and teacher voice and influence over policy in their schools (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

### **Call Me MISTER**

Another way to involve men in the classroom is to recruit volunteers from high schools, colleges, and universities. Students in education, psychology, child development, family life, and occupational education are often required to complete service learning, community service, career exploration, or volunteer hours (Cunningham, 2002). There are two noted models that encourage and support African American males to enter teaching as a profession: 1) Call Me MISTER Initiative and 2)

The Griot Program. The mission of the Call Me MISTER (acronym for Mentors Instructing Students Toward Effective Role Models) national initiative is to increase the pool of available teachers from a broader more diverse background particularly among South Carolina's lowest performing elementary schools. Student participants are largely selected from among under-served, socio-economically disadvantaged and educationally at-risk communities (Call Me MISTER, 2009).

Call Me MISTER takes its name from a line made famous in the 1967 Oscar-winning movie, "In the Heat of the Night." The program is the creation of the Clemson University Research Foundation and three historically Black institutions in South Carolina: Claflin University, Benedict College, and Morris College. The following two and four two-year colleges within the state of South Carolina since joined the four founding members of the partnership: Anderson University, College of Charleston, Coastal Carolina University, Greenville Technical College, Midlands Technical College, Morris College, South Carolina State University, Tri-County Technical College, Trident Technical College and University of South Carolina - Beaufort. Call Me MISTER also has five national partner schools in five different states: The North East Florida Educational Consortium (Florida), Eastern Kentucky University (Kentucky), Metropolitan Community College (Missouri), Cheyney University (Pennsylvania), Longwood University (Virginia). Clemson is responsible for overall marketing and development, but each school is responsible for recruiting for its program (Norton, 2005).



Call Me MISTER was initiated in the fall of 2000 to recruit, train, certify and secure employment for African-American men as teachers in South Carolina's public primary schools. Less than 1 percent, or fewer than 200, of South Carolina's 20,300 elementary school teachers are African-American men. Since 1999, the Mott Foundation has provided \$650,000 in support (Holsendolph, 2007). It is expected that a MISTER who completes his program of study and becomes certified to teach will assume a teaching position and teach one year for each year they received financial support from the Call Me MISTER program. Requirements to be a recipient of the Call Me MISTER Scholarship are that an applicant must: (1) Be a resident of the state of college admission; (2) Be a member of one of the following racial groups: African American/Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian /Pacific Islander, or Native American/Alaskan Native; (3) Have a 2.5 Grade Point Average out of high school; (4) Be newly admitted into a teacher education program or admitted to a community college (Clemson University, 2010).

The program appeals to young men who want to use their teaching positions to change the lives of other African-American males. Students are typically recruited from their own campuses and receive their classroom training locally. The partner institution and its teacher education program first must accept students. After admission, they apply to become program participants, or MISTERS (Norton, 2005). The imprint of the Mister program consists of meetings, seminars and other activities at Clemson, including a summer program that is held on the university's campus (Holsendolph, 2007). The first class of MISTERS graduated in May 2004 and entered classrooms as strong, positive

role models, mentors and leaders. Support for all MISTER's include: tuition assistance through loan forgiveness programs for admitted students pursuing approved programs of study in teacher education at participating colleges; an academic support system to help assure their success and a cohort system for social and cultural support (Clemson University, 2010).

For all children, the MISTER leading his class represents something they don't have in sports stars and entertainers: a Black man of authority whom they can reach out and touch (Norton, 2005).

Mission Statement:

I am a dedicated Servant Leader who is perpetuating a sorely needed concept, Servant-Leaders as role models in elementary schools. I am devoted to planting seeds of dignity and respect in children, and inspiring them to cultivate those seeds that will produce a crop of unprecedented success. I will teach reading, writing and arithmetic and progress to self-esteem, imagination and determination. Because of my immeasurable promise, not only have I earned your respect but I demand it! A title is only important if ones' character and integrity dictate its use. So, when you address me, please verbalize my destiny, please do not call me by my first name, call me in reference to my great vision...

Call Me MISTER (Clemson University, 2010)

### **The Griot Program**

The Griot Program is Marygrove College's school of education African American male career initiative designed to provide qualified individuals the opportunity

to make a rewarding career change. The name for this cohort derived from the African word for a storyteller whose knowledge and wisdom is shared and passed on from generation to generation. The program is geared toward the African American male career changer who wants to make a difference by serving as a primary role model for students in urban school systems. Students who have a degree, or work in fields outside of education, currently serve as ‘emergency substitutes in a regular position’ in high needs areas, are able to earn their teacher certification and a master’s degree through the Griot program.

There are many benefits of the Marygrove’s Griot program. Members of this cohort receive support and advisement from distinguished African American male educators (Griot Program, 2009). Students can continue to work full-time given that all classes are held on Friday and Saturday evenings throughout the year. The program is completed over six semesters, including a semester of student teaching, a teacher certification course sequence, and a cognate to complete the Master of Education degree. Each cohort remains together for all of the courses, working in a multi-cultural group to learn collaboratively.

Marygrove’s Griot program is committed to developing urban leaders, providing students the opportunity and preparation to apply classroom knowledge in an urban laboratory through practical application in the community and eventually take leadership positions in America’s urban centers. Griots are expected to convene forward-thinking political, economic, social, and cultural leaders to explore and positively contribute to a vibrant city. The ultimate goal of the program is to prepare teacher leaders to create a

new model of an engaged urban institution that attracts positive attention in other American cities.

### **Troops to Teachers**

Troops to Teachers is a U.S. Department of Education and Department of Defense program that helps eligible military personnel begin a new career as teachers in public schools where their skills, knowledge and experience are most needed. Troops to Teachers is managed by the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES). Troops to Teachers provides Counseling and Referral services to military personnel interested in beginning a second career in public education as a teacher. The DANTES Troops to Teachers office help applicants identify teacher certification requirements and programs leading to certification and employment opportunities.

In order for members of the armed forces to receive the programs' assistance for placement as an elementary or secondary school teacher must have a baccalaureate or advanced degree, and their last period of service in the armed forces must have been honorable. Stipends of up to \$5,000 are eligible members of the armed forces so that they can obtain certification or licensing as elementary school teachers, secondary school teachers, or vocational/technical teachers and become highly qualified teachers by demonstrating competency in each of the subjects they teach. In addition, the program helps these individuals find employment in high-need local educational agencies (LEA's) or charter schools. In lieu of the \$5,000 stipends, DANTES may pay \$10,000 bonuses to participants who agree to teach in high-poverty schools.

### **Alternative Teacher Certification**

In the past, teachers have generally arrived at the schools after four years of a liberal arts education, with some pedagogy courses, and a major and minor or endorsement area. These teachers have typically been young adults who were fresh out of college. One of the most significant changes in the teaching profession over the past two decades has been the rapid growth of alternative routes into teaching. Although alternative pathways to a teaching career were rare in the 1980s, 49 U.S. states now allow some form of alternative certification (Feistritzer, 2008). In Texas, for example, nearly a third of the 87 teacher training institutions offer alternative certification, either as an option within the preparation program or as the entire program (Newman & Thomas, 1999).

Despite the common terminology used to describe them, alternative routes vary widely in their program design. According to Grossman (2010), four features capture the range of variation: 1) Nature of the provider, which include institutions of higher education; private providers, including nonprofit organizations; and districts; 2) Response to specific labor market needs; 3) Coursework, with regard to the timing and character of coursework and field experiences; 4) Recruitment and selection of highly selective and moderately low selective alternative routes. (p.25)

Alternative teacher certification programs are attracting highly qualified, well-educated, life-experienced adults to the teaching profession (Newman & Thomas, 1999). Research on Teach for America, which is the most studied of all alternative routes, indicates that achievement results for corps members' students either mirror or exceed

the results of students whose teachers entered from university-based programs(Boyd et al., 2006; Decker, Mayer, & Glazerman, 2004;Raymond, Fletcher, & Luque, 2001).

Teacher education programs have a commitment is to identify, educate, and place highly qualified teacher-leaders in urban public schools. These programs seek to prepare and support teacher leaders working with diverse learners to achieve high intellectual, academic, and social standards by creating equitable and successful schools and classrooms. By applying greater expertise, and demanding better results, these individuals will help bring about a dramatic expansion of educational opportunity and quality at all levels. Increased recruitment efforts, the development of new and innovative preparation programs and the implementation of expanded and flexible scheduling of teacher preparation program offerings have resulted in an increasing number of teachers who complete their professional education license requirements. The goal is to prepare program graduates to meet both the practical and intellectual challenges of the teaching profession, to serve the needs of the diverse population of today's students, and to revitalize the profession and the field by preparing educational leaders for tomorrow's schools.

### **Summary**

This chapter contains a review of literature on the research of African American male teachers and recruitment efforts in U.S. K-12 schools. The historical perspective of African American male teachers in K-12 schools in the United States clearly illustrates the backdrop of the current need for more increasing numbers. The problems facing African American males serve an impediment for them to succeed scholastically. In

exploring African American male recruitment efforts across the United States, valuable evidence of efforts are in place. However, an increased exertion is warranted. Though the current challenges of African American male teacher recruitment are highlighted, we must find answers to this national problem of the limited number of African American male teachers in the classroom. This chapter provides insight into the nature of the problem and what has been done by researchers to understand the issues surrounding this phenomenon.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

This qualitative research used a case study methodology. A case study is a detailed examination of a subject or population that has been overlooked (Boddan & Bilken, 1998). The purpose of this study is to explore: (1) how African American male teachers describe personal characteristics attributed to their acceptance of a teaching position and (2) how African American teachers describe factors that lead to their job acceptance decision. The research design and procedures used to conduct this study will include the following: (a) population and sample; (b) research design; (c) instrumentation; (d) participants; (e) data collection; (f) data analysis and (g) member check.

This chapter outlines the methodology for the study. It describes the theoretical assumptions or paradigms that guided the collection and analysis of data and provides a description of the research design by detailing the specific methods used in the analysis.

#### **The School District**

The school district being used for the purpose of this study is located in the Southern region of the United States. The district serves approximately 19,234 students and is ethnically, economically, and academically diverse. The demographic makeup of this particular district is 67.87 % European American, 31.95 % African American; 1.19 % Asian American; 0.06 % Native American. There are a total of 35 K-12 schools in this district which include: Six high schools; Seven middle schools; and Twenty-two



elementary schools. The total amount of certified personnel amounts to 4,729. Classrooms teachers amount to 1,263. Only 40 African American male teachers are employed by this school district. There are eight African American male elementary school teachers, eleven middle school teachers, and twenty-one high school teachers. African American male teacher make up a dismal 3 % of the total teaching population in the district.

Southern Parish School System's teacher recruitment policy does not explicitly state that their intentions are to recruit male teachers of color, particularly African American males. According to Southern Parish School System's teacher recruitment policy, the employment and retention of quality personnel is one of the most important factors in insuring a quality education (Southern Parish School Board Personnel Manual, 2010). Southern Parish School System established policies concerning the recruitment, interviewing, selection, and assignments of all teachers and staff. No district-wide efforts are currently in place to single out any underrepresented group of potential teachers. Southern Parish School System's teacher recruitment policy does not provide any content concerning the staffing of teachers of color, in particular African American males.

### **Purposeful Sample**

This study utilized purposeful sampling to identify the African American male selected for this study. Purposeful sampling attempts to include participants who have experienced the phenomenon under consideration and from those whom the researcher can learn the most (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Merriam, 1988). Patton (1990) suggested

The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information rich cases are from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research. (p. 169)

Furthermore, without interaction, purposeful sampling and emergent design are impossible to achieve (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

For this study, I interviewed six African American male teachers in an urban school district in North Louisiana. The breakdown consisted of two elementary teachers, two middle school teachers, and two high school teachers. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym. For this study, in-depth interviews with African American male teachers was the method of collecting data. I purposefully selected African American male teachers in an urban school district. I want my study to focus on these teachers because research shows African American males make up less than 1% of the teaching force in the United States (Kunjufu, 2003; Lewis 2006).

The selection criteria for the participants were based on predetermined criteria. There are only four conditions for inclusion in this study. Specifically, all of the teachers must be male, (2) African American, (3) certified, and (4) within the fifth year of teaching.

The participants in this research were selected from a list of eligible participants that meet the inclusionary criteria obtained from the urban school district's human resources office. This list included all currently employed and certified African American male personnel for the 2010-2011 school year. In order to be eligible for to

participate in this study, the solicited teachers had to be African American male, certified, and have no more than five years of teaching experience.

### **Positionality**

A qualitative study relies heavily on the researcher, a human, as the primary instrument. Lincoln and Guba (1985) declare:

Naturalistic inquiry is always carried out – logically enough – in a natural setting. Such a contextual inquiry demands a human instrument, one fully adaptive to the indeterminate situation that will be encountered. The human instrument builds upon his or her tacit knowledge as much as, if not more than, upon propositional knowledge and uses methods that are appropriate to humanly implemented inquiry: interviews, observations, document analysis, unobtrusive clues, and the like. (p. 187)

I am the instrument for this study. However the interviews served as the primary source of direct information received from the participant's interpretation of the factors that influenced their decision to become classroom teachers. I used an interview guide approach to naturalistic interviews to explore each participant's interpretations relating to those factors and their recruitment process to the district. The interview was developed based upon key issues derived from the literature review. In order to minimize the imposition of predetermined responses when gathering data, I asked interview questions that were open-ended in nature. The interview guide in this study consisted of three main issues: (1) personal characteristics that attributed to their acceptance of a teaching position; (2) factors that lead to their job acceptance decision;

and (3) their recruitment process. Although the interview questions were developed based prior to the research, I was freely allowed to word questions in a way that established a conversational style during the interview. For example, a conversational style allowed me to develop new questions while continuing the flow throughout the interview.

In each case study, the interviews were conducted with the participants to seek an understanding of their self-perceptions of what influenced them to become classroom teachers. The interviews were held in the participants' classroom or at a neutral site in the community which provided a comfortable setting for conversation. I interviewed each participant once with most of the interviews ranging from one to two hours. Immediately following each interview, notes taken from the interview were organized.

Organizing and reviewing notes were done as soon as possible in order to allow me to recall other things that were not noted when they occurred. Each interview conducted was handwritten as well as audio taped with the consent of the participants. Handwritten notes involved me paying careful attention to what was being said, and allowed me to make certain notations without making it known to the interviewee.

In addition, taking notes did not require me to memorize statements made during the interview; however, it did allow me to highlight important items for later review. On the other hand, using a tape recorder had many advantages, such as assuring completeness, providing the opportunity to review as often as necessary, and assuring that full understanding had been achieved. Tape recording my interviews provided me an opportunity to later review nonverbal cues such as voice pitches and pauses, as well as

material for reliability checks. Each participant's interview was transcribed by a professional transcription company.

The data collected for this study consisted of six individual lived experiences. The open-ended nature of questions allowed individual participants to focus on what influenced their decision to become teachers and their recruitment experiences. This was reflected in the narrative sets of the participants.

The guiding research questions addressed issues concerning African American male teachers. They are as follows:

1. How do African American male teachers describe personal characteristics attributed to their acceptance of a teaching position?
2. How do African American teachers describe factors the lead to their job acceptance decision?
3. How do African American male teachers describe their recruitment process?

### **Data Collection**

After receiving approval to conduct the research from Texas A&M University's Institutional Review Board, I sent a letter to the superintendent of the Southern Parish School District requesting permission to conduct a case study on African American male teachers in the district. I obtained a file from the director of human resources that contained a list of the forty-three African American male teachers employed by the district for the 2010-2011 school year. The file listed the following information on all the African American male teachers: a) name; b) school; 3) grade level taught; and 4) years of teaching experience. I contacted all of the teachers who met the criteria for this study,

namely – African American, male, certified with five or less years of teaching experience. A one-week grace period was allotted for teachers to return the forms. Six teachers were selected from the returned forms. At the end of one week, those six teachers willing to participate were interviewed individually in their classrooms before, during or after school, whichever was best for them. The interviews were in-depth and lasted from one to two hours.

Data were collected through the use of audio recorded individual interviews with all six participants. The interviews were conversations between the participants and myself. Each audio recorded interview was transcribed into written text. Observational notes accompanied the recorded interviews which provided detailed descriptions of the setting and participant nuances that could not be captured in audio form. The interview questions are located in Appendix C.

### **Research Design**

This research study functions from a case study method on African American male teachers (Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1994). “A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries are between phenomenon and context is not clearly evident” (Yin, 1994, p. 13). Merriam (1988) defines case study as “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit” (p. 21). I implemented the qualitative research framework in order to gain an understanding of why these African American males chose to become teachers. The intent of my case study is to expand the limited research relating to the underrepresentation of African American male teachers in K-12

school settings. In order to gain a clear understanding of the factors that contribute to successful recruitment of African American male teachers in the K-12 setting, this study will investigate recruitment by employing a critical race perspective.

For this study, I utilized qualitative research methods to gain an in-depth look at personal and professional characteristics and factors that lead to a job acceptance decision for six African American male teachers in an urban school district in the South. Qualitative research is interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (Merriam, 1998).

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that you accumulate to enable one to reveal findings (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Marshall and Rossman (1989) note that it is not possible to comprehend human behavior without comprehending the framework in which participants interpret their thoughts, emotions, and behavior. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) emphasized that qualitative research is multipurpose in its focus, and involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. My research attempts to subjective, personal in meaning and definition, commonalities and voices to the underrepresented.

### **Trustworthiness and Credibility**

As the researcher and primary research instrument (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993), it was impossible to remain unbiased as I documented, handled, and

analyzed the data. The foundation of qualitative research recognizes and appreciates the influence of the researcher on the participants and vice-versa (Merriam & Associates, 2002). Credibility in qualitative research such as in the narrative analysis design of this study is reflected in the relationship between my research findings and the real world (Merriam, 2009). I used two strategies to ensure the credibility of my study. First, I utilized the method of triangulation. Merriam (2009) defined triangulation as the use of multiple sources of data or data collection methods to confirm emerging findings. In conjunction with audio-recorded interviews, I wrote extensive observational notes during each interview which highlighted the observables throughout each interviews. I recorded such nuances as body language, long pauses, and laughter that I observed throughout each interview.

### **Member Check**

Member checking is a validity procedure that involves taking data and interpretations back to the participants in the study so they can confirm the credibility of the information and narrative account (Cresswell & Miller, 2000). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that member check is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility. I went to the source of the information, the teacher, to check my data and the interpretation. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Throughout the data analysis process I was able to ask several questions of the informants in relation to my interpretation of some things that they said, especially in consideration of my findings. The informants were very instrumental in providing feedback throughout this process and contributed to the credibility of the research findings and analysis.



### **Transferability**

Lincoln and Guba (1985), proposed transferability as the qualitative counterpart for external validity. They also suggested, “if there is to be transferability, the burden of proof lies less with the original investigator than with the person seeking to make the application elsewhere. The original inquirer cannot know the sites to which transferability might be sought, but the appliers can and do know” (p. 298). To be more specific, though researchers seeks only to describe one specific situation and the meaning of that particular situation for the participants of the study, the reader of the research report can apply the findings of the research to similar situations in which he or she is involved. To this end I anticipate the readers to be able to transfer different aspects of my study to situations in which they are involved. However, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated, the transferability will depend upon the situation to which the reader applies the findings of my study.

### **Dependability and Conformability**

To determine dependability and conformability, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that both can be determined through one “properly managed process.” An auditor, who is also a doctoral student, was used to examine the process by which various stages of the study, including analytic techniques, were conducted (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba determined whether this process was applicable to the research undertaken and whether it was applied consistently (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To show conformability, all records, taped interviews, transcripts, notes, discussions, and all other relevant documents relating to this study were maintained by me. Merriam (1988)

said it best when she described dependability and conformability by saying, “Rather than demanding that outsiders get the same results, one wishes outsiders to concur that, given the data collected, the results make sense and they are consistent and dependable” (Merriam, 1988, p. 172).

### **Complimentary Data Techniques**

In order to gather additional data, several other strategies and techniques will be employed. The purpose of these techniques was to enhance the collection and interpretation of the data. The use of tape recording, field notes, and non-verbal cues are discussed in the next section.

#### **Tape Recordings**

A digital audio recorder was used to record interviews with the participants. The transcriptions were reviewed and corrected by the researcher.

#### **Field Notes**

The main reason I recorded field notes is to compose a written document of the observations, dialogue, experiences, and descriptions of the participants and the events that influenced them directly or indirectly. My field notes also served the purpose of recording certain feelings, and thoughts about the investigation. All of my field notes were kept in one notebook. This notebook consisted of the interview records and observations that will be made during the audio recorded interviews with the participants. Following each observation or interview, I transcribed the field notes.

## Summary

This qualitative research study examined: (1) How African American male teachers described personal characteristics attributed to their acceptance of a teaching position?; (2) How African American teachers described factors the lead to their job acceptance decision?: and (3) How African American male teachers described their recruitment process? In order to understand the participants' responses, the primary source of data collection was audio recorded through open ended interviews.

In analyzing the interview data, I performed a thematic analysis where I reviewed the transcribed interviews and coded theme according to patterns. Next, I identified all data related to the clarified patterns. I further examined the data and highlighted emergent themes. By piecing together the themes which emerged from the participants stories, I was able to present a comprehensive picture of their collective experiences and documented them accordingly in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS**

The life experiences of six African American male teachers in a selected school district were explored in order to understand factors that led to their job acceptance decision. Six African American male school teachers with classroom teaching experience that ranged from one to five years were examined: two elementary teachers, two middle school teachers, and two high school teachers. In-depth interviews were conducted to gain insight about their experiences.

There were multiple purposes of this study: 1) to hear the voices of African American male teachers in a selected urban school district; 2) to identify the factors that contribute to their job acceptance decisions; 3) to gain an in-depth understanding of why African American male teachers chose teaching as a profession; 4) to determine and understand the nature of the professional lives of these teachers; and finally 5) to advance our existing knowledge base in attracting African American males to our nation's classrooms. The following three research questions guided the study: (a) How do African American male teachers describe their personal characteristics attributed to their interest of becoming a teacher? (b) How do African American male teachers describe factors that led to their job acceptance decision? and (c) How do African American male teachers describe their recruitment process?

This presentation of findings is divided into two main sections. The first section presents individual profiles of the six participants in this study. The second section presents a description and explanation of the major themes and subthemes that emerged

from the participants' interviews followed by a summary of each research question. A summary of the section two concludes this chapter. For research question one, How do African American male teachers describe their personal characteristics attributed to their acceptance of a teaching position?, the emerging themes were: (a) *Nobility associated with the teaching profession and* (b) *compassion associated with the teaching profession*. Nobility associated with the teaching profession were classified into two subthemes. These subthemes are 1) garnering respect in the community and 2) desire to serve as a role model. Compassion associated with the teaching profession were classified into two subthemes. These subthemes were 1) giving back to the community and 2) demonstrating care for others.

For research question two, How do African American male teachers describe factors that led to their job acceptance decision?, the emerging themes were: a) *Stability of the profession*, b) *Family and community influences* and c) *Life experiences*. The participants' responses describe the factors that led to their job acceptance decision. Supporting data are categorized by each of the themes. The section concludes with a summary of the overall findings for the second research question.

For research question three, How do African American male teachers describe their recruitment process?, the emerging theme was: *I was not recruited: I chose this district*. The participants' responses indicate that they were not recruited by the Southern Parish School District. Instead, the participants chose district. The responses throughout the findings are both direct quotes that characterize opinions of the participants.

### **Participant Profiles**

This section presents an overall descriptive profile of the participants included in this study. The purpose of this section is to provide information on each participant's background. These profiles were prepared for the six African American male teachers that participated this study. These profiles cover demographic information and offer a snapshot of their teaching service record. This section discusses the participants' background as well as offers my perception of their disposition throughout the interview session. Of the six African American male participants profiled in this section, two are elementary school teachers, two are middle school teachers and two are high school teachers. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym by which he is referred to in the profile. The African American male teacher participants included: Participant #1, Patrick, Ira, Darrell, Josh and Ellis. Table 2 summarizes the demographics of the participants recorded in school level order. The table also lists the pseudonym, age, teaching level, teacher education program, certification area, and teaching experience of each participant.

A pseudonym was used to protect the identity of each participant. I used the pseudonym "Participant" followed by a numerical identifier. The age of each participant was also recorded. The participants' ages range from 26-30 years old. The teaching level of each participant was recorded by their current teaching level: elementary, middle, or high school. Two types of education certification programs identified. Traditional certification programs include a four-year bachelor's degree teacher education program. Alternative certification included a one to two year post bachelor program that allows a

non-education major to receive teaching credentials in a specific K-12 area. The certification area recorded in the table lists the primary teaching area in which the participant certified to teach. Teaching experience was also recorded for each participant. The participants' teaching experience includes the total number of years that they have as a K-12 classroom teacher. The participants' teaching experience range from zero to five years.

**Table 2**  
**Participant Profiles**

Name (Pseudonym)	Age	Teaching Level	Teacher Preparation Program	Certification Area(s)	Teaching Experience
Channon	26	Elementary School	Traditional Certification	Elementary 1-5 Biology 6-12 Social Studies 6-12	3 years
Patrick	36	Elementary School	Alternative Certification	Elementary 1-6	0 years
Ira	30	Middle School	Traditional Certification	Social Studies 6-12	5 years
Darrell	27	Middle School	Alternative Certification	Physical Education K-12	3 years
Josh	30	High School	Alternative Certification	Biology 6-12	5 years
Ellis	28	High School	Traditional Certification	Physical Education K-12	5 years

**Channon**

Channon was a highly energetic twenty-seven year old elementary teacher who seemed to be thrilled to be an educator. From the opening to the closing of the interview he was delighted to share his experiences. Beaming with confidence, he was a proud African American male teacher. He mentioned that education was very important to him. The oldest of three boys, he was primarily raised by his Great grandparents in a small town in northern Louisiana. His great grandparents did not graduate from high school, but they instilled in him the education was a key to success. He attended public school where he graduated from the local high school in 2003. The following fall academic semester, he enrolled in a Predominately White College / Institution (PWI), also located in northern Louisiana with aspirations of becoming a teacher. He graduated in the summer of 2007 with a bachelor's of arts degree in biology education.

Although Channon majored in biology education, which certified him to teach in grades 6-12 in the state of Louisiana, he expressed his desire to be both flexible and marketable as it related to his future as an educator. He has completed the certification requirements for the following areas in the state: elementary grades 1-5; biology 6-12; and social studies 6-12. After graduating, he began working for the Southern Parish school system, at the same middle school where he also completed student teaching. This was a one-year commitment since the previous teacher was on a one year sabbatical. After completing one year of teaching at the middle school level, he relocated to an elementary school within the same district where he has remained for the past two



years in the Southern Parish School District. He is currently a sixth-grade science teacher in the Southern Parish School District.

### **Patrick**

Patrick was a thirty-six year old first year elementary classroom teacher with four months of teaching experience at the time of this interview. He had recently switched careers. He was the K-12 product of a neighboring school district. Patrick attended a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) located in Tallahassee, Florida where he received a bachelor's degree in business administration. Patrick expressed that teaching definitely was not his first career choice. Patrick stated that he chose business administration as his major in college because his dad, who recently died after being self-employed for over thirty-seven years, had been in business for over twenty plus years at that point. He mentioned that he had been involved in many aspects of business entrepreneurship. Prior to college, he worked in a family owned business and remains involved in the family business. He had aspirations of management level positions in corporate America. After graduating from college, he was employed as a financial planner for about eight years. He then moved from Florida to Texas and worked several years in finance and banking for a leading company. He appreciated the structure of this leading company. The uncertainty of his future to move up the corporate ladder sparked an immediate thought process. He transferred home from Texas to Louisiana and entered the mortgage lending side of the business atmosphere. He expressed that the mortgage lending business was offered him a sustainable lifestyle, but the recession caused layoffs and panic throughout the business world.

Though he expressed his love for the business world, illness of a close family member and job stability lead him to a more unwavering profession. After researching an alternative teacher certification program at a local Predominately White Institution (PWI) that his wife had been enrolled in, he discovered it only required thirty credit hours to receive a Master's degree in teaching and he could actually teach while both completing work and testing requirements to become certified in the state of Louisiana. Patrick plans to complete the alternative teacher certification Master's program in the summer of 2011. He currently teaches fifth grade social studies at an elementary school in the Southern Parish School District. Participant #2 mentioned that his first year of teaching has been pretty busy. At the time of his interview he had been married for a year and three months and was expecting his first child in the summer of 2011 as well.

### **Ira**

Ira was a thirty-year-old middle school teacher. He teaches American history to approximately one hundred twenty 7<sup>th</sup> grade students. He has been teaching for five years within the Southern Parish School District. He had not been employed by any other school district except for Southern Parish School System.

Ira was educated at a Historically Black College/University (HBCU) located in Baton Rouge, LA. Although he graduated in 2003 with a bachelor's degree in history, teaching was not his first career choice. As a child growing up he wanted to be an electrician. When he entered middle school he saw journalism as the choice for him so mass communications stuck with him for a while. When he entered in high school, he enrolled in journalism courses and gained knowledge of the history of the newspaper

printing press. This gave him knowledge a strong knowledge base of how newspapers are printed in the past as well as the current methods of printing at that time. He also learned things about, black rooms, red rooms, developing photos, assembling the various parts of a newspaper. When he enrolled in college, his first major was mass communications. He was on the way to living out his dream. He believed that this profession would allow him to travel and see the world. As he moved further into his major, he saw that the salary of this profession would not lead him to the life that he wanted to live. He expressed that mass communications majors did not earn an appreciable salary and the travel was extensive. He mentioned that they also have to work extremely hard. He believed mass communications majors worked harder than most other people in order to obtain employment. Above all, some professors in the mass communications department did not believe in him as a future journalist or as a person in the field of mass communication. Those impressions put him in a depressed mood and discouraged him from maintaining interest in the field. The lack of motivation and support from his college professors lead him to pursue other options.

At this point, education was still not within his realm of thinking. He spent the following semester majoring in economics. The next semester he majored in history and included geography as a minor. He also looked at switching his major to speech pathology. At that time, the thought of being an urban planner diminished when he found out the university did not have an urban planning program. Eventually, he went to his academic advisor and expressed to her that the one thing that was important to him was being able to get a job out of college and going straight to work. As soon as he got

out of college he wanted to find a job. More importantly, he wanted to be able to find a job in any major city within the United States. His academic adviser's first and only suggestion was that he major in education. All of his credits were accepted by the College of Education at his university. He was also able to complete the requirements to become certified to teach social studies in grades six through twelve in the state of Louisiana without losing time off of his degree plan. Now married with a seven-year old girl and new-born boy, he remembers that conversation with his college advisor as a real life changing moment. He felt that this meeting led him to his professional calling.

### **Darrell**

Darrell was a 27 year old Physical Education teacher at a middle school in Southern Parish School District. He has been teaching for a total of four years in this school district. He has taught in both an elementary and middle school in the Southern Parish School District. The last three years he has been working with what he considered "at risk" schools. He mentioned that the majority if not all of the students that he taught were economically disadvantaged. He felt that these schools were the perfect place for him to give back to the community. Working with disadvantaged youth had always been an interest of his.

Darrell was a very jubilant young man who expressed how proud he was to contribute to this study. Throughout the interview he conveyed that more research is needed that examines the underrepresentation of African American male teachers in K-12 schools. He was a hometown boy, born and raised in the most populated city of Southern Parish. His K-12 student experiences were also in the Southern Parish School

District. Upon graduating from the local high school within the district, he enrolled in a local Predominately White Institution (PWI). Initially, he did not think that education would be able to support his lifestyle or a family. Therefore he majored in physical therapy and received his bachelor's degree four years later. Though a career as a physical therapist offered more potential salary than a classroom teacher, a year a working as a physical therapist convinced him that this career option was not physically and emotionally gratifying. This lack of job satisfaction led him to research options to become a teacher. Darrell enrolled in and completed an alternative teacher certification program that was affiliated with the university where he received his bachelor's degree. He was certified as a physical education teacher in grades K-12. He works as a middle school physical education teacher in addition to coaching seventh grade boys' football and basketball.

### **Josh**

Josh was a 30 year old hometown hero. He was a product of the Southern Parish School District. He attended a 5A High School within the parish and excelled in both academics and athletics. His senior year he earned All-State honors in football as well as Academic All-State honors. Graduating in the top five percent of his high school class, he received a full scholarship to a local PWI in Southern Louisiana. He would go on to hold individual football records at that PWI. These collegiate athletic accomplishments led way to an opportunity for him to try out for the National Football League (NFL). All through high school and during pursuit of his undergraduate degree, he was an aspiring dental student. He later received a bachelor's of science degree in biology. After the

desire to enter the dental profession diminished, he explored other routes for using his biology degree while giving back to the community. His research led him to an alternative teacher's certification program housed at the same university where he received his undergraduate degree. He was able to complete the two year requirement of this program and obtain a master's degree in curriculum and instruction. Josh had a teacher's certification in biology, which allowed him to teach biology, physical science and environmental science in grades six through twelve.

Upon completion of the program, he was hired by the Southern Parish School District to work as a biology teacher and coach football. He had accumulated five years of teaching experience. All of his teaching experience has been at the high school level within the Southern Parish School District. Though he was no longer coaching football, all of his teaching efforts were dedicated to his current biology students.

Josh found this research topic intriguing. He expressed that there is a shortage of African American teachers, but also a more significant shortage of African American male teachers in the subjects of biology and physics. The critical shortage of African American male teachers in K-12 schools was something that has been a concern of his for quite some time.

### **Ellis**

Ellis was 28 years old, born and raised in a major city in North Louisiana. He attended grades K-12 in a neighboring school district and later attended an HBCU in South Louisiana. It was during this time in college that he decided to major in physical education. He completed the requirements for the college of education and graduated

with a Bachelor of Science degree in education with certification in physical education. That certification qualified him to teach physical education and health to grades K-12 in the state of Louisiana. He has since enrolled in and completed a master's degree in educational administration from the same HBCU in where he received his bachelor's degree.

Ellis has five years of teaching experience in secondary education. He previously spent four years in a South Louisiana school district teaching health and physical education at the middle school level. There he also gained his initial coaching experience, in boys' basketball and football. He recently started his first year in the Southern Parish School District as a high school social studies teacher. He was employed by the Southern Parish School District to teach on an out of field teaching certificate. Family obligations required him to move back to his hometown. Ellis expressed an initial hesitation about moving back home. Since coming back he realized that everything happened for a reason. He believed that everything had fallen into place for him. He was happy to be back around his support system of family and close friends. Ellis has also started working as an assistant high school basketball coach under the leadership of his former high school basketball coach. Ellis indicated he was currently living out his dream of instructing youth and giving back to the community that helped him.

### **Presentation of Findings**

The following section presents an analysis of the overall findings associated with the interview data from the study's participants. The research questions that guided this

study are listed before each theme identified in the analysis of data. Divided according to representative sections, or identified themes, each subsection includes a discussion of that theme and the relevant segments of the interviews that are reflective of the identified themes. After each theme and sub-theme discussion, there is a summary which captures the essence of each theme as presented by the data. Where applicable, my own related observation associated with the themes and overall interview experiences with the participants are also presented. This section presents a description and explanation of the major themes and subthemes that emerged from the participants' interviews.

To address research question one, How do African American male teachers describe their personal characteristics attributed to their acceptance of a teaching position?, the emerging themes were: (1) *Nobility associated with the teaching profession* and, (2) *compassion associated with the teaching profession*. *Nobility associated with the teaching profession* were classified into two subthemes. These subthemes are: (a) garnering respect in the community, and (b) desire to serve as a role model. *Compassion associated with the teaching profession* was classified into two subthemes. These subthemes were (a) giving back to the community and, (b) demonstrating care for others.

To address research question two, How do African American male teachers describe factors that led to their job acceptance decision?, the emerging themes were: a) *stability of the profession*, b) *family and community influences* and c) *life experiences*.

Research question three is, How do African American male teachers describe their recruitment process? The findings of research question three revealed one emerging



theme : *I was not recruited: I chose this district. I was not recruited: I chose this district* was classified into three subthemes. The three subthemes are: (a) obstacles and restrictions of teaching, (b) employment process, (c) improving teacher recruitment in the district. The responses throughout the findings are direct quotes that characterize opinions of the participants.

### **Research Question One**

This section presents the two themes that emerged that were associated with research question one. The question was, How do African American male teachers describe their personal characteristics attributed to their acceptance of a teaching position? Nobility associated with the teaching profession and compassion associated with the teaching profession were the emerging themes associated with this research question. Supporting data are categorized by each of the themes. The section concludes with a summary of the overall findings for the first research question.

#### **Nobility Associated with the Teaching Profession**

Addressing research question one, nobility emerged as a major theme when participants were asked to discuss the personal characteristics that attributed to their interest in a teaching position. Noble is how the participants internalized one characteristic which attributed to their acceptance of a teaching position. Supported evidence for this theme is discussed and categorized by the following sub-themes: (a) garnering respect in the community and (b) desire to serve as a role model.

When analyzing the comments of the six African American male teachers interviewed in this case study, it became apparent that their self-proclaimed nobility

played a major role in their decision to become an educator. The nobility associated with being a teacher is not a new phenomenon. In many countries, teachers are revered and held in high regard by the community at large (Fwu & Wang, 2002). Nobility in the teaching profession according to the participants is described as a privileged status. The following are excerpts from the teacher participants which emphasized their belief that nobility is a personal characteristic associated with teaching.

“The reason I like education was because it has always been looked at as a noble profession.....” (Josh)

“This is a job that is well respected and one of those noble professions in the community....” (Channon)

“One of the reasons I wanted to become a doctor was because it was a noble profession, so the teaching profession is also one of those noble professions in the community.” (Ira)

In addition, a review of the interview data indicates that nobility associated with the teaching profession is multifaceted and defined by two key elements which emerged as the subthemes: (a) garnering respect in the community and (b) serving as a role model.

### **Garnering Respect in the Community**

Historically, African American teachers have been respected because there were only few African Americans who were educated at the time (Milner & Howard, 2004). Jobs for African American males were limited to teaching, preaching or becoming a mortician (Anderson, 1988). The participants stated that it was their duty to go back into the communities to teach what they learned in their colleges and institutions of higher learning. The participants indicated that the level of respect African American male teachers incur in the African American community does not materialize overnight. This

reverence comes from hard work ethics and a commitment to the community. The participants in the study expressed the high regard a need to be respected and visible in the community.

“Teaching is a highly respected profession in the African American community.” (Darrell)

“African American male teachers are held to high standards just like the preachers, mayors, and judges.” (Patrick)

“My job does not stop when the last bell rings. I coach basketball in the community, attend church in the community and shop in the community... I am highly visible throughout this community...” (Ellis)

These teachers understood their position of leadership required more than pedagogical excellence but a strong presence in the community. The visibility garnered the respect of the locals. The participants expressed that the African American community hold teachers to a high regard. As products of the African American community, these participants expressed that they have a duty to uphold and leave up to. They voiced that African American male teachers have always been a pillar in their community. They suggested that African American male teachers have been the individuals the community depends on to educate the next generation. These participants welcomed the challenges that come along with the being an educator. They expressed that they were “built” for this type of position.

“My youth directors they were both teachers and we looked up to those two ladies. They were well respected in the community.” (Channon)

“If the students respect you then they will do anything for you” (Josh)

“These students do actually respect you as a teacher” (Darrell)

“Because the teacher was one who was respected; they trusted the teacher”  
(Ellis)

These direct quotes are examples of participants’ personal observations of how teachers were respected by members of the community, students, as well as parents. To the extent one participant knew the word of a teacher would be accepted over that of a student.

### **Desire to Serve as Role Model**

Having African American male role model teachers significantly impacts the academic achievement of all students (Dees, 2004). The participants communicated true role models are those who possess the qualities that someone would like to have and affect them in a way that makes them want to be better people. African American male teachers have the privilege to be role models for all of their students. “With so many young African American males being raised by single mothers we need more role models in the class room.” The implications of being an African American male teaching African American boys and girls who do have limited contact with a positive African American male figure are astronomical. These direct quotes express the participants’ sentiments regarding the importance of being role models.

“I serve as a role model for the students that I teach, especially the African-American males in my classroom. They can see something positive that they may not normally see or may not have at home or in the community themselves.... They can see that there are other avenues besides the negative ones that they see daily.” (Darrell)

“I am a role model for many of my students in particular a lot of students who come from a lot of single-parent homes where those homes being a lot of single parent mothers and not many men are in their lives...I also conducted a little survey myself with several students and ask the students to name five positive African American male role models...a lot of the students could name no more than two African American male role models...” (Channon)

“What I bring to the table as an African-American male educator is being a big brother or role model...being that fatherly figure or just more so just a friend.” (Ellis)

“Many of my students look up to me...I am that father figure in their life...I must make sure that I channel that power effectively by preparing my students for greatness” (Patrick)

The participants expressed that a great amount of what they contribute to the educational process is not necessarily something found in educational textbooks or formal curriculum. These teachers articulated the responsibility they assumed to share life lessons in preparation for the students future. The participants' indicated the majority of their students come from low socio-economic backgrounds and the importance to serve as a role model for all of their students. Many students also come from single parents households where the mother is the head of the home. The participants felt the presence of an African American male teacher as a role model is warranted in the classroom. This responsibility extends to modeling appropriate behavior and appearance. As professionals, these teachers fully understand that appearance is the first order in establishing one's perception then beliefs. In many instances a person is judged by his appearance. Dressing in a professional manner allows teachers to gain the respect and set a positive example for students. Students are likely to model the behavior and appearance they observe in adults. African American male teachers believe it is important as role models to follow the established conservative attire required by the district dress code.

The participants expressed that one of the biggest problems in the school setting was dress code violations of African American male students. The participants

mentioned that these disciplinary problems that could easily be avoided. They also expressed the importance of African American male teachers modeling how to dress appropriately in terms of having their pants pulled up or shirttails tucked in their pants properly. The importance of teachers dress and appearance were seen across the following responses.

“I make sure that I’m dressed professionally every day and that is required for all teachers....a lot of times the student do not see African-American males in business casual or business attire every day, especially when they are outside of the school setting so I think that really makes a difference...” (Ellis)

“One student told me, ‘Mr. you have church shoes on’. I took the opportunity at that moment to educate the entire class on the importance of professional appearance...” (Patrick)

“On a daily basis, I demonstrate to my students how a professional dresses and behaves...I think it is important for young people to be taught at an early age how they should dress...for example how shoes should be shined, clothes should be pressed, hair should be groomed and combed neatly...I think this is important...” (Channon)

The responses of all the participants indicated that their daily dress and appearance was of great importance to them. Since teaching is a profession, there is a need for teachers to look professional. The participants articulated that a professional look is a recruitment mechanism for the teaching profession. Students and people in general want to be a part of something they consider attractive. They also expressed a significant value on not looking slouchy. Teachers have to demonstrate the look and characteristics of a competent and confident individual both inside and outside the workplace.

The participants expressed that seeing an African American male in a positive light is important. As classroom teachers, these African American males voiced that the

need to always led by example and handling themselves appropriately in all situations. They also demonstrated character every day in the classroom. The participants try to be not only a teacher, but somebody the students can come to when they have problems, a mentor. They set positive examples for their students. They educate their students of the many opportunities beyond a life of illegal activities present in the community, exposing them to career options beyond entertainment in professional sports or music. Although those things are possible, they expressed that there are other avenues and aspects of life that can be explored in order to be successful. Based on the participants' responses, they clearly believe African American students, in particularly male students, have an essential need for positive role models that demonstrate resiliency.

### **Compassion Associated With the Teaching Profession**

Addressing research question one, *Compassion Associated with Teaching Profession*, the participant's personal characteristics of compassion that attributed to their acceptance of a position is discussed. In addition, a review of the interview data indicates that compassion associated with the teaching profession is two dimensional and defined by two key elements which emerged as the subthemes: (a) giving back to the community and (b) demonstrating care for others.

In analyzing the comments of the six African American male participants in this case study, their deeply rooted compassion for their students and community became obvious when reflecting on their own words. It is not surprising for teachers to experience feelings of compassion as it is often considered a profession of calling much like a calling in ministry (Farkas, Johnson, & Foleno, 2000). According to the

participants, compassion associated with the teaching profession can be seen in acts of caring and kindness. The following are excerpts from the teacher participants which emphasized the personal acts of associated with teaching.

“A caring and compassionate teacher will get to know the families of their students and will make themselves available for family questions, concerns, or needs that affect the student’s life.” (Channon)

“Really, what I try to contribute to my students’ educational process is hopefully what every other teacher would want to do...and that is incorporating compassion... I'm not for sure what each household pertains and what each household has, but I do know what my students on the south side of this city have to deal with...” (Ellis)

“Teachers can show compassion for students by providing extra support for students who are struggling. Students will notice when a teacher goes the extra mile to help them.” (Darrell)

The participants interviewed viewed caring as arising from the African American community notion of helping. These teachers voiced that they are ethically committed to and believed in all of their students (Walker, 1996). A caring teacher makes an ethical commitment to each his or her students (Irvine, 2002). Supported evidence for this theme is discussed and categorized by the following sub-themes: (a) giving back to the community and (b) demonstrating care for others. A summary of the findings under this theme and subtheme directly follow.

### **Giving Back to the Community**

Giving back to the community was a subtheme connected with the theme, compassion associated with the teaching profession. Giving back to the community is defined as a service or activity that is performed by someone or a group of people for the benefit of the public or its institutions (Edmondson & Carroll, 1999). Giving back to the



community was defined as a personal characteristic that attributed to the participants' decision to enter the teaching profession. The participants expressed their desire to service in general begins with giving back to the community. This service played an important role in a majority of the participants' decision to enter the teaching profession. This service philosophy does not include boastfulness or arrogance but humbleness with limited desire for recognition. Teachers give back to the community in various ways. As shown in the following quotes, a desire to give back to the community was revealed as a reason for choosing to become a classroom teacher.

“*Giving back* is a vital part of a full and rewarding life...It is a *service* type of career and I was taught to focus on service.” (Patrick)

“The thing that drew me to a teaching profession was the job itself...the role as a teacher...It is a great *service* and asset to the community... That was something that really drew me to the profession.” (Ira)

These African American male teachers expressed that their desire to giving back to the community was a major factor in their choice to become a teacher. These participants alleged that there is a strong need for African American males that want to support the needs all students, in particularly African American male students. They realized that many of their African American male students lacked genuine support and guidance needed to be successful in society. Each of the participants in this study were so compelled to give back to their community that they each sought positions in the districts in which there were educated. These African American male teachers did not see their job as just employment. They believe they are actually serving their community. The participants expressed that in order for the community to grow, an

efforts must be made to make it happen. The following personal characteristics seen throughout all of the participants attributed to their acceptance of a teaching position.

### **Demonstrating Care for Others**

Since students spend the majority of their time in school, it is important to have teachers that genuinely care about them. Having a teacher who genuinely cares about students will help the students to develop a positive self-concept as well as help them to be intrinsically motivated to do well in school. Students want to be cared for (Irvine, 2002). The participants shared various stories of giving and caring.

“I’m a listening ear. Sometimes a child just needs someone to talk to....I respect them and care about their overall wellbeing. I just have a traditional manner of giving and that is what draws my students to me.” (Darrell)

“The one thing I have noticed when I was tutoring some third grade students after school....there was a little girl who left an extremely filthy jacket in the classroom. I took the jacket home and washed it....I’m sure that have showed her that I do care and do want them to look and appear clean and decent and well groomed.” (Patrick)

“I teach in a Title I school that is in a low social economic school setting. I have students who simply do not have....So I take that little change [money] I do make and use it to give back on things like hats and gloves. I notice that many of my students don’t possess these items so when I find them on sale I don’t mind picking up some and giving it to them.” (Channon)

These participants’ stories of their compassion for others are illustrative of a personal characteristic that attributed to their interest in the teaching profession. Caring is a trait that is common amongst many good teachers and students know when teachers genuinely care about them (Walker, 1996). Teachers also know that this trait cannot be counterfeited. The participants expressed that caring and having compassion for others

is intrinsic. Because of this, acts of care were demonstrated by these teachers from the onset of the school year.

The participants mentioned that they have an open-door policy. Their students can speak with them at any time if they have any questions or concerns about school or life in general. The participants indicated that the open-door policy helps the students' emotional well-being since many of the kids live in a "survival mode" when they are not in school. The participants expressed they make sure the students feel they are in a safe environment when at school. These teachers see their position as multifaceted, requiring them to wear multiple hats. They appeared comfortable assuming the responsibility of not only teacher but confidant and parental figure as well. These multiple roles gave these teachers opportunities to compassionately listen to their students while applying stern disciplinary standards.

### **Summary of Research Question One**

The participants in this study described personal characteristics that attributed to their acceptance of a teaching position. As the participants describe what became a reoccurring theme, *nobility and compassion* associated with being an African American male teacher, the enthusiasm becomes evident. The nobility associated with the teaching profession is not new. In contrary to what is often experienced in the United States, teachers are highly esteemed in others countries throughout the world (Fwu & Wang, 2002). These teachers sought positions that bestow privileges of a well-respected role model in the community. They were more than willing to uphold the high ethical standards that lead to that kind of reverence among students, families and the

community. These teachers desired to serve as role models in forms of their character and professionalism. Fully understanding that personal appearance is important, they each shared how their own appearance was a reflection of what they expected from their students. This unofficial curriculum became part of their pedagogy.

According to the participants, the opportunity to demonstrate acts of compassion and serve the community attributed to their acceptance of a teaching position. They recognized the need and made a career choice that would afford them the opportunity to meet the growing needs of the community. The participants incorporated caring as an integral part of their teaching philosophy. They understand that as they demonstrate sincere acts of care, they gain the respect, trust and commitment of their students and the community. In addition, these participants yearned to deposit into the lives of students in their old communities. These desires lead them to return to teach in areas from which they emerged.

In the next section, I present the participants perspective on the factors that attributed to their job acceptance. I also discuss the findings as they relate to the stability, influential factors, and life experiences that attributed to their current placement.

### **Research Question Two**

This section presents the three emergent themes associated with question two. How do African American male teachers describe factors that led to their job acceptance decision? The themes include, *a) stability associated with the profession, b) family and community influences, and c) life experiences*. The responses describe the factors that led a job acceptance decision from the perspective of the participants interviewed in this

study. Supporting data are categorized by each of the themes. The section concludes with a summary of the overall findings for the second question.

### **Stability Associated With the Teaching Profession**

Addressing research question two, career stability emerged was a major theme when describing factors that led to the participants job acceptance decision. Job stability is the assurance or lack of it, an employee has about the security or continuity of gainful employment for his work life (Jaeger & Huff-Stevens, 1999). Job security usually arises from the terms of the contract of employment, collective bargaining agreement, or labor legislation that prevents arbitrary termination, layoffs, and lockouts (Inman & Marlow, 2004). The participants mentioned that the job of a teacher evolved job security. This was reflected though many of the participants responses. Ira wanted to seek a college major that would almost guarantee a stable job after graduation from college:

“I went to my college advisor...I told her that one thing that is important to me is being able to get a stable job right out of college....As soon as I got out of college I wanted to find a job in any state. Her first and only suggestion was to major in education...” (Ira)

As an undergraduate, Ellis originally majored in business management. During his sophomore year of college, he changed his major from business management to secondary education after forecasting the job market.

“The reason for me majoring education was because I wanted to spend more time with family and kids... Money was not an issue as much as it was about family time... Family time and just working a stable job has allowed me to put a positive impression on my kid's life, my family's life, and as well as others...” (Ellis)

Patrick's' initial plan included majoring in business and following in his father's footsteps as an entrepreneur. He soon sought a more stable position after experiencing

the turmoil and instability of the corporate world. He found the stability he was seeking as a teacher.

“The mortgage lending business was pretty decent when I worked as a broker in Texas. Then came the uproar and everything with the stock market and the mortgage lending business...I needed something more steady. The economy around here and different things that were acceptable to me without moving were very limited. So I looked in the possibility of going back to school and getting my masters..... When I looked at the different programs I figured that the teach delta alternative teachers certification program was beneficial to me because it offered a change to a stable career.” (Patrick)

The stability associated with security of the teaching profession can also be seen in the other participants' accounts. They expressed the need for jobs that offered security, meaning minimal chance of layoffs and availability of positions.

“Many of my friends were in engineering and they couldn't find jobs. I just wanted something that, that could allow me to have *job security* as well as a nice salary.” (Darrell)

“One thing that was important to me was a career that allowed me the opportunity to relocate. I asked myself questions like: Am I going to have *job security* when I leave here and move to Atlanta or Florida or Nebraska or wherever, you know... Will I have a job?” (Ira)

In choosing to enter the teaching profession, stability and job assurance were a major recruitment instruments. The participants indicted that the desire to obtain a stable job attributed to their acceptance of a teaching position. They also suggested that a stable job reduces their stress level. A stable job allowed them the opportunity to have a fixed schedule. That gave the participants a period throughout the day or week to spend quality time with family. These participants expressed that this led to better quality of life.

### **Family and Community Influences**

Addressing research question two, the findings indicate that the participants were greatly influenced by family and community members and these individuals were considered factors that influenced their decision to become teachers. The African American male teachers in this study had limited access to African American male teachers during their K-12 experience.

Outside of school, family members are people that these participants saw on a regular basis. The participants indicated that that actually taught them how to do their firsts: ride a bike; drive a car; shoot a basketball, swing a bat. Spending their valuable time with these individuals allows the participant to adopt some of the attitudes and behaviors of their family. The participants mention their parental influence on their decision to become a teacher.

“I come from a partially single-family home...so my mother played a major part in my career decision...she always told us to excel... not only for her, not making good grades for her but for ourselves so we could be independent and teach others...” (Ira)

“My grandmother was a head start coordinator...she was well respected in the community as well as in my own family...she provided a great service to the community and that was something that really drew me to the profession.” (Channon)

“My grandfather was a school bus driver.... Though he did not have a college degree, he always talked to me about the importance of an education. He stressed the importance of doing what makes you happy.” (Ellis)

“My brother helped influence my decision to teach...He is 14 years older than me so growing up he was always there encouraging me. He always emphasized ‘don't only make yourself better, do something to make others better’. That was very influential in me choosing to become a teacher.”(Darrell)

“My wife actually influenced me to become a teacher... While were dating, when she began an alternative teacher certification program... She would talk about all the joy that teaching brought to her life. I like to work with kids as well. I thought to myself, I should be a teacher... She has been my inspiration!” (Patrick)

The participants’ responses indicated that their family influences were a major factor in their decision to become a teacher. These family members demanded that the participants take advantage of their educational opportunities. Education was always stressed in their home as children. Seeing the importance of education at a young age helped them to continue to value academics as adults. These participants knew that all children do not have the same type of guidance that they received and felt they could offer students a good example as a teacher. They felt that it was important to influence these individual children and prepared them to be productive citizens in today’s society. Their family influences spawned a desire to deposit into the lives of others as they had been deposited into. In the case of the wife influencing her husband, he recognized the fulfillment she received from being a teacher. These teachers tied their own personal family values into their decisions when they acknowledged the importance of a job that allowed them to spend time with family.

There were also others who these participants considered factors that led to their decision to become a teacher. The influence of youth coaches, community and church were evident in the responses as these participants shared their personal stories. They were considered factors because they maintained high expectations for academic success. They exposed the participants to various experiences that help shape their character. The participants felt indebted to these individuals because of the guidance that kept them moving in the right direction.



“I was involved in youth sports quite a bit as a kid. There were many coaches that wanted to, but were not certified to work at the school level... They told me that me to take advantage of my educational opportunities... Since I expressed to them that coaching was something that I wanted to do, they told me how I could eventually advance into an administrative role... they let me know that if I pursued a coaching career that many opportunities would present themselves to me in the education system.” (Josh)

“My coaches in youth sports had a strong influence on me pursuing education... They were well-rounded good men which is hard to come by. They never press the envelope... I always wanted to have many of the characteristic that they all possessed...” (Ellis)

“I was very active in my church and I started to work with the youth at a young age. I was a teenager and since we didn't have that many teenagers in the church at the time, I was chosen to teach Sunday school, to help lead the choir and to help with youth plays.... That really was influential in making me want to become a teacher.” (Channon)

“I think about the various elders in my church that would always tell me to stay school. Many of them did not have an education, but they knew the value of it...” (Ira)

The participants expressed that the church members and coaches influenced their decision to become teachers. These individuals had the desire to help children overcome their limitations, and reach their highest potential. Church members and youth coaches instilled discipline in these participants. The participants indicated that these individuals taught them a real love for learning. This eventually made them want to do the same for other students.

### **Life Experiences**

Addressing research question two, life experiences emerged a major theme. The participants mentioned how different occurrences lead to their decision to become a teacher. Job layoffs, job transfers, career choice changes, and the inability to find a job

were some of the experiences that influenced the participant's decision to enter the teaching profession.

“After being laid off from my job, I had to find employment...I love to work with kids....I was a trainer for a corporation for five years, so teaching was a natural progression...” (Patrick)

“I was transferred from my previous job to work in two different states...I did not want to keep sending my kids to different schools every two to three years...” (Darrell)

“I was working on studying for the American Dental Association's Dental Admission Test (DAT), in hopes of getting accepted into dental school. During that time period studying was very stressful... so whenever I would go volunteer time with the kids at a local school, it was a stress-free environment...It was something I did naturally and I was able to teach as well as kind of give back a little bit. I kind of knew then that I liked it” (Josh)

“I learned the hard way working at my first job before I started teaching...When you are doing something that isn't your passion, it is the hardest thing in the world to do... Teaching is my passion and I love it...” (Ellis)

The participants expressed how various life experiences influenced their decision to become teachers. Whether they were laid off a job, transferred too often or recognized a career in teaching was the right choice for their life, these participants identified specific events attributed to the decision to become teachers. These life changing occurrences or career changers have helped to shape these African American male teachers. These teachers' responses demonstrate how life experiences shape us as individuals, and contribute to our behaviors, including how we make choices. These male teachers have been greatly influenced by certain events that cater pulled them into a career that gives them opportunity to engage and experience a variety of talents and skills. They voiced that that these various life experiences offered them a unique perspective to bring to the classroom. They felt that their various experiences better

qualified them to work with their students. They also voiced their different experiences helped them to better appreciate the teaching profession.

### **Summary of Research Question Two**

The participants in this study described personal factors that led to their acceptance of a teaching position. They described what emerged as three themes that led to their job acceptance decision. Job stability and the ability to maintain a position over time was determined to be an important factor that led to job acceptance. Although harsh economic times have proven that job stability is virtually none existent, these participants sought a position that would provide a sense of security for the future. The importance of family was mentioned as not only a reason for seeking job security but also a great influence on seeking a position in education. The families of these participants demanded they take advantage of their educational opportunities and were instrumental influences in their career choices. The final factor associated them becoming a teacher was personal life experiences or an event that inspired them to pursue a career in education. These experiences are broad but include job layoffs, transfers and career choice changes based on passion and interest.

In the next section, I present the participants perspective on their recruitment process. The findings are presented and analyzed as they relate to research question three: How do African American male teachers describe their recruitment process?

### **Research Question Three**

This section presents the single theme associated with question three. How do African American male teachers describe their recruitment process? The culminating

response from all participants was, *I was not recruited, I chose this district*. Supporting data is presented with a concluding summary of the overall finding related to this question.

### **I Was Not Recruited: I Chose This District**

Addressing research question three, the participants in this study revealed that the Southern Parish School District did not actively recruit them into the district. According to the school district's teacher recruitment policy, the employment and retention of quality personnel is one of the most important factors in insuring a quality education. The participants shared their stories of how they became employed by the district. The participants were asked the question "What did the district do to recruit you?" The responses indicate that the Southern Parish School District did not actively recruit any of the participants in this study.

"Actually finding a job was surprising to me in one of the obstacles that I did face. I applied to the district. I had a portfolio ready, I had resume's ready, I had everything that was needed in order to become a teacher ready for any interviewer that was set in front of me. Initially, the Parish told me that they didn't have anything for me." (Ira)

"There was really nothing was done to recruit me. Nothing really at all.... I just applied for the job and I felt like I had a job. I felt like I had nothing to lose to try and get into the Southern Parish School District. There were no visits to any of my undergraduate classrooms by the Southern Parish School District personnel. That would have been a big help. There was nothing done. I think there could have been more done but I can't elaborate on nothing that was done. I applied and a few weeks later they called me and told me to come in for an interview and they told me that they had something open." (Channon)

"I wasn't recruited for teaching position in the school district. Actually I did it pretty much by all by myself....I called to talk with an elementary principal. I interviewed with the principal and she referred me to the school district. That is how I started my process as far as interviewing. I made the call and showed my

interest to the local principal who had a vacancy which I heard through word-of-mouth....” (Patrick)

“As far as the Southern Parish School District goes, there aren’t many African American male teachers. There was nothing really ever done to kind of reach out to bring in African-American teachers like myself to this district. And grew up here!” (Josh)

“I actually went to one of the local schools in my neighborhood and I talked to the principal because the hiring actually goes to the principal. The principal decides who they would like at their schools and they just send their recommendation to the school board. That was how I started my first year teaching in the district. I talked to the principal and he told me that he was looking for a particular teacher in this area and he said I feel you fit the qualifications and he said that he would love to have made the school.” (Darrell)

“This school district did not recruit me. I sought this school district. I came down and I just made my way around the district. After meeting with various administrators in the district, a certain principal called and referred me to another principal. After meeting with me, he asked, "what do I have to do to get you here?" I just said I want a job.” (Ellis)

The participants indicated that securing a job in Southern School District was not an easy task. They were all considered “highly qualified” at the time they applied with the school district. This meant that they had all passed their respective Praxis II content exam which makes them eligible to be hired by any school district in Louisiana. Since there is a need for more African American male schools teachers they did not believe that they would have a problem securing a teaching position in the Southern Parish School District.

None of the participants indicated that this school district recruited them for their teaching job. The participants expressed that they sought the district for employment. The participants’ individual relationships with the school district’s principals or other key personnel led to them their hiring. These participants believed that if the need for

African American male teachers was publicized then there would be more African American males applying for positions in the district.

The participants were concerned that the Southern school district was not visible with their recruitment. All of the participants wanted to know why they Southern Parish school district employed a low number of African American male teachers. After reassessing their own journey to becoming hired by the district, the reasons then become clear. The participants suggested that the district had been engaging in hiring practices that was overlooking highly qualified African American male candidates. Although academic research points to the positive correlation between African American male teachers and student achievement, the districts represented by the participants did not actively recruit them (Dees, 2004). The participants expressed their disbelief that the district was not doing more to increase their African American male teachers when the need for them is evident (Table 1).

### **Summary of Research Question Three**

The participants in this study were asked to describe their teacher recruitment process. They described what emerged as the theme that described their recruitment process with the Southern Parish School District. I was not recruited: I chose this district was determined to be the factor that led to their employment. The responses indicate that the Southern Parish School District did not actively recruit any of the participants in this study. These participants expressed that their employment with the school district was initiated by them knowing administrators at various schools within the district. The participants were concerned that the Southern Parish School District was not visible with

their recruitment. The participants suggested that the district had been engaging in hiring practices that was overlooking highly qualified African American male candidates.

### **Summary of Findings**

This chapter was designed to demonstrate the my analysis of the data collected through inquiry into how African American male teachers describe their personal characteristics attributed to their interest of becoming a teacher; how African American male teachers describe factors that led to their job acceptance decision; and how African American male teachers describe their recruitment process. Additionally through open-ended interviews and document analysis I sought to understand the reasons African American males become K-12 classroom teachers.

From the inquiry and analysis, six themes emerged that included the perceptions of these African American male teachers, *nobility associated with the teaching profession, compassion associated with the teaching profession, stability of the profession, family and community influences, life experiences, and I was not recruited: I chose this district.*

Additionally, the themes included subthemes which included: *garnering respect in the community, desire to serve as a role model, giving back to the community, and demonstrating care for others.*

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter includes conclusions, study limitations, and implications for future research and practice. As I describe in Chapter I, this study focused on the following research questions: *How do African American male teachers describe personal characteristics attributed to their interest in becoming a teacher?; How do African American male teachers describe factors that lead to their job acceptance decision?; and How do African American male teachers describe their recruitment process?*

Based on the inquiry and analysis from these guiding questions, I came to the following conclusions:

1. The African American male teachers' self-perception of nobility and compassion attribute to their interest in the teaching position.
2. The major factors that lead African American males to becoming classroom teachers are the stability associated with the teaching profession, family and community influences, and life experiences.
3. Despite an underrepresentation of African American male teachers in K-12 classroom, school districts fail to actively recruit highly qualified African American male candidates.

#### **Relation to Theoretical Framework**

Critical race theory was used to support the guiding questions that allowed me to investigate the experiences of six African American male teachers in one urban school district. Lynn and Jennings (2009), suggests that African American male teachers in



urban communities embody qualities outlined in critical race pedagogy. The objective of critical race research is to move toward anti-racist practices and dispute the existing power structures that exist in the United States. Being that critical race theory views legal, political, and social issue through the lens of race and racial inequality, they are attempting transform society by challenge the policies that have created institutionalized racism (Ladson-Billings, 1999). The focus of this study was to look into the life stories of African American male teachers as race continues to be significant in the United States. Each of the African American male teachers discussed the difficulty of securing a teaching position.

According to Nell Noddings (1992), care symbolizes an educational orientation that emphasizes trusting relationships as the basis for building an effective and social climate for schooling. There is a growing body of evidence supporting that notion that caring relationships provides structure, provide structure, and hold high expectations (Irvine, 2003). Rosiek (1994) and Young (1998) argue the significance of narrative in novices' learning to care, since narrative accounts for context and resists formulaic solutions to relational issues, such as behavioral management techniques and mentoring. The African American male teachers in this study believed that that their caring characteristics helped them in their decision to become teachers. The African American male teachers also believed that the ethic of care is instilled in them through their upbringing.

## **Discussion of Results**

This study provides useful information to inform school districts and teacher education programs of factors that influence African American males to become classroom teachers. Ethic of care and critical race theory provided a tool for shaping my inquiry so to hear the voices of African American male teachers in a selected urban school district; to identify the factors that contribute to their job acceptance decisions; to gain an in-depth understanding of why teachers chose teaching as a profession; to determine and understand the nature of the professional lives of these teachers; and finally to advance our existing knowledge base in attracting African American males to our nation's classrooms.

As the researcher, I investigated the literature that I believed would be pertinent to the study of recruiting African American male teachers in K-12 schools. The participants in this study believed that their voices could benefit the quest for increasing recruitment of African American male teachers in K-12 schools. There were six major themes that emerged from the interviews with the African American male teachers. The themes were: (1) nobility associated with the teaching profession; (2) compassion associated with the teaching profession; (3) stability of the profession; (4) family and community influences; (5) life experiences; and (6) I was not recruited: I chose this district. Woven into the discussion of each them are the answers to the study's research questions: (1) how do African American male teachers describe personal characteristics attributed to their interest in becoming a teacher, (2) how do African

American male teachers describe factors that lead to their job acceptance decision, and (3) how do African American male teachers describe their recruitment process.

### **Theme One: Nobility Associated with the Teaching Profession**

The findings of this study suggest that the participants' self-proclaimed nobility played a major role in the decision to become an educator. These mechanisms are garnering respect in the community and the desire to serve as a role model. The participants viewed nobility in the teaching profession as a privileged status. They mentioned that the nobility associated with the teaching profession was one of the reasons they chose to enter the profession.

These African American male teachers expressed their need to be respected and visible in the community. They viewed teaching as a highly respected profession in the African American community. These African American male teachers also understood that their position of leadership required more than pedagogical excellence but a strong presence in the community. Related to these comments is the fact that these participants felt that African American male teachers have always been a pillar in the African American community, being the individuals the individuals that the community depends on to educate the next generation.

This study also demonstrated that African American male teachers' desire to serve as a role model highly influenced their decision to become teachers. Several mentioned that more African American male teachers are needed as role models, big brothers, and father figures, since many young African American male students are being raised by single mothers and lack positive adult male influence. Related to these

comments is the fact that these African American male teachers articulated the responsibility they assumed to share life lessons for their students future. The participants educate their students of many opportunities beyond a life of illegal activities by exposing them to career option beyond professional sports and hip hop music. These participants also expressed that modeling professional behavior and appearance all times is necessary.

### **Theme Two: Compassion Associated with the Teaching Profession**

The findings from this study suggest that the participants' personal characteristics of compassion attributed to their acceptance of a teaching profession. These mechanisms include giving back to the community and demonstrating care for others. The participants expressed that a caring and compassionate teacher would go beyond classroom teaching by getting to the families of their students and making themselves available for family questions, concerns, or need that affect the student's life. The participants viewed caring as a common theme arising from the African American community notion of helping.

The participants defined giving back to the community as a service or activity that is performed by someone or a group of people for the benefit of the public or its institutions. They expressed that their desire to service begins with giving back to the community. This service philosophy does not include arrogance but humbleness with limited desire for acknowledgement.

Since these participants recognized that many of their African American students lacked the genuine support and guidance, they were felt obligated to give back to their

community in the form of becoming a classroom teacher. The participants did not acknowledge teaching as a job, but considered the occupation a ‘calling’.

### **Theme Three: Stability of the Profession**

The findings of this study suggest that the job stability associated with a K-12 teaching position was a major factor in the participants’ decision to become classroom teachers. A stable job allowed the participants to have a fixed schedule. The participants mentioned that securing a teaching position allowed them to spend time with their family which essentially led to a better quality of life. The participants also expressed that a teaching career offered job security with a minimal chance of layoff high availability of positions.

### **Theme Four: Family and Community Influences.**

The findings of this study indicate that the participants were greatly influenced by family and community members and these individuals were factors that influenced their decision to become teachers. Education was stressed in the homes of all of the participants. Despite not having college degrees, the participants’ expressed that their family members always stressed the importance of getting an education and doing what makes you happy. These participants’ had limited access to African American male teachers during their K-12 experience. It must also be noted that these participants listed only non-academic factors that influenced their decision to become teachers.

The participants mentioned the influence of youth coaches and the church helped shape their character. The participants also attributed those individuals’ high expectations for academic success as the reason for their academic achievement. Church

members and youth coaches love for instruction and learning and the desire to help children overcome their limitations, influenced the participants to want to do the same for others.

#### **Theme Five: Life Experiences**

The participants in this study acknowledged that various life experiences lead to the decision to become K-12 classroom teachers. More specifically, jobs transfers, job lay-offs, career choice changes, and the inability to find a job were the experiences that influence their decision to choose the teaching profession. These African American male teachers revealed different events pulled them into a career that gives them an opportunity to engage and experience a variety of talents and skills. The life experiences of these African American male teachers allowed them to bring unique teaching perspectives to the classroom. These participants also believed that their life experiences better qualified them to work with the students that they teach.

#### **Theme Six: I was Not Recruited: I Chose This District.**

The findings of this study indicate that the Southern Parish School District did not actively recruit these participants to the school district. The participants acknowledged that finding a job in the district was one of the obstacles they faced. These African American male teachers went to great length to obtain employment in the Southern School District. The participants voiced that securing a job in the district can be credited to their relationships with the principals and other key personnel employed by the Southern Parish School District who initially referred them to the director of human resources. The participants were aware of the low number of African American

males currently employed by the Southern Parish School District and expressed concerns that efforts to increase this problem have not been put into practice.

### **Limitations of Generalizability**

As the study evolved, several limitations were discovered that the reader should be aware of as follow-up studies are formulated. These limitations serve as a frame of reference for future researchers to have as they consider the research design of their study.

This study also looked at the opinions of African American male teachers in the state of Louisiana with up to five years of teaching experience. Generalizations should not be made to all male teachers in all school districts. Hence, the results of this study are only limited to the responses from the six African American male teachers in within the one state under study within the urban school district that were approved to participate in this study.

### **Recommendations**

Based on my conclusions, I have developed recommendations that to address the issues presented by the African American male teachers I interviewed. The following are recommendations based on this study:

1. Teacher recruitment programs need to take an extensive look at the influence that an African American male's family and community have of on his decision to become a teacher.
2. School districts need to create early and long-term recruitment strategies to attract and recruit highly qualified African American male teachers into

urban public school systems that equalize the competition with more lucrative professions.

3. Educational leaders and teacher education programs should emphasize the importance and benefits of the role that African American male teachers have on students.
4. School districts should offer incentives to level the competition of other professional careers.

School district need to recognize that the underrepresentation of African American male teachers in K-12 schools is a major issue. School district must also actively promote the need for more African American male teachers in their respective districts.

### **Implications for Further Research**

Based on the findings of this study the following are suggestions for further research:

1. This study was conducted with six African American male teachers in one urban school district. This study should be replicated with African American male teachers from other states in urban, suburban, and rural school districts.
2. This study examined factors that influenced African American male teachers to become K-12 teachers. A study should be conducted to determine how has the shortage of African American male teachers impacted the academic achievement of African American students?



3. A study should be conducted to determine what can be done to encourage young African American males in K-12 to enter teacher education programs and seek teaching positions.

### **Conclusion**

The purposes of this case study were to: 1) to hear the voices of African American male teachers in a selected urban school district; 2) to identify the factors that contribute to their job acceptance decisions; 3) to gain an in-depth understanding of why teachers chose teaching as a profession; 4) to determine and understand the nature of the professional lives of these teachers; and finally 5) to advance our existing knowledge base in attracting African American males to our nation's classrooms. The review of literature revealed the factors that influenced African American male teachers' decision to become teachers. The six participants in this study had the opportunity to respond to the 16 questions on the instrument (Appendix B). The data gathered and analyzed from the participants' interviews generated the personal characteristics that attributed to their acceptance of a teaching position, factors that lead to their job acceptance decision and a description of their recruitment process.

In conclusion, the African American male teachers in this study have made clear statements as to what influenced their decision to accept a teaching position. School districts should be cognizant of the results presented in this study as important variables to consider when recruiting African American male teachers. This study is one small step in opening the door for school districts to increase their hiring of African American male teachers.

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**APPENDIX A****TEACHER'S INFORMED CONSENT**

In order to complete the requirements for a Doctorate in Teaching, Learning and Culture Studies at Texas A&M University of College Station, Texas, I am anticipating the pursuit of a qualitative study. The title of the study is *Recruiting African American Males in K-12 Schools: A Case Study in One Urban School District*. The study will be composed of 6 teachers from the Southern Parish School System. The study will entail the interviewing of teachers and an analysis of the themes found in the interviews.

The investigator would prefer to utilize an audiotape in his interviews. Only my committee, Dr. Lewis, Dr. Carter, and I will have access to such tapes, and they will be kept by the investigator for one year before being destroyed.

I have been assured that the data generated will be kept confidential by not identifying the participants by their names. I have also been assured our names will not be used in any publication. The data will be used only to assist in increasing teacher recruitment. The study will likewise identify variables that may affect teacher recruitment.

I have been asked my permission to participate in this study. The proposed study will be conducted during the fall of 2010. The Interview will take approximately one hour before, after school, or based on my availability in the best interests of daily school procedures.

The investigator assures me that the data generated will be kept confidential. No one in the Southern Parish School System will know what I have said in the interviews; however, the school district will receive an anonymous summary of the data generated by all of the participants. My participation is voluntary. However, should I decide to withdraw, at no time will my employee status be affected.

If I have any questions or concerns, I may contact Mr. Watson at 225-803-9531 (jessejwatson@tamu.edu), Dr. Chance W. Lewis co-chairperson and associate professor of Teaching, Learning, and Culture at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas, at 979-458-0835 (chance.lewis@tamu.edu) or Dr. Norvella Carter, co-chairperson and professor of Teaching, Learning, and Culture at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas, at 979-458-0835 (ncarter@tamu.edu).

Page 1 of 2

Initial \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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 979-845-8585 (mw Buckley@tam u.edu). Only my committee, Dr. Lewis, Dr. Carter, and I will have access to the information contained in this study.

I also understand that there are no risks or benefits from participating 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. There are no benefits to my participating in this research. I also understand that recording will be used upon my approval.

I have been given a copy of this consent form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN TEACHERS

This qualitative case study will use the techniques to gather and analyze data. Interpretive analysis uses storytelling, which takes as its object of investigation the story itself. The investigator will ask the participants to tell their story of becoming and being a teacher. The investigator will ask follow up questions to clarify and understand answers. Only my committee, Dr. Lewis, Dr. Carter, and I will have access to the information contained in this study.

Some of the questions that will be asked of the participants will be:

#### Personal Information

1. Tell me about yourself?
2. How many years of elementary/secondary teaching experience do you have?
3. How many years have you been employed in this district (in others)?
4. Was education your first choice as a profession?
5. How long have you known that you wanted to be a teacher?
6. What factors were most important in your decision to become a teacher?
7. As an African American male teacher, what/how do you contribute directly to the student's educational process?
8. Please describe the important personal qualities, values, and behaviors that African American male classroom teachers must convey.
9. What / Who influenced you to become a teacher?
10. What role, if any, did your upbringing play on the way you becoming a teacher?
11. Please share some of the important life experiences that you have had which facilitated your choice to become a teacher?
12. How has your professional training program prepared you for the classroom?
13. Please share your perception of the current shortage of African American male teachers in the K-12 setting? Why do you think there is a shortage of AA male teachers in k-12 schools?"
14. Please describe some of the obstacles or restrictions that you faced during your journey to becoming a teacher.
15. How did you obtain your initial employment as a teacher in this school district?
16. What did the school district do to recruit you?
17. What could the school district have done to make your specific recruitment better?
18. What they could/should the school district do in GENERAL to increase recruitment?
19. Is there any other information that you would like to include in the interview?

## VITA

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## RESEARCH INTERESTS

Urban Education and the Achievement Gap  
 Urban African American Student Success in K-12 and Higher Education  
 Urban Teacher Education (Teacher Diversity) and Teacher Recruitment Practices

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