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The Underachievement of African American Males in K-12 Education

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The State of African American Male in Michigan
"A Courageous Conversation"
June 9th 2006

Abstract

The challenges that face African American males are enormous. The causal factors of underachievement in African American males involve almost every aspect of society. Therefore, in attempting to address the underachievement of African American males we truly do need a village approach that uses all members of the community to advocate and support African American males. This paper addresses the causes of the achievement gap between the performance of African American and White middle-class students on achievement tests that were identified at the symposium on "African American Male Achievement". Included are suggestions for ways to improve the academic gains and overall achievement of African American males in particular.

"To be young and black in the urban areas of the Untied States is to be subjected to all the harshest elements of oppression at the most vulnerable period of one's life."

Robert Staples (1982, p.22)

Introduction

In order to understand the underachievement of African American males in public education today, an examination of the history of discrimination of African American males in education is necessary. The history of the African American educational experience begins with slavery, when African Americans were forbidden to learn how to read and write.

After the conclusion of the Civil War, African American families lived in segregated communities where children attended segregated schools which were legal under Plessey v. Ferguson with the stipulation that schools were separate but equal (Orfield, 2001). During segregation, the African American community consisted of families from lower, middle, and upper-socioeconomic levels all living together. Schools were taught primarily by African American teachers who were a part of the school community. While The infrastructures of these schools were lacking, compared to White schools. Up to date instructional materials and curriculum were hard to come by due to lack of funds, but teachers infused the curriculum with the accomplishments and history of African Americans. Family involvement in schools was less of a challenge due to the fact that schools were centrally located within the community where people knew each other well enough to support each other (Wilson, 1987). African American children saw the impact of having an education as they witnessed the lives of both laborers and professionals within the community.

With the *Brown V. Topeka* decision in 1954, came court ordered desegregation and eventually African American students and White students were bused to the same schools to achieve racial balance and equity. The face of schools across the nation changed as African American students joined White students in the classroom. New challenges arose for African American students with the desegregation of schools. Most classrooms were taught by White teachers. The curriculum was Eurocentric and not inclusive of African American culture or history. Family involvement declined as families did not live in the vicinity of the schools and often had difficulty attending conferences and school events. Initially, many newly desegregated schools showed an increase in achievement test scores among African American students during the 1970's but then test scores began to decline in the late 1980's. After about 20 years of busing, school districts were able to dismantle busing to desegregate schools and students returned to their neighborhood schools to what is now referred to as resegregation (Orfield, 2001).

The African American community had changed. It no longer consisted of families representing lower, middle and upper socioeconomic levels. Due to economic and housing opportunities, many upper- and middle-class families moved away from the African American community integrating White communities. With the decline of the urban industrial economy came the elimination of many unskilled jobs from the cities resulting in a decrease of middle-and working-class African American families and social isolation of high poverty communities. Remaining families in many urban neighborhoods did not have contact with regularly employed individuals, job networks, or other middle-class resources.   This social isolation was the breeding ground for drug abuse, domestic

violence, health problems, suicide, disproportionate number of arrests, incarceration, migration of poor, higher birth rates, and low employment of males. This in turn led to an increase in crime, addiction, welfare dependency, school drop-outs, and lack of employment (Wilson, 1987).

Currently, in many states, such as Michigan, we are experiencing resegregation. In fact, we are more segregated today than we were before Brown v. Topeka (Orfield, 2001).   Michigan was named one of the most segregated states in our nation with Detroit identified as the second "Blackest" city after Gary, Indiana and Livonia identified as the "Whitest" city – only fifteen minutes away from Detroit. African American students, particularly African American males, are not faring well in school as demonstrated in the disparity of the achievement test scores between African Americans and Whites. This underachievement of African American students in public education spans across all socioeconomic levels with African American students living in highly educated college communities claiming the widest gaps (Time Magazine, 2000).

African Americans have experienced the decline of two parent families and increased households headed by women. African American males have experienced a decline in labor resulting in a significant number of African American males experiencing long-term poverty. Many African American male children are living in female-headed households where men have illegal and dangerous lifestyles. Within the community there is a lack of men who are responsible, legitimate and demonstrate adult behavior (Roach, 2000; Wilson, 1987).

African American males are bombarded with negative images and stereotypes of African American males in the news, newspaper, television, and movies. Add to this,

continual viewing of rap music and hip hop videos with images of African American males that are explicit and glamorize pimps and gangsters (Wilson, 1987)

In most schools across our nation, African American male children spend a full day in a classroom that can be characterized as a hostile environment – an environment that was not designed for and does not accept the way one thinks, speaks or behaves. In these classrooms are teachers, many of whom know very little about African American males and how to effectively teach them. A curriculum is often used in the school that is neither affirming nor inclusive of African American history or culture and is delivered in ways that may be incongruent to the way African American males prefer to learn. The results of these cumulative experiences are apparent in these statistics (Elementary and Secondary Civil Rights Survey, 2000; Kunjufu, 2002; US Department of Education, 2003; Whiting, 2006):

- About 50% of the US public school population is comprised of students of color.
- African American students comprise 17% of the US public school students
- African American males comprise 8.37% of public school student population.
- African American students constitute almost 40% of the students placed in special education,
- If an African American child is placed in special education, 80% of the time the child will be male.
- Only 3% of the students placed in gifted and talented programs are African American students.
- Of those African American students, only 3.54% are male.
- Fewer than half of African American males graduate from high school in four years after entering the ninth grade

The Achievement Gap

The achievement gap refers to the disparity between the performance of African American and European American students on achievement tests. There are very large differences in the test scores, even at the top levels of performance with African

American students scoring significantly lower than European American students. In 2001, the Center on Educational Policy (Kober, 2001) examined the development and history of the achievement gap and reported its findings in a report. The report indicated that there was a significant reduction in the achievement gap from 1970 to the late 1980's. During this time the nation was making a concerted effort to improve educational opportunities through the War on Poverty and the establishment of school reforms and entitlement programs such as Title I and Head Start. Beginning with the 1990's to-date, there has been a widening of the achievement gap. It was noted that the achievement gap appears before students enter kindergarten and that while racial-ethnic differences in family income contribute to the achievement gap, it does not entirely explain the achievement gap in test performance. In fact, the achievement gap occurs among African Americans students, regardless of socioeconomic status (Kober, 2001).

Five years ago, in an attempt to understand the performance of African American students, Howard University hosted a symposium on "African American Male Achievement" and invited leading scholars and experts on the achievement gap to identify and discuss possible causal factors of the achievement gap. The symposium brought to light several issues that need further study and unearthed many concerns that need to be addressed (Roach, 2000). Further research looking at the underachievement of African American male students in special education, regular education, and gifted education programs supports the findings of the "African American Male Achievement" symposium along with additional causal factors. These challenges that African American males face in public education today contribute to the achievement gap between African

American and European American students and can be grouped into four major

categories: societal factors, family factors, school factors, and cultural factors.

Societal Factors

Societal factors refer to beliefs, practices, and conditions of society that impact

the experiences of its members. Many of these practices are viewed as social injustices.

Three societal factors that impact the achievement of African American males are deficit

deprivation, social inequalities, and "lure of the streets".

Deficit-Deprivation Theory

Deficit-deprivation theory simply states that there are inherent differences in

intellectual ability among races. Eugenists subscribe to this theory and have created a

hierarchy correlating race and intellectual ability. This theory suggests the following:

Whites are most intelligent. Asians are more intelligent.
Latinos are less intelligent. Native Americans are less intelligent.
Blacks are least intelligent.

The disparity in the performance of students on standardized achievement tests is

often used by Eugenists to support their argument that African Americans are not as

intelligent as European Americans. These claims are unsubstantiated by research. What

Eugenists fail to recognize is that exposure to the language of the tests as well as middle-

class experiences, which are referenced on standardized achievement tests, privileges

most middle class White students and places many African American students at risk

(Harmon, 2004).

The impact of these beliefs can be detrimental to African American students

within the context of the classroom. Teachers who subscribe to the belief that race is

related to intelligence have low expectations of African American students which, in turn, have a significant impact on the academic performance of African American students. According to Ferguson (2001), stereotypes about African American intellectual inferiority are reinforced by past and current disparities in performance causing some teachers to underestimate the potential of black children. Teachers refusing to acknowledge African American intellectual ability has led to self-doubt among African Americans and a sense that academic achievement is the province of Whites.

Structural Inequality

Structural inequality refers to the differences in access, experiences, exposure, and enrichment that exist between middle and lower socio-economic levels. Structural inequalities are social injustices that exist in schools across our nation, in particularly, schools in urban and lower socioeconomic communities. Examples of structural inequalities include inadequate school resources, under funding, large class sizes staffed by least qualified teachers contributing to a high turnover of teachers within the school. Another practice of social inequality is the use of White middle-class experiences as standards and norms by which other students are measured. This practice privileges White middle-class students and puts those students from culturally diverse populations and lower socio-economic levels at a disadvantage.

Within the classroom there are practices that create social inequalities. These include lowering the rigor in teaching emphasizing lower level thinking skills, providing few opportunities to gain higher academic skills, and less constructive feedback and encouragement. Some teachers accept substandard work from African American students and view low grades as acceptable for students. The performance of African

American students who are high achievers may be questioned leading to less referrals to Advanced Placement classes or gifted and talented programs. All of these factors contribute to the quality of teaching and lack of learning within the classroom among African American students (Harmon, 2004; Ford & Moore, 2004).

"Lure of the Street"

"Lure of the street-life" refers to the desire for material possessions and to emulate street life. Media and entertainment are the major forces transmitting these values and beliefs to young people. The unflattering images of black men from movies, music, television, and news media present African American males with very negative images of themselves. In addition, an anti-intellectual attitude is pervasive within media and pop-culture. Exposure to these images can cause young African American males have poor views of themselves and their community and low achievement orientation impacting their attitudes about scholarly achievement (Whiting, 2006; Harmon, 2004; Ford & Moore, 2004).

Family Involvement

Research indicates there is a strong positive correlation between family involvement and academic achievement. Family involvement is the participation of family members communicating and working in tandem with classroom teachers to meet the learning needs of the student. One challenge about family involvement is that teachers tend to measure family involvement through a very limited paradigm. Teachers frequently complain about the poor attendance of family members at conferences and school programs. This lack of participation often leads teachers to fall prey to the myth that parents don't care about their children. However, there are various reasons why many

African American families do not participate in their child's school activities (Ford & Moore, 2004).

Fulfilling the basic needs of the family will supersede family participation in the classroom. For many family members, their own past experiences with schools make it very unpleasant for them to participate. They may view the school as a hostile environment and find it difficulty to become involved. Family members also differ in how they care and show concern and support for their children and this involvement may not be valued by the teacher. Family members also may not be able to participate in the classroom in ways teachers wish. Many African American families have reported that while they would like to participate in schools, they are uncertain how they can be involved (Ford & Moore, 2004).

Family involvement also includes providing experiences and enrichment at home for children. For many African American families, their routine does not lend itself to these kinds of activities. There may be limited access to facilities and resources. Many families may not have the funds to provide books, materials, and extracurricular activities. Children who are not able to have these experiences at any early age can be at a disadvantage in school when competing with students who have these experiences (Ford & Moore, 2004).

School Factors

There are numerous causal factors that effect the achievement of African American males within the school system and classroom setting. Practices that have a

negative impact on achievement include tracking, 4th Grade Syndrome, cultural discontinuity, underprepared teachers, and low teacher expectations. Tracking

Tracking is the practice of assigning students at the beginning of the school year to an ability group and keeping them within that group regardless of their performance throughout the year. Research has found that often ability grouping in multiracial schools is stratified not only by academic performance but by race and ethnicity (Carter, 2005)**.** African American students, especially males, are usually placed in lower tracks. Students who find themselves in learning environment where their educational needs are not being met often respond in one of two ways - withdrawing or acting out. It is precisely these kinds of behaviors that target African American males for referral to special education programs (Hillinan & Sorenson, 1983; Oakes, 1985; Lucas, 1999).

Tracking reinforces racial boundaries and also discourages African American students from enrolling in more challenging classes, Advanced Placement classes, or gifted education classes. An example of this is seen in the overrepresentation of African American males in special education and the underrepresentation of African American males in gifted and talented programs. The prospect of being the only African American student in an Advanced Placement class or gifted and talented program is a great deterrent for African American students and leads them away from opportunities to develop their abilities (Ford, 1996).

4th Grade Syndrome

Fourth grade syndrome is a phenomena that is naturally occurring in all students at about the fourth grade level. Students experience a drop on their achievement tests especially in reading and writing. A difference in instruction between third and fourth

grades is often attributed as one of the primary reasons for the decline. In third grade, teachers interact with students in a more informal, personable style. The classroom environment and activities allow for more movement, student interaction, and interaction with the classroom environment. Students often engage in more experiential learning in third grade. The classroom environment in fourth grade differs significantly as teachers interact with students with a more formal communication style, present more content through direct instruction, and offer fewer group activities and opportunities for movement. At the beginning of fourth grade, these changes have an impact on student's achievement resulting in a small decline in performance as they adjust to their new learning environment.   As students adjust, their performance on achievement test recovers (Harmon & Jones, 2005).

For African American male students, the decline in their academic performance begins before the third or fourth grade. The classroom has changed from an environment that was very conducive to their preferred way of learning to one that may not meet their learning needs. Students move and talk less and ask fewer questions and enthusiasm for learning begins to wane. At the 4th grade level African American males tend to "check out" completely and unlike their White counterparts, do not recover. For many African American males, this marks the beginning of a continuous decline on achievement tests as they proceed through elementary, middle school, and high school (Kunjufu, 1986; Lloyd, 1978).

Cultural Discontinuity

Cultural discontinuity refers to the mismatch between home culture and school culture.   African American students are at a disadvantage because of the "mismatch"

between their own culture and the culture of the school and in many cases the culture of the teacher. In most classrooms, the classroom environment including the communication style, instructional styles, and the curriculum are based upon the needs of dominant culture students. African American male students find themselves in classrooms that are a "cultural misfit" with teachers who have different communication styles, use instructional methods that are not congruent to the way they need to learn, and a curriculum that does not mirror or affirm them. No where is this difference in culture more apparent in the way that teachers interact and develop relationships with their students. Most teachers, especially in middle and high school have a more formal relationship with their students. African American students, as well as other culturally diverse student populations, need to have more meaningful relationships with their teachers.

Research continues to support the fact that for African American students to achieve, they must have meaningful relationships with their teachers (Ferguson, 2001; Kunjufu, 2002; Steele, 2003) . African American children more often seek to please their teachers more than White children (Ferguson, 2001). While students from the dominant culture also enjoy meaningful relationships with their teachers, they are motivated more by the need to please their parents than pleasing the teacher. The relationship between African American students and their teachers is critical for student engagement and achievement within the classroom. African American students consistently identify teacher encouragement as a motive for their effort and indicate that encouragement is even more motivating than teacher demands.   In the absence of these relationships which are characterized by teachers being supportive, nurturing, and encouraging, African

American students report that they strongly believe that their teachers do not "care" about them (Ferguson 2001, Ford & Moore, 2005; Harmon, 2004).

Underprepared Teachers

The majority of the teaching force in the United States consists of teachers who are White and come from middle-class experiences. In fact, over 80% of the elementary teachers in public schools are White, female, and are of middle class socioeconomic status. Teacher education programs have been very successful in preparing teachers for teaching middle-class, White students but when these teachers are faced with students who are culturally diverse, linguistically diverse, from lower socioeconomic levels, or have special needs, they are at a great disadvantage. It is, then, not surprising to find that when it comes to African American students, especially African American males, the majority of teachers in this country find themselves ill-equipped and unprepared to teach these students. When faced with African American students from lower socioeconomic status, the challenge is even greater.

Teachers generally lack the cultural awareness and understanding necessary for developing meaningful relationships and effectively teaching African American students especially males. Due to this lack of cultural competence, teachers often unknowingly create a hostile learning environment for African American students (Harmon 2004; Ford & Moore, 2004; Ford, 1996).

Teacher Expectations

Research on the impact of teacher expectations and student achievement has overwhelming revealed that teacher expectations have the greatest impact on student achievement. Teacher expectations refer to the beliefs and attitudes teachers hold about

students. These expectations dictate teacher's behavior and interaction with students and result is high achievement as well as underachievement (Harmon & Jones, 2005).

Experimental studies looking at teacher expectations and student achievement confirm that teachers do use race in forming opinions about students and their potential. Teacher expectations are effected by these negative beliefs and stereotypes about African Americans, especially African American males and affect the way a teacher interacts and behaves toward their students (Carter, 2005; Ford & Moore, 2004; Fordham & Ogbu, 1996; Harmon, 2004)

Ferguson (2001) investigated the expectations and attitudes of teachers and African American students and found "that on average, teachers probably prefer to teach whites, and on average they probably give whites more plentiful and unambiguous support" (298-299). According to his research Ferguson (2001), teachers tend to perceive that young African American students are less willing to put forth effort to succeed academically. This early perception can affect the students' future educational experiences. Teachers tend to view the effort of older African American and White students as more similar but the beliefs about younger African American student's effort has already affected the students' educational experiences (Carter, 2005; Ferguson, 2001).

When it comes to low-performing African American students, teachers often perceive them as "more difficult" than low-performing White students and receive less teacher support. Teachers report that "difficult" students can be a hassle and distraction for teachers and they would rather spend their time attending to those students they perceive to be willing and interested in learning rather than the "trouble-makers". Higher

performing African American students may be perceived as "less difficult" than white students and receive more teacher support (Carter, 2005; Ford & Moore, 2004; Fordham & Ogbu, 1996; Harmon, 2004).

Low teacher expectations lead to classroom practices and interaction between teachers and African American students that impact the achievement of African American students. They also contribute to the low enrollment in Advanced Placement course as teachers are less likely to recommend or admit African American students to those programs (Sadowski, 2001). According to Ferguson (1998), "My bottom line conclusion is that teachers' perceptions, expectations, and behaviors probably do help to sustain, and perhaps even expand, the black-white test score gap" (p. 313).

Cultural Factors

African American students experience school differently from whites. They feel less connected to school than their White peers because they are forced to participate in an education system that has little regard for their culture or their values, beliefs, and cultural specific behaviors. They are compared to a standard based upon White, middle class society and culture which many of them have not experienced. African American males are particularly vulnerable as they have to battle negative stereotypes and perceptions supported by the media. The result is that African American males often develop negative attitudes toward school. Many African American males have the perception that they receive a worse punishment for inappropriate or unacceptable behaviors than White students and research supports this belief. Cultural factors that impact the achievement of African American males include stereotype threat, "acting

white" or the anti-achievement paradox, cool posing (Carter, 2005; Sadowski, 2001; Ogbu, 1994).

Stereotype Threat

Stereotype threat, a theory developed by Steele (1999), is felt by African American students in academic settings that are heavily populated by peers and teachers who are likely to perceive them as representing stereotypes that exist about African American students. This phenomena exist among all students, even though students may be academically prepared. Especially vulnerable are African American male students. Students feel anxious because they do not want to confirm the generally held belief that African Americans cannot perform as well as European Americans. The anxiety students experience from worrying whether their peers and teachers believe the stereotypes is distressful enough to lower their performance in school. Steele's theories about stereotype threat help in understanding the underachievement of upper and middle class African American students (Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003).

Stereotype threat can discourage students from completing school work as students feel that it may be better to look as if they are making an effort in class instead of looking stupid by turning unacceptable work. One way that African American students deal with the anxiety of stereotype threat is to distance themselves from the importance of the school work by telling themselves that it really doesn't matter much anyway. When stereotype anxiety is shared by a group of African American students, they may come to associate academic achievement with "acting white" and chastise their high-performing peers (Perry, Steele, & Hilliard; Ferguson, 2001; Ford & Moore, 2005).

Acting White – Anti-achievement Paradox

"Acting white" occurs when African American students equate school success with being required to adopt the attitudes and behaviors of middle class White society. Students feel they have to reject their African American culture to succeed academically. Resistance to "acting white" is about maintaining cultural identity – not embracing or rejecting the dominant standards of achievement. Many African American males consider themselves to be asserting their "blackness" by rejecting achievement.

Fordham and Ogbu (1986) investigated and developed the concept of "acting white". They found that African American students' school experience involves dealing with conflicts and suspicions which makes it difficult for them to internalize the schools goals, standard, and teaching and learning approaches. The belief that achievement requires giving up one's culture and adopting White middle class culture leads to an anti-achievement ethic or fear of "acting white" as an act of resistance to racelessness (Ogbu, 1981). African American students may assert their "blackness" by rejecting the values that White students and teachers place on academic achievement . This behavior often leads to a preoccupation with "acting black" to assert an African American identity. Students engage in over identification of what is perceived as "acting black. This over identification appears more often in middle class educated communities (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Majors, 1990).

Students dealing with the notion of "acting white" often engage in behaviors cool posing is behavior characterized by aloofness, lack of emotion, fearlessness, and detachment manifesting in unique ways of speaking and walking. The history of cool posing finds its roots in slavery when African Americans slaves learned to mask their

emotions and feelings for survival. Cool posing was crucial for preservation of pride, dignity and respect. This behavior also served as a way for neutralizing stress and even demonstrating strength and power. Unfortunately, many of behaviors associated with cool posing are perceived as negative and rude and can lead to addition challenges in the classroom (Ford, 1996; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986).

Anti-achievement ethic refers to holding the belief that education is important and the importance of doing well but then engaging in behaviors that do not support this belief. This anti-achievement ethic is a personification of cool posing (Majors, 1990) and anti-achievement ethic (Carter, 2005; Feguson, 1998; Ford, 1996; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). The impact of the notion of "acting black" to resist "acting white" unfortunately can lead students engage in behaviors and to make decisions that greatly impact their achievement and success in school. Some of these behaviors include adopting an anti-achievement ethic and engaging in cool posing. Anti-achievement ethic refers to holding the belief that education is important and the importance of doing well but then engaging in behaviors that do not support this belief

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The impact of choosing to "act white" or not "act white" impacts achievement of African American students when faced with educational opportunities . Students may refuse to participate in programs that could provide additional skills, knowledge, and experiences that could lead to success. College preparatory, honors, and advanced placement classes are viewed as classes for Asian and White students. Students who are enrolled in these classes are isolated from their co-ethnic peer. It can also result in students dropping out of school and possibly failing to reach their academic potential (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Majors, 1990).

Recent research on this controversial phenomena reveals that the notion of "acting white" is observable in predominantly White schools, but is often nonexistent in predominantly African American schools. Notions of "acting white" emerge in schools with a disproportionate representation of minority and low-income student in rigorous courses and programs. (Fryer & Terelli, 2005; Ford, 1996; Ford & Moore, 2005).

Summary

The challenges that face African American males are enormous. The causal factors of underachievement in African American males are numerous and involve almost every aspect of society. Therefore, in attempting to address the underachievement of African American males we truly do need a village approach that uses all members of the community to advocate and support African American males. Table 1 summarizes the causes of the achievement gap between the performance of African American and White middle-class students on achievement tests that were identified at the symposium on "African American Male Achievement" . Included in the table are suggestions for ways that each issue might be addressed.

Table 1. Addressing the Achievement Gap

Factors that Contribute to the Gap	School Strategies that Could Help Reduce the Gap
Limited participation of minority students in rigorous courses	Challenging curriculum and instruction Multicultural / Differentiated
Watered-down instruction	Improvements in teacher preparation and professional development Multicultural Education Differentiation
Less-Qualified or experienced teachers	Experience with cultural diversity Culturally competent teachers
Teachers with low expectations	Culturally competent training High standards and accountability for subgroup performance
Resource disparities between high-minority schools and other schools	Equitable distribution of resources
Concentrations of low-income and minority students in certain schools	Sustained class size reductions in high minority schools
School climate less conducive to learning	Comprehensive School Reform – Caring Community based upon fostering resiliency
Student performance anxiety Stereotype Anxiety	Extended after-school and summer learning opportunities Support groups Counselor Providing Sanctuary
Negative peer pressure Anti-achievement / Acting White	Support groups Counseling Sanctuary
Disparities in access to high-quality preschools	Expanded access to high-quality preschool
Limited learning supports in homes and communities	Improved social conditions
Access to parenting education	Parent education and involvement

In assessing what is needed to address underachievement in African American males,

it becomes evident that a comprehensive and collaborative effort is needed including the

family, community, school, and society.

Today, the progress of students is measured through the practice of administrating standardized tests which have been proven to privilege dominant culture and create a disadvantage for African American and other culturally diverse student populations. School districts are investing in ways to improve test performance. Perhaps school districts need to focus more on the identified causes of underachievement which point to the fact that schools are designed for White middle-class students and are not addressing the needs of African American students. Sullivan (1979) investigated the impact of desegregation on the achievement shortly after the dismantling of busing looking for looking for lessons learned to allow school districts to effectively teach to all student populations. Sullivan states that, "For teachers to provide an effective education for culturally diverse students, it is necessary for them to become culturally competent."

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