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Parental Involvement in At-Risk Students' Academic Affairs Versus the Athletic Arena in Low-Performing Schools in South Florida

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Approval Page

This applied dissertation was submitted by Antrell L. Dirden under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

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Statement of Original Work

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Date

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Abstract

Parental Involvement in At-Risk Students' Academic Affairs Versus the Athletic Arena in Low-Performing Schools in South Florida. Antrell L. Dirden, 2021: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice. Keywords: academic achievement, achievement gap, parent participation, African American students, at risk students.

The researcher designed a qualitative case study to delve further into the lack of consistent parental involvement and academic support in low-performing schools in South Florida with at-risk African American students, most especially when compared to the support in the athletic arena by those same parents. Educators and leaders in the field of education agree that the same effort and energy displayed in support of the athletic aspirations of their child should be equal or even greater in the academic success of the same students. Research questions focused on perceived challenges that prevent consistent parental involvement in academics over athletics, along with strategies and recommendations for working families and potential solutions.

Surveys were also constructed and answered, including interviews, which were documented regarding the perceived struggles and prospective answers for the research questions. The results of this study indicated further studies need to be conducted on parental involvement and support for athletics in low-performing schools in South Florida among at-risk African American students and the lack of parental involvement and support regarding academics in low-performing schools in South Florida among at-risk African American students.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed by this study involved the lack of consistent parental involvement and academic support in low-performing schools in South Florida with at-risk African American students, most especially when compared to the support in the athletic arena by those same parents. As a result of deteriorating grades, grade point averages, financial struggles, personal conflict at home, social services issues or homelessness, bullying, low self-esteem, peer-pressure or lack of interest, students become disengaged from school and their immediate surroundings (Landis & Reschley, 2013). Often, the end result of such actions causes students to stop attending school before graduating and receiving their diploma. Thus, consistent parental involvement is extremely essential for students as they navigate from elementary to high school and college.

Researchers and leaders in the field of education agree that parental involvement is vital to student success and is mandatory for maximum student academic achievement (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Badri et al., 2014; Epstein et al., 2009; Gordon & Cui, 2014; Graves & Brown-Wright, 2011; Hudley, 2016; Luet, 2015). For many parents, the supreme aspiration for their children is success. Ethnic backgrounds, race, and socioeconomic status (SES) have minor effects on parental concerns, engagements, and support regarding their child's education (Brandt, 1989; Davies, 1987; Mapp, 2002). On the other hand, there is a plethora of information in relation to the academic success of African American students who fail to be successful in academics, but thrive in athletics or neglect those who pursue their educational passion and pursuits (Lewis et al., 2012).

The researchers further noted that, during the latter part of the 20th century,

economic challenges, health deficiencies, and educational contributions or experiences caused many educational veterans to refer to this population of students as endangered species, at risk, low-performing students, and victims (Lewis et al., 2012). As a result of this branding or labeling, many educators and stakeholders within the community developed negative assumptions toward this individualized group. According to Noguera (2003), these labels were attached to African American students due to the high numbers of them who ended up dropping out of school or not completing their high school diploma. To add, Powell and Grant-Thomas (2010) mentioned that the high rates of Black on Black crimes, homicides, HIV/AIDS, arrests and convictions, high unemployment, and poor life expectancy among African American males and females have assisted to the deleterious view of this said population. Eckholm (2006) attributed these adverse trends to underprivileged schooling of African American students. Thus, high rates of suspension and dropout, overrepresentation in special education and low-performing classes, low graduation rates, and low college enrollment have also promoted to injustices regarding equal and quality education among African American students being portrayed as unable to achieve at the same level as other racial and gender groups (Noguera, 2003).

In contrast, other researchers feel that student athletes are more apt to succeed and progress further without a quality education. According to Rhoden (2006), students participating in extracurricular activities and other sports are more academically equipped than those who do not, but others have conjectured that multiple effects can vary depending on the investigation across groups, namely regarding African American males who participate in middle and high school sports. In addition, regardless of the sport, but primarily in football and basketball, interpretation of success by coaches on the athletic

field can also have an adverse effect or positive one regarding academic achievement of students. Given to natural ability to excel in sports, African American males disproportionately draw to athletics. Coaches also are instrumental in assisting the students' participation regarding academic achievement by a mobilizing mechanism as opposed to an explorative one. Understanding that African American males have historically considered sports as a way out of their social woes or disadvantages (Harris et al., 2014). In addition, coaches play a pivotal role in the advancement of successful academic achievement due to the powerful influence they have from the field. When used in unison, the outcome can be rewarding and provide a well-rounded student who will possess a balance with both academics and athletics as opposed to academics versus athletics. However, this must also be accompanied by active participation and consistent parental partnerships that can positively influence the cultivation of both a student scholar and athlete.

The Research Problem

The problem addressed by this study involved the lack of consistent parental involvement and academic support regarding at-risk African American students within inner city schools, which influences their academic achievement and progress. According to Howard and Reynolds (2008), regardless of SES, whether you are White or African American, and whether you attend an inner city or affluent school, parental support is needed and plays a pivotal responsibility in a student's academic achievement and athletic success. On the contrary, African American students are not academically involved in their academics at the same level as their peers. The present state of academic engagement of African American students is often portrayed specifically by the Black-White achievement gap, which is mostly defined by the academic achievement levels on

national and state-administered standardized tests (Haycock, 2001; Morales, 2016).

Background and Justification

For many years, parents, educators, and stakeholders have been concerned about the position of African American students and their academic success. While many educators, parents, and stakeholders have recognized countless positive contributions made by African American students and the academic gains made, they want to ensure the progress continues. Whether the conversation is regarding kindergarten to Grade 12 education, standardized test scores, high school dropout statistics, or college preparation and completion, African American males, on average, score below other ethnic or gender groups. However, the persistent endeavors of many African American males who have completed high school and matriculated to prestigious colleges and universities, some being Historical Black Colleges and Universities, contribute to the nation's ability to sustain in a competitive and biased workforce. Thus, the success of African American males can lead to continued economic prosperity in our nation where parental support, effective mentoring, and the village are consistent with love and patience (Donner & Shockley, 2010; Hughes, 2010).

According to John E. Jackson, president of the Schott Foundation for Public Education (2015), statistics on the academic success of African American males in kindergarten to Grade 12 were low, which, if not improved, present an economic and educational challenge to the community and nation. According to data provided by Aratani et al. (2011), African American fourth-grade students who attend public school typically scored 27 percentage points lower in reading compared to their White counterparts and 33 percentage points lower than Asian fourth graders. The trend is also evident in mathematics where African American males scored 37 percentage points lower

than White males. While the gap in mathematics performance between African American males and White males narrowed to 32 percentage points by the eighth grade, the proficiency data still suggested most African American males are not proficient in reading and mathematics throughout their elementary and secondary education. As a result, if this trend continues, the underachievement of African American males in their overall academics, primarily reading and mathematics, will affect the economic competitiveness of the many communities represented around the world. In contrast, the data for African American female proficiency indicated gains were recognized, but the problem was not as severe or deficient as it was for their African American males. Yet, it adds to the lack of parental involvement regarding their academic achievement.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 can be used as foundation for much of today's concern for parental involvement in a child's education (Berger, 2008). Parent involvement has been found to be extremely vital to the success of African American males (Miller, 2008). Many articles have been written with varying opinions on the subject (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Badri et al., 2014; Epstein, 2001; Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2007; Luet, 2015). Some researchers view authoritative parenting as the key to successful academic achievement progress among African American males, while others view effective mentoring along with student engagement and motivation to be more important (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Badri et al., 2014; Miller, 2008; Parietti, 2015). Parents who were authoritative in their approach to motivating their children saw greater results in their children's academic success outcomes than the parents who were not as authoritative in the rearing of their children (Miller, 2008; Parietti, 2015).

Parental involvement is deemed to be essential to the academic development and success of the youth and adults, and African American males are no exception (Gordon &

Cui, 2014; Graves & Brown-Wright, 2011; Harper & Davis, 2012; Hudley, 2016; Parietti, 2015). Parental involvement must be consistent and ongoing throughout a child's educational journey. In addition, parental involvement has been considered the premise of any child's educational expedition and high motivation (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Badri et al., 2014; Dotterer & Wehrspann, 2016; Epstein, 2001; W. Fan & Williams, 2010; X. T. Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2007; Reynolds et al., 2015).

At the researcher's location, inconsistent parental support seems to be more prevalent and has become a normal pattern with growing deficiencies that continue to haunt schools and surrounding communities, especially regarding low-performing students. At the beginning of the school year, the parental support is decent but could be better. Some parents are adamant and genuinely concerned about their child's academic performance and educational growth. On the other hand, most are more ecstatic regarding their child's appointment to a sports position or starting in each game, mainly football. This growing trend has caused major infractions within our school from teachers fueling administration, parents, coaches, and students. So, the school has been known for passing athletes with insufficient academic progress and accommodating athletes because of their athletic ability on the field versus their academic performance and success in the classroom. The question has always been: Why can't they have the best of both worlds?

Sadly, most of the students, including the incoming freshmen, are perceived to be more concerned about football and playbooks than with their basic academics and accreditation to graduate high school and proceed further with postsecondary studies, technical schools, or other careers of their choice. The researcher's school supports education and student academic success, but most of the students are more driven by their growing statistics on various football social media sites and homemade highlights. This

affects our school culture, students, and community. For example, during official open house for the school year, approximately 100 parents, out of a student body of 1,140, were in attendance and participated. Some parents focus more on the athletics than the academic success and performance of their children. This has proven to be more of a problem during the sport season, mainly football. The stands are excessively overflowing with eager and vivacious parents whom the researcher will never meet unless a disciplinary action or offense warrants a parental presence. So, year after year, this trend has increased and shows no signs of decelerating. Parental engagement and involvement on a consistent basis can be viewed as optional, depending on the perspective of who you ask.

Deficiencies in the Evidence

There is a voluminous body of literature that concerns itself with parental involvement and the methods which parents assist as agents of change and advocates on behalf of their children (Howard & Reynolds, 2008). Parental engagement is the proactive involvement of parents in students' education. As a veteran educator, this epidemic has been to the forefront for years within numerous inner city schools. There is a plethora of literature that supports and documents these concerns. The lack of parental support regarding student academics for at-risk African American high school students, primarily males, is a major concern, but the lack of parental support and involvement of the same students regarding their athletics, mainly football and basketball, are a greater problem.

For example, the researcher recently experienced an annual Open House for the new school year. It was quite disturbing to the researcher that, of the 217 students the researcher is accountable for and loves to teach, only 12 parents came to better

understand the expectations of the district, state, and nation regarding their children's education path and plan. Needless to say, the researcher saw these same parents at the Homecoming game the week before and asked would they be in attendance and they responded in unison affirmatively. There was just a remnant of 12. This is disheartening, and it seems to only progress to a higher degree. Many parents may be considered active participants in the advancement of their child's education and athletic success, but, at times, their actions speak volumes, and it is exhibited through the students' academic achievement (Deplanty et al., 2007; Luet, 2015).

On the other hand, as students advance from elementary to secondary education, parental involvement dwindles (Dotterer & Wehrspann, 2016; Hill & Taylor, 2004; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2009; Milgram & Toubiana, 1999; Mo & Singh, 2008). Many parents struggle with being active, available, or dependable with their supportive initiatives due to their own deficiencies in education or limited schooling (Deplanty et al., 2007; Luet, 2015). Therefore, a lack of urgency or attentiveness regarding consistent and unswerving reinforcement from parents who are considered to be challenged both educationally and socioeconomically may contribute to unhealthy practices for struggling adolescents and barriers for productive adolescents.

Audience

The individuals who will be affected and benefit from this study are students, parents, teachers, academic coaches, administrators, principals, area superintendents, regional directors, and superintendents of schools.

Setting of the Study

This study took place at an inner city, urban public middle and high school located in Florida. The schools were located in a middle class neighborhood where

multiple barriers and circumstances contributed to factors that plagued academic achievement and parental engagement, such as race and ethnicity, language proficiency, gangs, high crime, and SES of the household. Over 75% of the residents in the county were from culturally and racially diverse backgrounds. The African American population in the county was over 82% and had a multicultural infusion that allowed for such diversity and originality. The school enrollment was 550. The demographics of the student body were 75% African Americans, 15% White Americans, and 10% Hispanics. The school employed about 25 teachers and 25 staff workers, including clerical, at the time of this study. Also, most of the teachers were African American. To add, both schools housed four magnet programs that serviced the students and community: Pre-Law, Pre-Med, Robotics, and Information Technology. Also, there were three technical programs: Radio and Broadcasting, Auto Mechanics, and Cosmetology.

Researcher's Role

The researcher's role in this organization is the principal and mentor of the Take Stock in Children program, as a 22-year veteran. The researcher is responsible for inner city at-risk students in Grades 6 through 12 who academically perform on one or two grade levels below proficiency according to the No Child Left Behind Act and the Florida Department of Education's Florida Standard Assessment, which assesses students' academic levels and comprehension annually. Also, the researcher tutors students in reading, language arts, and writing to assist with academic achievement and success, including outlining a plethora of careers options with college or trade school exposure.

In addition, the researcher mentors at-risk male students within various urban, inner city communities and schools, including the researcher's school, to bring structure, knowledge, wisdom, and change to students who are branded as dropouts, unruly,

worthless, and headed for a life of destruction. The researcher's love and passion are exemplified daily though his teachings, zero tolerance for low self-esteem, and positive affirmations, attitudes, and realistic resolutions. Also, the researcher is noted for effective communication among all stakeholders. In addition, his rapport and resolution of disruptive and challenging behavior are regularly applauded by administration, teachers, staff, parents, the community at large, and most importantly, the students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand the factors that contribute to the lack of parental involvement and support in at-risk students' academics, as compared to the parental support that these same students receive in the athletic arena.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this applied dissertation, the following terms are defined.

Academic Achievement

This term refers to the level of actual accomplishment or proficiency that students have obtained in an academic area as opposed to their potential.

Achievement Gap

This term refers to the disparity in academic success between low-income, minority students and their majority peers as measured by high-stake tests (Jenks & Phillips, 1998; Uwah et al., 2008). The achievement gap continues to exist today and is one of the prominent issues in education. It is a central topic of discussion in education reform.

African American Student

This term refers to a Black person who is male or female of African origin (Ragstogi et al., 2018; Sue et al., 2008).

At-Risk Students

This term is used to describe students who are failing academically due to three sources of influence, such as family engagement, community involvement, and peer association.

Communication

This term refers to the interaction between the school, parents, and teachers regarding the dissemination of information about the child's education through various means: parent-teacher conferences, phone calls, newsletters, report cards, emails, and school websites (Grant & Ray, 2010, 2015; Hirsto, 2010).

Culture

This term refers to a set of behaviors, values, beliefs, experiences, communication styles, and learning styles shared by a particular group.

Educational Poverty

This term refers to a process of the limitation of children's right to education and deprivation of their opportunities to learn and develop the skills they will need to succeed in a rapidly changing society.

Family Support

This term refers to a group of individuals who care for or live with a child or adolescent who needs emotional or behavioral assistance during grade school and/or college (Hetherington & Jodl, 1994).

High School

This term refers to to students academically engaged in Grades 9 through 12.

Homelessness

This term refers to living without a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime

residence. This includes students who are living with a friend, relative, or someone else because they lost their home, or their family is experiencing temporary financial problems.

Middle School

This term refers to students academically engaged in Grades 6 through 8.

Parent Engagement

This term refers to the active involvement of children's parents and guardians in the educational process (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013).

Parental Involvement

This term refers to the participation of parents in regular, two-way, meaningful communication involving student academic learning, performance, behavior, and other school activities.

Single-Parent Households

This term refers to families with children under age 18 headed by a parent who is widowed or divorced and not remarried or by a parent who has never married.

Socioeconomic Status (SES)

This term refers to the measure of a person's work experience and an individual's or family's social and economic position as it relates to others, based on income, education, and job occupation. This term is generally divided into three levels: (a) high SES (b) middle SES, and (c) low SES.

Stakeholders

This term refers to individuals who include, but are not limited, to school boards, parents, teachers, administrators, students, local business owners, community groups and leaders, professional organizations, youth organizations, the faith community including

churches, and media.

Student Academic Scholar

This term refers to a person who pursues academic and intellectual activities, particularly those in grade school and colligate beyond.

Student Athlete

This term refers to a participant in an organized competitive sport sponsored by the educational institution in which the student is enrolled (Howard, 2000; Purdy et al., 1985).

Student Engagement

This term refers to the quality of effort from students who are devoted to educationally purposeful activities that contribute directly to specific desired outcomes.

Student Participation

This term refers to the extent to which students participate or involve themselves in their academic success.

Urban Education

This term refers to a method of schooling that takes place in large, densely populated areas with diverse populations.

Urban Schools

This term refers to schools located in or near urban centers, primarily serving poor and ethnically diverse students in densely populated areas.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Student Academics and Parental Involvement

There is ongoing debate and uncertainty about how student academic achievement has dimmed to the point of nonimportance while student athletics takes a more definite stance over acquiring a quality education, which floods literature (Knifsend & Graham, 2012). There are several rumors contributing to the battle of students who choose academics through education, while other students choose athletics over education with no sense of urgency of prioritizing what is important, including inconsistent and nonsupportive parental engagement (Dawkins et al., 2008). Additionally, there has been an interesting conflict of how White student athletes operate and maintain their academics with some parental support, while African American student athletes within inner city schools receive little to no parental support in academics but more so in their athletics (Czopp, 2010).

Moreover, using various stereotyping or profiling has been another area of interest that seems to continuously plague inner city schools. For example, poor parental and coach support systems, having to choose between sports or academics, and teachers trying to consistently raise the momentum of students who are less interested in academics and more riveted with establishing themselves as well-known student athletes are noted as contributing factors, as well as how school extracurricular and academics could bridge an efficacious life for all students involved in any type of sport activity (Mamerow & Navarro, 2014). In addition, there are various factors that serve as a platform for understanding the importance of academics and athletics and being able to bridge the gap as a well-rounded student (Bowen & Greene, 2012), such as being able to balance school and extracurricular activities, engaging in healthy relationships that

promote success, and receiving consistent parental influence.

On the other hand, parental support for student academics have had its share of adversities in the urban, inner city schools, predominantly among the African American, at-risk students. Parental involvement is any action taken by a parent that can enhance or assist in the progression of their child's educational journey, including their academic performance and behavior (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Badri et al., 2014; Gordon & Cui, 2014; Graves & Brown-Wright, 2011; Hudley, 2016; McNeal, 2014). In conjunction, parental involvement also consists of actions that meet or exceed the students' norms or expectations and thrust them toward success through educational advancements.

Parental engagement is the proactive involvement of parents in a student's educational advancement. This involvement is initiated by the parents as the guardians and ones responsible for their children's psychosocial and educational development, which is more likely to encourage students' educational engagement and academic performance. Nevertheless, consistent parental involvement is a pivotal aspect in the academic advancement and learning of adolescents. Researchers agree that parental involvement is a social, cultural, and perceptive concept that assists in improving educational learning outcomes and favorable successes, primarily among inner city adolescents (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Badri et al., 2014; Creech, 2010; Gordon & Cui, 2014; Graves & Brown-Wright, 2011; Hudley, 2016; Yamanoto & Holloway, 2010). As a matter of fact, parental involvement has been identified as the precedent for education regarding the youth inside of inner city schools (Jackson, 2008; Woolfolk, 2013).

Parental involvement has been described in two ways: by assessing the number of activities parents are able to participate in, such as meetings, games, and so on, or by the volume of influence the parents exercise or experience as a result of their children's

school and the individualized school experience (Wennerholm & Bremberg, 2005). Parents active involvement, regarding their children's education, positively affects the children's dedication to school, enhanced student academic performance, and achievement, and overall self-motivation needed to succeed during their educational journey.

Rodgers et al. (2009) acknowledged that parents who are actively engaged in the education of their child experience exceedingly high academic performance levels and mastery of varied school subjects in school. Deplanty et al. (2007) summed up their definition of parental involvement as parents being their children's first teacher and cheerleader, and, for students to excel academically in school, parents must participate actively in the education of their children. Epstein (1987a) defined parental involvement as an ongoing process to support student achievement. Parents also need to be engaged early and remain consistent throughout the school years from elementary to high school. This holds true especially during the adolescent years. Adolescents are affected differently as a result of parental involvement and support. The relationship must be continuous between home and school.

Involvement at home, wherein parents discuss school assignments and activities, as well as assist with planning events, has the strongest impact on student behavior and academic achievement (Hudley, 2016; Sui-Chu & Williams, 1996). Parents who are involved in the education of their children create and reinforce direct experiences of long-term education success. They also offer verbal persuasion that aims to develop positive and healthy attitudes, behaviors, and purposeful efforts consistent with school success and college matriculation. Creating emotional arousal and drive that accentuates the personal objective and importance of exceeding academically in school is more likely to

foster a solid, affirmative sense of efficacy for successfully achieving school-related assignments and activities that are academically sound than students whose parents are not involved (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Badri et al., 2014; Delale-O'Connor & Graham, 2019; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995; Parietti, 2015).

Consequently, some parents believe that their children's education is not as important from Grades 7 to 12, as it was during the primary educational learning stages. Parents may also believe that adolescents desire and need independence. Therefore, this approach causes parents to minimize and decrease their level of involvement (Eccles & Harold, 1993; Hudley, 2016; Parietti, 2015). Research has shown that parental involvement has a major influence on student achievement (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Badri et al., 2014; Barnard, 2004; Fan & Chen, 2001; Hudley, 2016; Parietti, 2015). Becher's (1986) literature review on parental involvement found that there was overwhelming evidence indicating that students whose parents are involved in their children's academic learning have increased academic performance and success during their educational tenure, including their overall cognitive development.

In addition, researchers have also found that consistent parental involvement is associated with a vast majority of children matriculating to colleges and universities nationwide, as well as high academic performance, lower rates regarding behavioral problems, and lower dropouts in high school and truancy (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Badri et al., 2014; Cabrera & Steven, 2000; Horn, 1998; McNeal, 1999; Muller & Kerbow, 1993; Parietti, 2015; Sui-Chu & Williams, 1996). Research that has commonly alluded to positive sectors of parent involvement has displayed that students benefit academically and socially when parents participate in their children's school learning experiences, build relationships with the administrators and teachers, and engage in supportive

learning at home (Castro et al., 2015; Delale-O'Connor & Graham, 2019; Dotterer & Wehrspann, 2016; Hudley, 2016; Jeynes, 2007; Parietti, 2015; Wilder, 2014). For more than 40 years, educational leaders have focused on the need for increased parental involvement (Castro et al., 2015; Epstein, 1987a, 1987b, 1995, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Weiss et al., 1998; Wilder, 2014). These studies provided evidence that parental involvement in education positively affects student achievement (Glasgow & Whitney, 2009; Keane, 2007; Vukovic et al., 2013).

Communication

Communication is key when parental involvement is being addressed. Results of research on parental involvement in schools indicate that parents who are consistent in their engagement concerning the education of their children can have a positive impact on academic performance, attitude, and student behavior. Fan and Williams (2010) stated that there is a difference when parents are contacted for poor academic performance, continued problems, or issues that negatively impact their child. This causes a decrease in student motivation in school and academic performance. However, when the parents are contacted for improvements in behavior or grades regarding their child, the response is deemed more positive and warrants increased parental support as a result.

Researchers have also found that strong, effective, and efficient parental involvement correlated with positive attitudes toward education and in various school settings, school attendance, behavioral performance and increased academic accomplishments as well (Dotterer & Wehrspann, 2016; Kauchak & Eggen, 2011; Parry, 2010). Also, researchers have found that consistent communication among parents and their children at home contributes to high academic achievement and significantly reduces problematic behavior (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Hudley, 2016; Luet, 2015;

McNeal, 1999; Parietti, 2015).

Slavin and Madden (2001) argued that parental involvement is one of the most relevant components that is absolutely essential in order to raise awareness to the failing academic achievements of minority and disadvantaged children. The Ross et al. (1999) study confirmed this assertion. Consistent parental involvement and the positive influence it has on children, as well as the outstanding academic outcomes, hold an important space and is special. Hara (1998) echoed that increased parental involvement is key to increasing the academic achievement of children. Various studies indicate that consistent parental involvement is significant in determining how productive children will perform in school on both elementary and secondary school levels (Christian et al., 1998, 2011; Mau, 1997; McBride & Lin, 1996; Singh et al., 1995).

Research conducted by Hill et al. (2004) revealed a circuitous effect of parent engagement was amended by the parent's level of education or academic completion. The authors conveyed that the involvement of parents with advanced or higher educational levels was associated to lesser behavioral challenges in middle school and indirectly linked to higher grade point averages and higher educational aspirations in high school. However, the engagement of parents with lower educational levels was linked to higher aspirations but not to behavior problems or poor academic performance and grades in school. Parental involvement will always be a popular topic and center of conversation among teachers, administration, parents, and community leaders, because the permanency of many households in the American family has deteriorated over the last 40 years (Hetherington & Jodl, 1994; Wallerstein & Lewis, 1998).

The advantages of parental involvement are well documented; therefore, there is reason to have confidence that an elevated level of parental involvement could assist

African American children with accelerated academic performance and achievement. Research denotes that consistent parental involvement more likely will have a more positive effect on children completing their assignments and homework (Balli, 1998; Balli et al., 1998; Villas-Boas, 1998), improve their communication and language skills both verbal and written (Epstein, 2001), and have low reported school absenteeism rates (Nesbitt, 1993). Parental involvement alone has become a popular topic. The unstableness and decline of it among the American family have been escalating for decades (Hetherington & Jodl, 1994; Wallerstein & Lewis, 1998).

Additional research agreed that consistent parental engagement and involvement in school can enhance student academic achievement and individual relationships at home and school. Therefore, increased student participation and parental involvement could be attributed to increased student performance and academic advancement in education. Parental involvement in education that is consistent is associated with the advancement and academic growth of early urban adolescents through positive behavior, social and cognitive engagement (Dotterer & Wehrspann, 2016).

Parent Involvement Challenges

Even though consistent student participation, academic motivation, and steady parental involvement can be challenging, it is necessary for academic improvement and success of inner city adolescents (Fan & Williams, 2010; Fortier et al., 1995; Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2005; Mancini et al., 2000; Skinner et al., 1998). Other researchers have acknowledged the positive impact of consistent parental involvement for specific cultures and ethnic groups including their SES and reported similar complexities in their findings (Carranza et al., 2009; Davis-Kean, 2005, 2009; Dretzke & Rickers, 2016). Regardless of the nuances, research outcomes consistently confirm the positive impact parents have as a

result of reliable parent engagement in both elementary and secondary students in urban settings (Dotterer & Wehrspann, 2016; Jeynes, 2007). Research has also revealed that urban and inner city schools, in particular, face additional struggles in trying to involve parents, due to pertinent characteristics such as excessively large families with low SES, limited English proficiency, and the diversity of their cultural and ethnic background (Dretzke & Rickers, 2016; Howland et al., 2006: Sheldon, 2003; Watson & Bogotch, 2015).

Although parental involvement has been studied on a plethora of cases and research conducted, there was no common definition found in the literature. Issues related to engaging parents from assorted backgrounds and ethnic origin posed a challenge and barrier for schools, parents, students, and teachers (Bower & Griffin, 2011; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). In addition, many influences are thought be associated with parental involvement. Research has suggested that many factors, such as grade school completion, gender, race or ethnicity, marital status, employment and the impact level of the SES affect parental involvement (Sheldon, 2003; Siraj-Blatchford, 2010; Skaliotis, 2010; Tezel-Sahin et al., 2011; Turney & Kao, 2009).

Many parents lack sufficient education or are limited in their comprehension, but many parents are also educationally astute. Thus, the more active parents become in their children's education, the more advanced and purposeful their children's academic success will be. Researchers agreed parental involvement practices, cultural and individual differences, family system of influence, ethnic background or origin, and technology usage may influence various parental practices with their children. Thus, the students' adaption to such practices leaves them with choices of engagement (Bower & Griffin, 2011; DeFur, 2012). Parents who struggled academically, dropped out of school,

or exhibited low academic achievement in school sometimes foster the same lack of interest and negative feelings as it relates to learning. Children in many low-income communities face life stressors, such as violence, depression, peer pressure, low academic performance, and lack of resources (Levine, 2002; Morales, 2016; Smith et al., 2009).

To add, researchers noted that considerations on parental values, beliefs, cultural orientations, and attitudes are needed when developing skills of non-judgement and respect for diversity to work with parents and their children. All parents are not the same. As a result, children mirror what they see, hear, or experience. They adjust according to the support that which is displayed from the parent or guardian (DeFur, 2012; Ryan et al., 2010; Sanchez et al., 2010). Also, parental involvement can be more convoluted than the factors referenced above. Although economic resources are absolutely essential in getting parents involved in their children's education, children from deprived and disadvantaged homes were found to be successful when parents were actively engaged in their academic progress. This led to high aspirations for their children and provided significant support in their educational quests.

Other factors that contribute to our understanding of parental involvement encompass individual parent and family environments, individual differences among siblings, parent-teacher interactions, student-teacher interactions, and parent-student interactions, not to mention the societal and psychological factors which may assist with limited parental involvement and association regarding educational support of their children (Bower & Griffin, 2011; Hornby & Lafaele, 2010; Hudley, 2016; Turney & Kao, 2009). Parents believe supervising the academic progress of their child, improving personal relationships the teachers, and involving their children in extracurricular

activities and school programs would strengthen the parental involvement in their children's education.

On the contrary, teachers suggested the maximum parental involvement in their child's education would be keeping a consistent line of communication open and accessible between the child and the school, participate in school functions, and practice applying fundamental parenting duties daily, which include proper supervision and discipline (Lawson, 2003). With that being said, actively engaged parents in their children's education, particularly those in low-income communities and neighborhoods representing the inner city, remain one of many pivotal factors and challenges educators face (Epstein, 2001).

Cooper and Crosnoe (2007) argued that the lack of adequate finances, time, and absence of energy limit economically disadvantaged African American parents' levels of commitment and involvement in their children's education. Lareau (2003) echoed that parents residing in low-income communities and neighborhoods are not equal regarding financial freedom and the educational resources which are more accessible to their middle class associates. Therefore, low-income parents may experience more turbulence and restrictions in time poverty. Time poverty is defined as the lack of poor working families' free time to devote to their child's educational concerns (Newman & Chin, 2003; Reynolds et al., 2015). Unfortunately, many African American parents have other children who they are responsible to care for or work schedules that hinder them from being fully engaged or attending parent-teacher conferences, school activities, and assemblies (Gavidia-Payne et al., 2015; Hudley, 2016; Machen et al., 2005; Vega et al., 2015).

Other hindrances faced by African American families evolve from the interactions

between the parent and school. Harry (1992) noted that African American parents conveyed feelings of isolation, discouragement, alienation, disengagement, and a host of other negative notions regarding personnel at the school that their child attends. Other African Americans are reluctant to become involved or active because of their negative educational experience as a student (Lightfoot, 2004). Thus, the combination of undesirable experiences and interaction, including personnel experiences during childhood and adolescent years, can serve as potential barriers to consistent parental involvement among African American parents. Given these difficulties, African American families living in inner cities have developed alternate ways to be involved or engaged in their children's education that are indirect and perhaps satisfy the traditional models of parental involvement (Auerbach, 2007; Gavidia-Payne et al., 2015; Hudley, 2016; Vega et al., 2015).

Conversely, Kunjufu (1984) stated that parental involvement is one of the most crucial detriments in performance inside the classroom. Akimoff (1996) found that parental involvement was indeed necessary and pivotal in assisting students achieve optimum success in school both academically and socially. Also, a vast majority of parents of all social classes, ethnic groups, and backgrounds understand the importance of a quality education and the desire for their children to excel academically as well as be successful in their educational journey through school (Clark, 1983). Parental involvement is a significant factor in the academic achievement of a child. Students also perform better when their parents are involved in their education (Kraft & Dougherty, 2013; Parcel et al., 2010). Indeed, the relationship between the parent and the child is important (Cristofaro et al., 2010; Radzi et al., 2010). Therefore, students whose parents are not actively involved may not perform as well in their studies and their behavior as

those students whose parents participate on a regular basis (Calzada et al., 2014; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Powell, 1989).

Differences in Student Academic Learning and Parental Involvement

Much of the current literature fails to adequately differentiate between the parental involvement patterns in schools of African American middle class parents and those of White middle class parents. Maybe to some, there is no visible differences, but to a majority, there are clear differences between White middle class experiences and those of African American middle class families, and the complications of these dissimilarities have been well documented in most professional literature (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Badri et al., 2014; Conley, 1999; Orrock & Clark, 2018; Parietti, 2015; Pattillo-McCoy, 1999; Wilson, 1996). Social class differences in how African American parents approach educational participation and engagement result from the interaction of the educational environments they are exposed and prior race and SES, family history, and school experiences.

The confluence of racial and social class provides an interesting examination in the engagement of parents and parental involvement regarding African American parents. Yan (1999) used social capital theory to investigate the levels of African American parents compared to their White counterparts. Using four constructs of social capital such as parent-teen interaction, parent-school interactions, interactions with other parents and stakeholders, and family engagement to evaluate parental involvement, Yan found that African American parents exhibited higher or equal levels of effective and efficient parental involvement when compared to White parents. Parent involvement, after-school programs, mentoring, teacher-student relationships, and family community support encourage academic success and additional opportunities for African American students,

primarily males (Gavidia-Payne et al., 2015; Hudley, 2016).

Massey and Denton (1985) stated that African American families have attempted to make their disgruntled and failed efforts relating to desegregation known through intended recommendations to provide African American parents the opportunity to send their children to schools that challenge and promote academic success. The assessment of academic performance and advancement of African American students in middle class, suburban schools propose that the type of educational impartiality many African American parents believe are prevalent in affluent schools remains subtle.

For example, Ferguson (2002) researched the racial discrepancies of high academic performing suburban schools and discovered that African American students produce lower test scores, grade point averages, and were significantly behind academically than their White peers. Moreover, parents and families utilize various forms of capital to advocate on behalf of their children. Even though the through deceit lends, educational transformation and acculturation will be a part of our past, present, and future possibly, if not realistic and positive changes and conformations are made. Of all the disparities in the American education system, researchers have tried to address the racial dissimilarity epidemic in many fashions (Orfield et al., 2000).

One indication that racial inequality is yet prevalent in the United States in the presence of a continual academic achievement gap between African Americans (as well as Latinos) and White Americans. Many educators noted that this achievement gap reflects racial inequality and promotes its continuation (Cross & Slater, 2000; Green, 2001; Hedges & Nowell, 1999; Hudley, 2016; Slavin & Madden, 2001). Another factor contributing to the poor achievement among minorities, especially African American students in urban schools, is the relative lack of teachers and instructors of color in public

schools nationwide (Morales, 2016). Regardless of many attempts to lessen the achievement gap, the major variation in test scores among African Americans and their counterparts confirms truth about the aforementioned (Green, 2001).

Nevertheless, the achievement gap remains a controversial issue among American educators, given consistent parental involvement has revealed students are more productive and academically equipped in the general population of students (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Badri et al., 2014; Dotterer & Wehrspann, 2016; Jeynes, 2005; Hudley, 2016; Parietti, 2015; Slavin & Madden, 2001; Watson & Bogotch, 2015). The African American community is not impressed by the trends of any other ethnic groups in the United States. There is a need for researchers to fully comprehend the importance and impact of consistent parental involvement among Americans, primarily African Americans. Commonly slighted contributors from outside the classroom which hinders consistent parent participation.

Existing literature highlights the negative academic outcomes associated with African American students. However, despite the societal odds pitted against them, many African American students are excelling, academically soaring, and attaining postsecondary degrees while achieving socially sound prestige. In fact, researchers have discovered that many African American students learn, succeed, and pursue plans for advancing their education regardless of their preexisting effects of low SES, minimal teacher expectations, and inadequate representation of their success in school and at home (Freiberg, 1993; Morales, 2016; Rutter, 1987; Werner, 1989).

Researchers and educators alike both agree that parental involvement is essential and necessary in students' development. This primarily is a result of unswerving and steady parental involvement in their children. Unlike teachers, administrators, counselors

and other professionals, active parents serve as a continual, persistent, and stable resource for their children throughout their life span. However, researchers continue to find themselves in a quandary as to what constitutes positive and influential parental involvement and successful academic outcomes predominantly among African American adolescents (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Badri et al., 2014; Hayes & Cunningham, 2003; Hudley, 2016; Parietti, 2015; Trusty, 2002).

Although infrequent, much of the literature surrounding the academic expectations of African American adolescents' future is consistent with majority of research that presents enough findings pertaining to youth of color through a deleterious and dearth-oriented lens (Spencer, 2006). For example, many researchers have noted that Black students may have unrealistic educational goals and aspirations (Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007). However, this identification of unrealistic education goals and aspirations was found to be prematurely assessed in their early academic careers. Turney and Kao (2009) found that Hispanic and Asian parents are more prone to report not feeling apart of or welcomed at school in reference their child's education and academic performance. Consequently, Black, Hispanic, Asian or foreign-based parents are challenged substantially higher with a plethora of barriers than their White native-born counterparts. An assessment of most academic indices across the subgroups reveal that African American students under perform in comparison to their peers from other ethnic groups and racial origins (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Badri et al., 2014; Gavidia-Payne et al., 2015; Hudley, 2016; Parietti, 2015; Vega et al., 2015; Watson & Bogotch, 2015).

For example, the data revealed that, in 2018, African Americans students performed and scored exceptionally lower on reading, math, and writing standard assessments for Grades 3, 8, and 10 than their White, Asian American, Hispanic, and

Latino counterparts. Researchers offered that one of the common reasons for this academic decline was the disproportionate numbers of students who live in poverty and suffer as a result their household climate and support (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Anyon, 2005; Badri et al., 2014; Hudley, 2016; Lee & Slaughter-Dafoe, 2005; Parietti, 2015). African American students who attend schools in impoverished and poverty stricken neighborhoods face a litany of challenges and hurdles in their pursuit for academic success, such as unqualified teachers, deteriorating and overcrowded schools, inadequate learning materials and supplies, high teacher and administration turnovers, and a host of other savage inequalities that hinder the academic progression in many urban and rural schools (Kozol, 2006). Students who suffer the corollaries of inequalities are often described pathologically as at risk, as mentioned by Franklin (2000), focus on risk and vulnerability, not promise, protection, and resilience. By labeling students and families in this manner, institutions and public schools alike shun criticism as the perpetrators of inequity (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Badri et al., 2014; Hudley, 2016; Lawton-Sticklor, 2018; Parietti, 2015; Watson & Bogotch, 2015).

Another scholar argued that middle class African American students do not possess the same desire to be academically successful as they their other ethnics counterparts or peers (Parietti, 2015). Fordham and Ogbu (1986) found that the middle class African American students are not interested in academic achievement or successful obtaining academic success. Rather in the study, they found that African American students gravitated toward music in the forms of hip hop, rap, and counterculture values more than pursuing academic success, even though many of their parents are working professionals representing a multiplicity of occupations world-wide. Sanders' (1997) research concluded that African American parents were successful in promoting their

children's racial and ethnic socialization, which assisted in supporting their academic success as well.

Datnow and Cooper (1996) examined the levels of parental involvement of African American middle class parents in a predominantly White school setting and found that the usage of peer networks and consistent affirmation of belonging to a group of individuals or associations were essential in their children succeeding academically, but yet trail their White cohorts on most academic indices. Black boys are repeatedly placed in low-performing and remedial classes or overdiagnosed with biased disabilities that lead to their overwhelming representation in special education programs (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Artiles, 2011; Artiles & Zamora-Duran, 1997; Badri et al., 2014; Parietti, 2015; Sullivan & Bal, 2013). The crossroads of hegemonic ontologies of Black masculine deviancy and pretended colorblind school disciplinary actions and policies add to the exaggerated and unnecessary scrutiny and disproportionate punishment of Black adolescent boys (Parietti, 2015; Skiba et al., 2014).

Black males who attend segregated schools and institutions are more susceptible to greater surveillance and disciplinary actions, and heightened police presence from local municipalities to assist with any erratic or unruly behavior on school campus (Welch & Payne, 2010). This also exposes Black boys, including students with alternative lifestyles, to unnecessary contact with the criminal justice system and adds to what is referenced for many inner city students as the school-to-prison pipeline (Losen & Martinez, 2013; Noguera, 2001, 2003; Parietti, 2015). While there is increasing evidence of how Black males thrive in school despite these conditions (Harper, 2012; McGee & Martin, 2011; Milner, 2008), it is apparent specific school policies and procedures limit Black students' opportunity to advance educational and contribute to the inequitable

social stratification.

African American male adolescents of today face complications that restrict academic success and future accomplishments. The increasing gap in academic success and drop-out rates between African American students and White counterparts in America is disturbing (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Badri et al., 2014; Hudley, 2016; Parietti, 2015). The National Center for Education Statistics reported that 57% of African American adolescent males dropped out of school in 2015 (Ellis, 2016; Whiting, 2009). These existing statistics call for immediate action from all stakeholders to understand minority culture and trends. Educators must be able to develop and execute interventions to improve retention and academic success for minority students in public schools regarding educational advancement (Orrock & Clark, 2018; Parietti, 2015).

When African American male students are supported properly accommodating their physical and psychological needs and their academic journey, these students are equipped and prepared to succeed in school (Hudley, 2016; Orrock & Clark, 2018; Parietti, 2015; Strayhorn, 2009). Also, when parental involvement in academics, positive mentors, emotional support, and improved relationships between administrators, teachers and African American males improve, they will be able to navigate confidently through the White middle class dominated educational system successfully (Hudley, 2016; McGee & Pearmann, 2014; Parietti, 2015).

Single Parenting

African American families over the course of American history have been birthed out of wedlock and female lead (Battle & Scott, 2000). Since the 1960s, African American single parent-parent households and communities have risen to 74%, with 92% of these families led by mothers (Battle & Scott, 2000; Du Plessis, 1993; Orrock & Clark,

2018; Paschall et al., 2003; Peoples & Loeber, 1994; Young et al., 1991). The conclusions of Battle and Scott (2000) imply that females who are the head of the household are capable of raising children in single-parent households, and academic achievement and healthy maturity are governed by the availability of economic resources and stability, rather than on gender or a traditional family setting.

On the other hand, the takes-a-village-to-raise-a-child method still remains vital in single-parent homes of mothers in urban communities (Battle & Scott, 2000; Orrock & Clark, 2018). Many African American families are without fathers as the head (DeBell, 2008; Dorsey et al., 2007; Orrock & Clark, 2018; Parietti, 2015). The subtleties of having a single-parent household have many difficulties and increased stress factors for the family, including consistent parental involvement. Stress from other issues contribute to the lack of active parental engagement in school and academic achievement in African American household. This leads to academic deficiencies in the educational goals of children from low-SES backgrounds (Dorsey et al., 2007; Orrock & Clark, 2018; Strayhorn, 2009). Single-parent families encounter greater financial hardships, exposure to more crime, violence, gang activity, and drugs with their community due to lack of income and affordable housing, as well as the psychological stress because of the aforementioned variables (Orrock & Clark, 2018; Paschall et al., 2003).

Academically Disadvantaged Students

The problem faced by many African American males in the low-SES communities in which they reside involves the choices of friends and organizations with which they are associated (Orrock & Clark, 2018; Parietti, 2015; Quanes & Rankin, 1998). African American males are at a double disadvantage being a minority, academically challenged, and coming from low-SES backgrounds (Hudley, 2016; Orrock

& Clark, 2018; Parietti, 2015). Oppression is visible in public education for most young Black adolescent men who must adjust to a set of White middle class standards. Therefore, soliciting parental involvement for an educational system that has been noted for racial disparities will always be a daunting task. Racial minorities also may find themselves alienated or rejected by schools from prior assumptions, discipline or behavioral issues, and unjust and unfair treatment from authority figures compared to their White counterparts (Hudley, 2016; Orrock & Clark, 2018, Parietti, 2015; Townsend, 2000).

Low parental involvement in children's education is associated with low student achievement (Barnard, 2004; Boutte & Johnson, 2014; Bower & Griffen, 2011; Desimone, 1999; Hill & Craft, 2003; Zellman & Waterman, 1998). This is especially true for students of color and students from low-SES backgrounds (Jeynes, 2010). A lack of parental involvement may also limit effective communication between the school and the home. Miscommunication may lead to decreased student motivation, high suspension rates, and high dropout rates (Flynn & Nolan, 2008). Therefore, schools throughout the United States have included increasing parental involvement as one of their improvement strategies. This further perpetuates the academic disengagement, lack of parental involvement, and dropout rates of African American males. Due to their perceived inferiority, African American males experience a plethora of issues, including a sense of rejection and feelings of being targeted by teachers and administrators (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Howard-Hamilton & Behar-Horenstein, 1995; Kupchick & Willis, 2008; Orrock & Clark, 2018; Parietti, 2015).

Teachers and administrators need to be aware of the cultural differences in the school and develop rules and procedures that incorporate all economic, linguistic, and

ethnic diverse environments to encourage parent engagement and student academic achievement (Epstein, 2001). Academic problems arise in public school with African American students when educators and administrators fail to embrace all ethnicities by not providing diverse opportunities to learn and petition for parental engagement (Gay, 2000, 2010; Hudley, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Orrock & Clark, 2018; Parietti, 2015). Van den Bergh et al. (2010) recommended teachers adjust their teaching curriculums and styles to be culturally conducive for diverse learning and effective student and classroom engagement. When a culturally responsive curriculum is not created, the lack of student and parent engagement or participation with school academic identity may occur, especially within minority groups (Gay, 2000, 2010; Howard-Hamilton & Behar-Horenstein, 1995; Orrock & Clark, 2018; Wyatt, 2009).

Some educators may not openly exhibit their racial partialities toward minority students, thus perpetuating continuing the ethnic achievement gap due to unknown or unaware preconceived assumptions of selected minority groups or cultures (Orrock & Clark, 2018; Van den Bergh et al., 2010). Many Caucasian educators are not aware of their own White privileges within the educational school system. White privilege is defined as implicit and overt benefits that White individuals accrue from society creating a bigoted balance of power and position when compared to other minority races (Orrock & Clark, 2018; Stewart et al., 2012).

Different Parenting Styles

Parenting styles may have influence and impact parental influence (Lease & Dahlbeck, 2009; Parietti, 2015). Parenting styles can be grouped in multiple ways, but they usually are placed in three categories: authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive (Baumrind, 1966; Lease & Dahlbeck, 2009; Parietti, 2015). Authoritarian parents are

extremely demanding, but they do not react to the behavior of their child. Authoritative parents are able to sustain being highly demanding and responsive. Permissive parents are rarely demanding and vastly responsive. Children of authoritative parents have higher academic success and fewer behavior problems (Lease & Dahlbeck, 2009). Lease and Dahlbeck (2009) suggested that parental style would impact the decision-making abilities of their child.

The educational aspirations of parents for their child is a pivotal indicator of the academic performance and success of their child (Bowen et al., 2012; Parietti, 2015; Spera et al., 2009). Bowen et al. (2012) discovered that high expectations to be positively associated to academic results. Spera et al. (2009) found that Caucasian parents who had lower levels of educational achievements had lower educational aspirations and expectations for their children compared to other parents of other ethnic groups with similar low educational possibilities. However, regardless of their children's ethnic background, most parents have high aspirations and expectations for their children. It has also been observed that minority parents, for the most part, have high expectations and aspirations for their children, but minority students still perform academically lower (Spera et al., 2009). There is a possibility that minority parents are not able to express their approval for academic achievement due to their limited educational knowledge and academic success. Thus, they cannot provide adequate assistance in the progress of their child's academic achievement.

African American parents are observant of these outcomes as the issue relates to their sons, but they also confront the institution's structural and cultural disparities in similar ways as their children. Where many school systems practice privileged White middle class norms, aesthetics, and parenting styles, the parental involvement practices of

Black parents are often pathologized. Educators make the assumption that Black parents are not interested or involved consistently about their children's education (Cooper, 2005; Fine, 1993; Gavidia-Payne et al., 2015; Hudley, 2016; Parietti, 2015). Families of color and economically struggling families are put into challenging positions while navigating through social institutions and public educational systems. Many educators who interact and have involvement with Black parents stated that their behaviors are repeatedly misinterpreted as confrontational and disputatious about their stance as parents and academic progress regarding their children (Delale-O'Connor & Graham, 2019; Diamond & Gomez, 2004; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Luet, 2015; Watson & Bogotch, 2015).

Therefore, Black parents are reluctant and, in many cases, refuse to be involved with their children's school and educational journey with their teachers and administration because of the feelings of exclusion and unwelcoming behavior when they inquire or visit the school (Abrams & Gibbs, 2002; Noguera, 2001; Posey-Maddox et al., 2016). In addition, other research has indicated the restricted and despotic techniques in which parents and their engagement are considered, particularly minorities and low-income families (Baquedano-Lopez et al., 2013; Crozier, 2001; Delale-O'Connor & Graham, 2019; Hudley, 2016; Luet, 2015; Parietti, 2015).

On the contrary, Black parents have a documented history of active parental engagement in their children's education and consistent involvement practices that encourage the well-being and overall academic success of their children. Education scholars affirmed that there are noted differences in parental engagement of Black parents and their children between the 19th and 20th century, which invested in education as a way of political and financial motivation and cultural encouragement, and varies in the present as we know it (Anderson, 1988; Dretzke & Rickers, 2016; Fairclough, 2007;

Hudley, 2016; Walker, 1993). Nevertheless, many parents in the African American communities are supportive and attentive to their children's educational growth and progression today. Research of the current Black schooling and educational practices describes some of the school-based parental traditions for Black families, which includes volunteering at school or in the classroom, participating in school-sponsored activities, meetings, school accountability groups, and financially supporting educational endeavors (Abel, 2012; Clark, 1983; Delale-O'Connor & Graham, 2019; Posey-Maddox, 2012; Thompson, 2003).

For example, the parental engagement for many underprivileged and working-class African American parents is fashioned by deficiency of time. Balancing a multiplicity of tasks, unstable jobs and work schedules, child-care costs, restricts many parent's ability to participate in their child's education or monitor their children's academic improvement including assignments and homework (Cooper, 2003; Delale-O'Connor & Graham, 2019; Lareau, 2003; Luet, 2015; Watson & Bogotch, 2015). Secondary education (i.e., middle and high school) exacerbates these challenges of student adolescent transition from elementary and the school based and parental involvement more difficult because many parents are concerned and perceive the academic content to be aggressively hard and challenging for them to provide adequate academic assistance (Eccles & Harold, 1993; Green et al., 2007; Hudley, 2016).

Although school personnel and educators frequently consider that the presence of parents in school and sufficient homework supervision signifies good parenting (Hudley, 2016; Lipman, 1997; Shumow & Harris, 2000), many poor and working class Black parents who are not able to engage in school-based events are considered to be uncaring and truant and are positioned through school communications as unsupportive of the

normalcy of school operations and functions regarding academic advancement (Cooper, 2005; Diamond & Gomez, 2004; Fine, 1993; Parietti, 2015; Posey-Maddox et al., 2016). Therefore, parents who are involved in monitoring their children's academic success in school and homework become normalized rituals of parental involvement, and other procedures of educational assistance required by Black families are overlooked (Hudley, 2016; Parietti, 2015).

On the other hand, when African American parents are able to attend to inquire about the academic progress of their children, they are regularly met with rejections, exclusion, and confrontational issues regarding their child's behavior or poor academic performance (Allen & White-Smith, 2018; Parietti, 2015). Teachers who are predominantly White, middle class, and female (Coopersmith, 2009) are more likely to appreciate the parenting styles and cultural investment in their children's education of White middle class parents and pathologize the parents practices of Black parents (Abrams & Gibbs, 2002; Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Badri et al., 2014; Dretzke & Rickers, 2016; Reay, 1998; Toldson, 2008; Toldson & Lemmons, 2013).

In other words, Black families are positioned as culturally inadequate if they do not display White middle class cultural capital and aesthetics (Allen & White-Smith, 2018; Parietti, 2015; Watson & Bogotch, 2015; Yosso, 2006). Black parents are also eliminated from White-dominated parent groups and resources and other organizing relevant to the academic success of their children (Delale-O'Connor & Graham, 2019; Howard & Reynolds, 2008; Posey-Maddox, 2012). As a result, many Black parents disengage and refrain from being actively involved with the school their children attend (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2009). Consequently, Black parents manage their children's education by providing the necessities in the home (e.g., shelter, food), maintaining high

academic expectations, or involving their children in community, church, and educational and leadership-based activities (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Badri et al., 2014; Clark, 1990; Gutman & McLoyd, 2000; Hudley, 2016; Luet, 2015; Parietti, 2015).

Black parents also prepare their children to navigate through the disparities of a racially biased society, school system to be exact, in which racism is endemic (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Hudley, 2016; Parietti, 2015). They do so by grooming their children to respond to interpersonal and institutional discrimination by clarifying the importance of reacting in a positive manner to racial messages and supplying them with effective techniques and strategies needed to resist racial hegemony (Allen & White-Smith, 2018; Friend et al., 2011; Hudley, 2016; Parietti, 2015).

Furthermore, because schools and institutions serve as locations of social propagation and cultural authority, school practices such as exclusion, disproportionality in discipline racialized academic monitoring and data tracking, and school funding inequalities have compelled Black parents to act on behalf of their children's education and advocate for them. For instance, Black parents advocate for their sons individually who experience racial microaggressions or denied advancements and opportunities due to educators' biases (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Allen, 2013; Badri et al., 2014; Howard & Reynolds, 2008; Hudley, 2016; Parietti, 2015; Posey-Maddox et al., 2016).

Additionally, Black parents have always voiced their support of organizing community-based groups and associations to reform school funding, educational equality access, and disciplinary practices and procedures that directly affect the educational and democratic opportunities for their children (Allen & White-Smith, 2018; Anderson, 1988; Cooper, 2003; Fuentes, 2012; Parietti, 2015; Shujaa, 1992). All educators, especially teachers, should have a wide range of knowledge that will best maximize student

engagement and learning through the most suitable classroom organization addressing and resolving discipline concerns in the classroom (Gay, 2010; Howard, 2010; Parietti, 2015), particularly in urban communities.

Many teachers, although they have good intentions, are not supported administratively and lack the understanding necessary for them to be successful and relevant in the classroom with a particular assembly of students. Thus, educators need to have a deeper consideration regarding urban students and the factors of students who are in urban environments that may enhance the academic progress for students and teachers (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Badri et al., 2014; Delale-O'Connor & Graham, 2019; Hudley, 2016; Milner et al., 2015; Parietti, 2015; Posey-Maddox et al., 2016).

Poverty

Poverty and structural injustice can be precursors to, and explanations for, negative out-of-school experience and behavior that educators should recognize. Understanding that all families living in poverty may not experience negative circumstances, but to single out the pervasiveness of these experiences in certain communities, specifically urban communities, due to racism, discrimination, and a host of other forms of oppression that prohibit those in the urban communities from reaching their full potential is essential (Milner et al., 2015; Parietti, 2015).

Malecki and Demaray (2006) suggested there is an escalation in the volume of adolescents who are at risk of failing in school academically, as the number of adolescents living in deprived conditions is anticipated to increase as well. The authors indicated that, by 2020, approximately over 50% of the students in the United States would be living in poverty and unfavorable conditions for academic achievement among minority students, primarily African American students. Although poverty is not the only

reason why students perform poorly in school, it is a strong indicator of low academic performance amid elementary, middle, and high school students (Malecki & Demaray, 2006).

Poverty is known to be one, if not the greatest, predictor of low academic achievement because it affects students in multiple ways. It is clearly detrimental to a child's learning ability to live without proper nutrition, health precaution, housing, safety, and a secure environment. Parental uncertainties regarding limited employment and excessively low wages are possible stress factors. Although schools strive and commit to educating children, it is questionable that schools alone can minimize the effects of racism and poverty, primarily in African American communities (Warren, 2005).

Warren (2005) implied that educators usually teach with biased curriculums and instructional techniques and, therefore, the pedagogy and curriculum alienate minorities, primarily African American students. Because of that, minority students are faced with much opposition and are usually seen as part of the dilemma. Warren also suggested that the community should compel schools to be accountable in solving problems related to discrimination, offering instruction to teachers in dealing with minority families and enforcing an environment against racism. Community-based corporations can assist in fostering social and cultural assets to the community and the schools, nurturing meaningful relationships between parents, students, and educators within the African American family (DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2005; Warren, 2005).

One might add the lack of motivational effort of urban low-SES African American youth to Maslow's (1987) theory of adolescent low self-esteem and the unfulfilled need of performing well academically. It is challenging to motivate students when they have other pressing concerns of daily survival. African American children

being raised in environments where poverty is the norm, abuse and neglect are apparent, high dropout rates among family or low education performance and expectations are acceptable, relocation, parental separation, death of a loved one, and extreme violence and crime are visible can all lead to feelings of insecurity. Another detrimental factor relates to the lack of resources offered to schools located in impoverished areas. Affluent suburban schools are more adequately funded than inner city schools.

As a result, underfunded schools usually have precarious facilities, inadequate textbooks, outdated technology, less qualified teachers, and crowded classrooms. In many cases, underfunded schools are not able to offer basic life skills classes, such as physical education, home economics, art, and drama, which are important to the students' overall development and well-being (Warren, 2005). Since not all students and families in urban environments live in poverty or experience severe cases of socioeconomic flustering, poverty is seen as a consequence of a prejudiced social and institutional system and not a culture of people or assembly of individuals. As with the term *urban*, poverty is also difficult to explain and conceptualize, many researchers provided various definitions or explanations of the term (Milner et al., 2015).

Studies of poverty and SES have been associated with school size (Coldarci, 2006), trust (Goddard et al., 2009), students' and teachers' perception of community wellness and unification (Battistich et al., 1995), classroom and school technology use and integration (Mapp, 2002), academic growth trajectories in literacy in urban schools and English-language learners (Howard & Reynolds, 2008), public high school graduations and college attendance rates (Toutkoushian & Curtis, 2005), the ability of young adolescents (ages 5 to 8) to self-engage and maintain (Howse et al., 2003; Hudley, 2016), and course selection and academic placement (Klopfenstein, 2005). Families of

color are much more likely to live in poverty and be affected by multiple issues surrounding their SES. As a result, they have limited access to societal benefits granted to the economically privileged. However, race and poverty are not an exact correlation. Not all individuals of color are poor, and not all White people are financially well off. It is extremely complicated to live in poverty, regardless of one's race or ethnic background.

Epstein et al. (2009) explicated how environmental conditions and natural hazardous contamination could adversely affect children's academic advancement. They explained that children of color and those who live in poverty-assessed communities are more likely to be vulnerable to these conditions and can experience a negative influence and effect on their health. Consequently, their performance in school and parental involvement may be compromised, as a result of hazardous conditions such as pollen, extreme allergy symptoms, air and water pollution, waste disposal sites, airports, lead paint, car emissions, and other environmental hazards (Gavidia-Payne et al., 2015; Hudley, 2016; Milner et al., 2015; Parietti, 2015). Cass (2010) agreed that poverty could be more noticeable in rural areas, while others see poverty most commonly in urban environments. In both urban and inner city neighborhoods, students who experience poverty can experience various heartbreaking realities, housing instability, hunger, health and nutrition problems, inadequate educational experiences in school, physical, psychological, and emotional abuse due to family strains and uncertainties.

Parental and family involvement overlaps the boundary between racial barriers outside and inside of school factors. Such participation can determine how connected students are to academic and social expectations of schools and their parents (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Badri et al., 2014; Gavidia-Payne et al., 2015; Hudley, 2016; Milner, 2015; Parietti, 2015; Posey-Maddox et al., 2016; Vega et al., 2015). Studies associated with

poverty, and what is often referred to as SES, focus on the role of parents, families, and their active participation in their children's education.

Cooper and Crosnoe (2007), in their studies focusing on parental involvement of multiple racial and ethnic classifications living in poverty, found that African American, Hispanic, and White students experienced more academic disadvantages than students from more affluent families. The researchers also found that poor and financially stable African American students both participated in organized extracurricular activities (Parietti, 2015; Vega et al., 2015). Unfortunately, the researchers concluded organized activities did not necessarily show a relationship with higher academic success for these students. Although research would propose that organized extracurricular activities would supplement students' academic achievement and ultimately their performance on assignments and tests (Gavidia-Payne et al., 2015; Parietti, 2015; Vega et al., 2015). So, family and parental decisions, which include students in or out of school academically and with extracurricular activities, can have an influence on students and those living in poverty that they could possibly profit from.

Many students and families living in poverty rely on teachers to increase student test scores and academic progress (Vega et al., 2015). Those from a more wealthy background may have the resources for additional tutorial services, unlike those students, primarily in urban schools, who live in poverty and depend solely on the teacher and school to assist with educational and academic stability (Hudley, 2016; Milner et al., 2015; Parietti, 2015). Parental involvement is a key issue when considering the low-income African American communities and the students' academic success (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Badri et al., 2014; Dretzke & Rickers, 2016; Hudley, 2016; Parietti, 2015).

In the early stages of development of children, if attachment and appropriate

social and emotional needs are not cultivated in the home, deficits in development may occur with the child that will eventually affect academic achievement and success in school (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Aviles et al., 2006; Badri et al., 2014; Hudley, 2016). Smith et al. (2009) dispelled the myth that African American parents who come from low-SES communities are not actively involved in their child's education. They disputed that these parents are actively involved in the academic success of their children but use a different approach to communicate their message than middle and upper class White parents.

Smith et al. (2009) explained that many parents in low-SES communities want to be a part of the academic success of their children, but they experience economic hardships, such as working two jobs or night shifts, which do not allow them to be actively engaged or participate in school functions and parent-teacher conferences. African American parents in low-SES communities actually motivate and encourage their children to excel in their academics as a result of their failed attempts of success in school (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Badri et al., 2014; Orrock & Clark, 2018; Parietti, 2015). Parents in urban communities, primarily African American, are critical to the academic success and engagement among their children at home and at school.

Homelessness

Gordon and Cui (2014) acknowledged that African American and Hispanic adolescents living in mild or extreme poverty conditions, and where parental engagement is evident, are often successful academically. For example, many students who receive free and reduced-price lunch were often used as indicators of poverty or social classification of studies of poverty (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Badri et al., 2014; Milner et al., 2015; Watson & Bogotch, 2015). Consequently, poverty can be defined (a) based on

the federal government's formula of what poverty is assumed to be, (b) based on free and reduced-price lunch formulas, or (c) based on specific characteristics and conditions people find themselves in because of their accomplished wealth or means of income they may or may not possess (Milner et al., 2015; Parietti, 2015).

Student and family home structures, mainly homelessness, have influenced students' experience and outcomes in schools that my often be overlooked or misunderstood. Homeless children, regardless of race, color, or creed, suffer from the poverty of their parents, as proven by excessive student school transfers, high absenteeism, grade retention, poor academic performance, low test scores, and a greater probability of learning disabilities, behavioral disorders, and other poverty-related issues. Duffield (2001) assessed the effects of homelessness on students' school attendance, enrollment, and academic achievement. She defined homelessness as a merging of blatant poverty and unaffordable housing opportunities, essentially making poverty-stricken families too poor to afford adequate housing.

Students become homeless either as individuals or with their families, and homelessness can result from immediate family problems, economic complications, and residential instability. Duffield (2001) conceptualized homelessness as conditions in which individuals may experience changes in housing status that includes being on the street, shared dwelling, emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent hospitalization and incarceration in correctional facilities. So, many parents are restricted from being engaged in their children's education and academic success due to these factors and a plethora of other hardships as well.

Duffield (2001) called attention to enduring economic and livelihood consequences that many homeless children may suffer because of the rigorous mandate

of academic success and achievement. The main issue examined involved the distresses such as medical records, residency, family problems, and transportation, which served as major indicators to the added burdens of student and parental engagement and its challenges with educational productivity (Hudley, 2016; Parietti, 2015). In addition, other barriers may attribute to the lack of parental involvement and student academic success, such as low self-esteem, ample sleep, severe socioeconomic encounters, and normal interaction with teachers or other students (Gavidia-Payne et al., 2015; Vega et al., 2015).

Student Athletics

Stereotyping

Sports have been tied to academics in the United States for long time. Despite the large body of evidence on the benefits and the popularity surrounding athletic success, there continues to be growing concerns regarding the overemphasis of sports, especially related to the social and educational development of Blacks and other minority youth. For instance, Edwards (1986) has been the spokesman for the argument that sports participation is overemphasized among Black students. Edwards and others argue that the mobility aspirations of millions of Black males in the inner city schools and neighborhoods lead them to believe that, by placing greater emphasis on sports, they are securing their destiny and future regarding their athletic ability to obtain financial security as a result. Therefore, participation in sports diverts attention and efforts away from purposeful and effective academic engagement. Negative stereotypes concerning athletes' lack of academic ability only contribute to these motivational hurdles and struggles (Dundes, 1996; Edwards, 1984).

The question of whether participation in sports contributes or diminishes from the social and educational development of Blacks is an extension of the claim raised by

researchers but framed in connection to the social milieu, which characterizes the circumstances faced by many Blacks who grow up in a climate where excelling in sports and athletics competes as an avenue for progress with the conventional focus of education and academics engagement as the key to future success. Even with the recent debates on the overemphasis on sports in America regarding Black youth inside poverty-infested communities, researchers argue that involvement in athletics decreases interest in academic engagement and reduces aspirations for pursuing success through educational attainment, especially among Black students versus other ethnic groups. Thus, for millions of Black adolescents who aspire to become a professional athlete as a major ambition, education matters or becomes important only to the degree of maintaining eligibility to participate in sports. Whether from elementary through college, it is necessary in order to satisfy externally imposed requirements beneficial to them solely for the purpose of athletic advancement, not academic progression (Braddock, 2005).

Other perspective views regarding sports and academics as competing forces are considered valid. Students who choose to be athletes must be fully engaged and committed to their athletic passion, while disengaging and neglecting their academic development and advancement, primarily among Black students. Many Black athletes recognize the disadvantages of overemphasizing sports, which leads to disappointing results, as circumstances such as unforeseen injuries surely can cut one's journey before it even begins. Despite the tremendous odds against making it out, largely among Black athletes in college or professional sports, little emphasis and consideration are placed on developing academic propensities in efficient organization for other careers as an alternative. Among Black student-athletes, the development of a strong connection between sports and academics is needed prior to reaching high school to avoid forced

academics and its negative consequences for realizing the attainment of career aspirations and goals in sports and abroad.

McNeal (1995) found that inner city student athletes for the most part were less likely to drop out of school. High school students also were documented for having advanced educational aspirations, persistent diligence in the completion of assignments and homework, and lower absenteeism, compared to students who are not active participants in sports (Marsh, 1992). High school students who participate in sports have higher grade point averages as well as excelled academic performance in math and language arts (Broh, 2002). While many researchers would suggest a positive relationship between successful high school athletic programs and overall academic achievement at varying schools, this may not be the end result for all schools and addresses the possibility of students who are not actively engaged in sports or student clubs and organizations, primarily among African American, inner city students. Also, trying to understand the effects of athletics in students who are wholly enthralled in high school sports has been challenging, but it is quite possible that many students who are not professing any sports affiliation are impaired academically. As a result, the overall effect of high school athletic programs regarding students' academic achievement could be negative, regardless of whether they are actively participating in sports, and does not necessarily improve their academic performance or educational advancement.

Balance for Academics and Athletics Together

The relationship between academic achievement and athletic confidence continues to be a topic of conversation and debate in America children's education (Patrick, 1986). Feltz et al. (2013) noted that positive and progressive athletic-academic relationships were sturdier for students who attended schools that serviced more

disadvantaged populations. Students who are academically engaged are actively involved in the learning process and their academic achievement, devote full attention to their studies and have committed to academic success, while students who are not academically engaged lack interest, display apathy, and participate only superficially in their academic pursuits to satisfy what is needed at that moment (Finn, 1993; Newman et al. 1992).

The debate over where sports participation impedes or enhances mobility may really not be a dispute at all, since the connection between sport participation and academic engagement of students may result in either or both outcomes, along with other realistic possibilities according the perspective of the ethnic group being referenced. Sports participation and school engagement among Black students within inner city schools should not be viewed as necessarily antithetical forces. For student-athletes with aspirations for sports, emphasis on sports may begin early in their childhood and to which they become academically engaged may assist with early signs of complexity from parents, schools, and coaches in the settings of family, community and school. Student-athletes present a perceptible motivational opposition. Most athletes are highly motivated to excel and succeed in the athletic domain, having been selected to partake in collegiate athletic programs and camps, because of their proven and noticeable desire to advance and succeed athletically. However, many of the visible student-athletes seem to lack the same ambition and drive in the classroom regarding their academic advancement and success.

While the connection between sports participation and academic involvement needs closer examination to understand whether sports interfere or enhance, normally, this issue is especially pivotal in addressing African American student-athletes and their

parents who have conditioned in their mindsets of large athletic goals for professional sports, all the while, neglecting the importance of academic advancement as well. The link associated with athletics and education is not always a pleasant or positive encounter. Feltz et al. (2013) affirmed that sports empires were fashioned to compete and produce victories by whatever means necessary. Their main purpose has never been to aid students with education.

Denault et al. (2009) discovered in a longitudinal study of students from seventh to 10th grade that many adolescents who were exposed to the use and abuse of alcohol overindulged in the participation of sports or extracurricular sports. They also discovered, contrary to other studies, no positive association between student sport's participation and student academic achievement. At the collegiate level, the academic values of athletes have always been questioned and challenged. This has followed many cases of misconduct. Recent college athletic programs and associations impacted by academic scandals include Fresno State (2003), Georgia (2003), Auburn (2006), Florida (2008), Memphis, (2008), Michigan (2008), Florida State (2009), and Stanford in 2011 ("Incomplete Passes," 2014). The most recent scandals to come to light have been at a university known for exceptionally student-athletes who were considered the cream of the crop and assured that student academic achievement was always paramount: Notre Dame (Layden, 2014).

Student Athletics and Parental Involvement

Bowen and Greene (2012) agreed having schools with noted successful academic programs is more likely to capture the attention and active participation of the parents and the community. As parents gather for multiple sports events, they also are likely to discuss and reference academic issues and concerns, which may assist in organizing and

providing support for improved academic quality among student athletes. More parental and community support can also be an additional avenue to authorize necessary bond initiatives wherein schools have ample funding to market their academic programs. Parents are vital to creating a positive sports experience for their children (Parietti, 2015; Sanchez-Miguel et al., 2013).

Parents of student-athletes choose between supporting and promoting their child's athletics or academics. Beamon (2010) ascertained that parents who pushed for the athletic success of their children did not exert the same energy on their academics. Lauer et al. (2010) suggested that parents can have a healthy and balanced perspective on sports or extracurricular sport activities and promote balance between sports and academics in their child's life. They also found that parents push winning and high sports accomplishments on the track or field, did not encourage and promote their academic success in the classroom.

While parents may understand the importance of their continued support regarding their child's athletic accomplishments and ambitions, others exhibit irregular, often unfavorable conducts in their pursuit of athletic success (Knight et al., 2010). Observing parents who were overdramatic and sensitive during athletic events their children were engaged in and attempting to coach from the sidelines during practice or at many sports events seemed to be common happenings. Their comments and reactions are often geared in the direction of the teammates, coaches, referees, and other parents of the specified sports activity or game from the stands. Kidman et al. (1999) revealed that although many parental comments may be positive during the games, more than one third were discouraging in context. Omli et al. (2008) suggested that this behavior from parents is a result of the emotional bond that they share with their child. They are frequently

exhibiting hostile emotions or frustrations from a loveable parental stance regarding their child without understanding the effect it may have on the excitement of the athletic experience. Though some of these strategies may achieve short-term success, setting high expectations for parents academically for their child through educational programs appears to have a more lasting influence (Patrikakou, 2008). Parents must be ambassadors by providing consistent support for their child and encouraging others to do the same. In addition, parents should promote academics as they do athletics, in regard to youth extracurricular activities and sports field (Anderson & Thomas, 2013; Baumrind, 2013; Christofferson & Strand, 2016; Collins et al., 2000; Gallagher, 2002; Harris, 1995; Lease & Dahlbeck, 2009; Maccoby, 1992; Melendez & Melendez, 2010; Parietti, 2015; Raj & Raval, 2013; Steinberg & Silk, 2003).

Also, negative behaviors should shift to a more pleasant climate providing a positive and productive atmosphere for all children involved. Being engaged in youth activities can be a challenging, arduous task and difficult to balance for parents, as they battle with the desire to thrust their children to perform at their maximum potential both in the classroom and on the field (Anderson & Thomas, 2013; Baumrind, 2013; Christofferson & Strand, 2016; Collins et al., 2000; Gallagher, 2002; Harris, 1995; Lease & Dahlbeck, 2009; Maccoby, 1992; Melendez & Melendez, 2010; Parietti, 2015; Raj & Raval, 2013; Steinberg & Silk, 2003). Cooper (2005) stated that parents indeed play an imperative and unique contextual role in how adolescents move forward in their lives.

Bhalla and Weiss (2010) agreed that parents assist in the interpretation of life for their child. This means that they learn how to respond, react, and behave academically and athletically from their parents about life and the world around them. Children also internalize the values and perceptions they observe from their parents (Howard &

Reynolds, 2008). For example, if the parent encourages and believes in the importance of education, then the child will place similar values and aspirations on education also. Researchers have implied that studying parents' interaction with their children is necessary to comprehend the socialization of children, due to parents being considered one of the largest factors in pursuit to balancing both athletics and academics as student-athletes (Anderson & Thomas, 2013; Baumrind, 2013; Christofferson & Strand, 2016; Collins et al., 2000; Harris, 1995; Lease & Dahlbeck, 2009; Gallagher, 2002; Maccoby, 1992; Melendez, 2010; Parietti, 2015; Raj & Raval, 2013; Steinberg & Silk, 2003).

Without a doubt, parents encompass a key contributing factor in extracurricular activities for their children (Cote, 1999). Parents are acknowledged for their pivotal contributions in providing adequate financial and logistical support during every athletic or sport opportunity their child may be a part of (Holt et al., 2011; Kirk et al., 1997). They also realize the meaningful and essential role they play with furnishing emotional support and assisting with a well-balanced life as an athlete (Cote, 1999; Fraser-Thomas & Cote, 2009; Fredricks & Eccles, 2004). Parental support, compliments, and supportive measures are extremely important granted they are associated with the intensified core motivation and amusement among adolescent sports participants (Power & Woogler, 1994).

Researchers have also acknowledged parents who were overly dramatic and not influential with encouraging and enthusiasm pertaining to participants in youth sports or extracurricular activities (Christofferson & Strand, 2016; Light et al., 2011). Conversely, an existing quantity of evidence insinuates that parents can also have a toxic influence on the sports experience of their child. Bornstein (2011) argued that youth sport and extracurricular events have become more like professional sports by securing a win or

victory at all cost ethos. He discussed that aggression, cheating, and poor sportsmanship are factors that have amplified this ethos mentality among youth sports. It is imperative to that all stakeholders are concerned about the welfare of the athletic programs within youth sports and on collegiate level, because it has a major influence on little league sports, where many of the athletes are adolescents and their academic, athletic views and habits are developed.

For example, researchers have examined parent observers' conduct at various student sports events and discovered that much of the language and verbal comments were positive and encouraging, many comments were negative and excessively aggressive toward the coaches, referees, and players. Omli et al. (2008) reported parallel discoveries from various student or youth sports and extracurricular events, stating that parents utilizing negative language and yelling was rather high without moderation or consideration of the students involved and the other parents who were in attendance. Furthermore, Holt et al. (2011) noted the nature of parental involvement in student athletes is interestingly high and vocal, contrary to the parental involvement in relation to student academics, which is not as aggressive and vocal. Although hostile and excessive parental verbalization is a cause for concern, there are many other factors that may possibly impact the adolescent sports experience. Also, parents exaggerate the winning experience in many sport sectors, but with student athletes, they hold unrealistic expectations and criticize student athletes even their children (Christofferson & Strand, 2016; Goldstein & Iso-Ahola, 2008).

Turman (2007) disputed that in addition to parents carrying the financial costs for students participating in sports activities, they frequently provided their children with rewards which was a bargaining tool that was evident as a result of their successful

winnings. Gould et al. (2008) also reported that parents use monetary incentives to boost more athletic accomplishments. Unlike, in the classroom, parents are less engaged and the parental support in relation to student academics, is not as broadcasted or revered according to many educators. Also, parents highlighted that their children who are student athletes are to work just as hard as them, due to parents not wanting to waste money on gear and accessories for an unsuccessful season or sports experience (Christofferson & Strand, 2016; Elliott & Drummond, 2015, 2017).

Oftentimes, student athletes are driven by various incentives, primarily money, from their parents is accepted by a compromising negative viewpoint. This can lead to adolescents suffering from enhanced pressure and anxiety to perform on the field, but not necessarily as adequate in the classroom (Christofferson & Strand, 2016; Keegan et al., 2009; McCarthy & Jones, 2007). Therefore, parental involvement should be noted as support of their children at any level, but academics should be the foundation that leads to greater opportunities in the classroom and on the track or field. Nonetheless, parents continue to integrate negative comments addressing the academic performance of their children yet emphasizing more positive reassurance for their athletic skills and abilities.

Researchers have found that social influence has a significant impact on the behavior of individuals (Banks et al., 1990; Beets et al., 2010; Bhalla & Weiss, 2010; Parietti, 2015). The most influential group for students regarding both academics and athletics is parents (Banks et al., 1990; Bhalla & Weiss, 2010; Fass & Tubman, 2002; Hitlin, 2006; Lauer et al., 2010; Leff & Hoyle, 1995; Ommundsen et al., 2006; Parietti, 2015). Research has shown that consistent social support from other entities, including parents, can assist adolescents adapting to grade school or college and succeed academically (Fass & Tubman, 2002; Parietti, 2015). Fass and Tubman (2002) found that

not only grade school students, but even college students who have low levels of parental attachment and peers, experience a low self-esteem or negative attachment than students with a continual support system from parents and peers. Comeaux and Harrison (2011) developed a conceptual model of the academic achievement of student athletes, and they recommended that family background and support was one of the essential aspects that impacts how successful a student-athlete will be.

Comeaux and Harrison (2011) also explained that the parental influence of student-athletes could have a principal impression on how a student-athlete perceived their sport and the school or institution. These observations in turn could influence the student-athlete's behavior and future academic success. The importance of parents as socializing agents and cheerleaders examines the impact they have in the lives of their children's athletic and academic behaviors. Although these individuals are expected to sustain their athletic motivation in school, they are as equally challenged and expected to demonstrate the same enthusiasm in the classroom (Anderson & Thomas, 2013; Baumrind, 2013; Harris, 1995; Parietti, 2015; Raj & Raval, 2013).

The maintenance of this academic motivation and achievement is more difficult due the unrealistic demands on their sport of choice. Student-athletes required to commit up to 25 hours per week when their sport of choice is in season miss numerous classes for school or league-sanctioned competitions and deal with fatigue and injuries as a result of their consented athletic commitment. These factors detract from the realistic journey of academic success, which in turn affects their academic motivation to succeed and be academically sound. (American Institutes for Research, 2019; Johnson, 2013; Parietti, 2015).

Excessive and Stressful Demands on Athletes

Student-athletes have exceptional demands placed upon them that differentiates them from their peers. Student-athletes have to dedicate an enormous amount of time to their sport between practice, games, team meetings, and other sports-related activities (Comeaux, 2010; Comeaux & Harrison, 2011; Gayles & Hu, 2009; Jolly, 2008; Parietti, 2015; Singer, 2008). Athletics can be physically and emotionally draining and exhausting on the student-athletes, and for many, they are recovering from or dealing with existing injuries (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011; Denny & Steiner, 2009; Parietti, 2015).

Case et al. (1987), Fountain and Finley (2009), and Knobler (2007) conferred that academic clustering is defined as a challenging and specific experience for a student-athlete. Fountain and Finley expressed this process as a turbulent method where practitioners recommend student-athletes to pursue a restricted set of undergraduate courses and majors that assist students in sustaining their athletic eligibility but does not necessarily accelerate their educational aspirations or career desires. This practice may further thwart purposeful student enhancement for the student-athlete population. Furthermore, this practice can impair many student-athletes' career and identity development apprehensions as they proceed to examine their choices regarding their individual classes and majors as a way to satisfy eligibility requirements rather than prepare a profitable way of life after sports (Christofferson & Strand, 2016; Fountain & Finley, 2009; Navarro, 2012).

Researchers have agreed that the challenges both students and student-athletes experience add pressure between dual roles as a student and athlete. Also, they face a variety of negative consequences when the latter role dominates the former (Chartrand & Lent, 1987; Christofferson & Strand, 2016; Hill et al., 2001). As students who are

balancing academics and athletics, it is crucial for individuals who are associated or work with students in this capacity, such as teachers, coaches, academic advisors, faculty or school staff, and administrators must have a thorough understanding of how parents are influencing their children and their involvement in their offspring's life (Parietti, 2015). Ting (2009) agreed people who work with student-athletes in any setting should assist the, in developing realistic goals and aspiration for their education. Having long-term goals was tied to positive academic performance.

Proponents of sports in schools imply that being actively involved in athletics is beneficial (Linver et al., 2009). Possible positives for adolescent, high school, and college athletes include higher academic performance (Fox et al., 2010; Gayles, 2009; Rees & Sabia, 2010) and social skills which includes teamwork and leadership (Holt et al., 2011; Parietti, 2015). Regrettably, many are not as excited about the benefits of sports in schools. There are a host of negatives that may suggest higher levels of disruptive and unruly behavior (Linver et al., 2009; Parietti, 2015). It has also been argued that student-athlete graduation rates are exaggerated. Student-athletes may be encouraged to choose majors, classes, and/or friendly professors known as the easy class to pass or get that A to boost their grade point average, even if it does not align with their future career goals or aspirations (Benjamin et al., 2009: Gayles & Hu, 2009; Johnson, 2013).

Nusbaum (2014) suggested that the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) inflates graduation and academic success rates by comparing student athletes, who are considered full-time students, to an enlarged student body involving of both full-time and part-time students. Many students-athletes are often placed into other categories depending on their academic and athletic abilities on and off the field, because many part-time students take longer to complete school. Student-athletes are also required to

meet grade point average and standardized test requirements for graduation and before they are eligible for collegiate student-athletes (Milton et al., 2012; Parietti, 2015).

Athletic success requires individuals to work hard and exemplify self-discipline and self-control, perseverance and determination, concentration, and consistent ambition. These qualities, if transferred and utilized with the same commitment and intensity, would be pivotal to academic success. Unfortunately, many secondary athletes, primarily Black and Hispanic cultures, gravitate toward less motivation and progress in their academics than their athletic motivation (Simons et al., 1997). This perceived lack of motivation and ambition for academic performance is often mirrored in general misidentification with many inner city schools and African American males, in particular (American Institutes for Research, 2019; Parietti, 2015; Snyder, 1996; Snyder & Spreitzer, 1992).

Beamon and Bell (2006) discovered that African American male student-athletes were often socialized to focus more on their athletic abilities rather than their academic success. They also learned the more emphasis that was placed on athletics, the worse the student-athlete performed academically. Singer (2008) found that student-athletes did not consider the label of student-athlete appropriate for them because they spend more time on their athletics than academics. This duality can be seen as stereotypically factual regarding Black male student-athletes who are considered to be poor performers academically while being a student is tied to exceptional grades and high academic achievement (Feltz et al., 2013). Therefore, being a student-athlete brings the dichotomy of negative and positive academic stereotypes, especially African American males.

Race appears to have some affiliation to how parents interact with their children toward sports. Researchers have found that African American males are more likely to

gravitate toward athletics by pressure or possible career path for a better way of living out of most urban communities (Anderson & Thomas, 2013; Baumrind, 2013; Christofferson & Strand, 2016; Collins et al., 2000; Harris, 1995; Lease & Dahlbeck, 2009; Gallagher, 2002; Maccoby, 1992; Melendez & Melendez, 2010; Parietti, 2015; Raj & Raval, 2013; Steinberg & Silk, 2003). Edwards (1986) argued that many of the Black adolescents and their families predict sports as the primary means or vehicle of self-realization and social-environment advancement to a better life. Beamon and Bell (2006) discovered that African American respondents were apt to favor athletics or academics. Shakib and Valiz (2012) found that male and female African American youth were encouraged to excel and participate in sports than their White, Hispanic, or Asian youth counterparts. African American parents often see sports as a chance for their child to advance educationally by going to college and acquiring scholarships and hopefully be drafted into a professional sports career.

On the other hand, female student athletes have been able to demonstrate more structure and academic progress than their male counterparts. Studies have shown that female athletes are superior in their academic achievement approach than their male student athlete male counterparts, including their consistent academic achievement in their high school grade point average and Scholastic Aptitude Test scores as well (American Institutes for Research, 2019; Simons et al., 1997). Trying hard and failing leads to the questioning of an individual's motivation and stability regarding their ability to succeed and conquer. Often times, failure can be associated with multiple factors which can diminish an individual's worth and cause a negative reflection on efforts made to reverse perceptions made as a result of unwise decisions or hardships of life. These failures can also be disguised and rationalized as excuses, due to self-handicapping

circumstances, procrastination, test anxiety, inadequate preparation, and so forth.

Motivation is an important aspect of successful student academic achievement and productivity. Unfortunately, consistent failure, for many, is associated with African American and other minority groups. As a result, they may develop a maladjusted drive for success, due to the anticipation of failure and shame from past failed attempts. Even more so regarding their academic ability and commitment. Depending on their academic ability, history of academic productivity and success including failures, influence of parents, teachers, peers, and siblings, motivation or failure can easily be chosen. At times, student athletes favor the athletic component more than their academics, especially when there is existing conflict between the demands of athletics and academics (Adler & Adler, 1991; Simons et al., 1997).

Missing a practice or part of a seasonal camp, due to a commitment in academics, rather it be tutoring, or academic testing is generally frowned upon. Coaches under the NCAA regulations are prohibited from requiring a student athlete to miss any sector of academics and its commitment to advancement of education that conflicts with practice, and the coaches' potential disapproval of such decisions weighs heavily in the eyes of the student athlete (Parietti, 2015). Nusbaum (2014) cited that a College Sport Research Institute study found that men and women basketball players and football players graduated at lower rates than their peers. There are also many cases where athletics have come before academics in the lives of many student-athletes. The best example of this is the abundant number of athletes who have left college early to pursue their sport professionally.

In addition, the NCAA has mandated that all Division I schools and institutions enforced the utilization of academic support services for all student athletes (Gayles &

Hu, 2009; Gill & Farrington, 2014; Johnson, 2013; Parietti, 2015). According to Gill and Farrington (2014), these departments are responsible for assisting student-athletes academically or for student-athletes who experience hardship maintaining their academics in school. The services provided will allow the student-athlete to balance both as a student and an athlete (Gill & Farrington, 2014). These departments also provide tutoring and workshops for student-athletes (Burns et al., 2013). Academic advisors also offer services and assistance for student-athletes. These services allow student-athletes to be in compliance with the NCAA rules and regulations regarding their academics and eligibility status needed to participate in sports and meet the requirements of their school or institution.

Bimper et al. (2012) explained from interview participants that the academic center for student-athletes helped to offer inspiration and encouragement for academic achievement. The participants also mentioned that the primary goal and responsibility of the counselors for all student-athletes was to make sure they meet graduation requirements as scholars and eligible to play sports as athletes. Burns et al. (2013) found that student-athletes were satisfied with the support from the academic center which allowed them to be more confident in their career development. Gill and Farrington (2014) discovered that the interventions available through academic support services assisted Black football student-athletes to improve their grade point averages.

Lally and Kerr (2005) discovered that student-athletes just starting college had extraordinarily strong athletic identities often referenced as high-minded jock with poorly defined career plans. This means they have firm plans on their athletic adventures and few realistic plans for life after sports. Student-athletes attend colleges and universities to participate in sports and be in compliance with NCAA regulations, but they can only do

so by being academically successful in the classroom (Gayles, 2009; Harrison et al., 2009; Parietti, 2015). It can be extremely difficult for student-athletes to balance their athletic and academic requirements (Gayles, 2009; Martin et al., 2010; Singer, 2008). It is also possible that student-athletes face role conflict when they are confused or frustrated about understanding the demands of their athletic and academic roles (Comeaux, 2010).

College student-athletes often have to choose between being either an athlete or a student (Comeaux, 2010; Despres et al., 2008; Parietti, 2015). These athletes are asked to dedicate themselves to exceling at their sport (Denny & Steiner, 2009). As mentioned above, this can require a considerable amount of time commitment which can take away from their academic obligations (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011; Parietti, 2015). Lally and Kerr (2005) found that it was less likely for student-athletes to be possess a strong athletic identity and academic focus at the same time.

Student-athletes have unique demands placed on them from multiple sources and angles that differentiates them from their peers. Because coached possess the power of deciding who starts or play in the games, many student athletes, especially African American males believe indirectly that they will be penalized by their coaches for missing practice to excel in their academics or choosing academic commitments over athletic ones. Therefore, many athletes are reluctant to miss practice and specialized camps or trainings, as it may interfere or disrupt with their athletic conditioning, ability, or skill development, which will also pose a risk for them securing a starting position. In addition, peer pressure from other team members to favor the athletic demands over academics plays a crucial role.

Motivation to succeed academically has been weakened by a host of publicized athletes leaving school early or signing their junior year of school to launch their

lucrative careers as professional athletes. For many of these athletes, receiving a degree has been jettisoned as a prerequisite for economic success, security, and fame. The troublesome truth that only a miniscule percentage of student athletes enter the professional ranks appears to have little to no effect on reducing the belief that many student athletes can and will emerge as professional athletes.

Research Questions

The following research questions needed to be answered in order to get to the heart of the problem in this qualitative study, with research partially designed in grounded theory and partially embedded in phenomenology, to understand the causation of a belief or behavior and understanding a unique aspect of human phenomena:

1. How does inconsistent parental involvement affect at-risk African American students' performance, retention, and success in low-performing schools?

2. What constitutes the difference in parental involvement rates in other ethnic groups and households as opposed to low-performing, at-risk, African American students' parental involvement rates?

3. What constitutes the difference in African American parental involvement rates in low-performing, at-risk students' academics as compared to their involvement in the athletic arena?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Research Design

According to Creswell (2014), qualitative methods are deemed appropriate for research questions that ask how or what instead of why and when a topic or problem is to be investigated and explored thoroughly. This purpose of this study was to understand what hinders African American parents of at-risk, low-performing African American students from being more involved in the academic achievement and progress but being fully supportive of the athletic demand of the same students. This chapter includes a discussion of the research strategies and activities, including the participants, instrumentation, and data-collection procedures. Following this, ethical issues, data analysis, validity, and reliability are discussed also.

Phenomenology is beneficial to the approach of studying human experiences. Learning and understanding the manner in which individual experiences are subjective has a multi-faceted as well as vert practical application (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). The phenomenological research can be referenced to real-life experiences, experiences of others, and lived experiences (Creswell, 2014). Now, phenomenological as a research method was developed in the 1900s by Edmund Husserl. Husserl believed that, if science was to accomplish the mission of supplying rational knowledge that would allow humanity to be free in shaping its own purpose or destiny in life, then science must exceed beyond the selected view on the world's perspective and take human experiences, individual or others, into consideration with equal potency (Corbin & Strauss, 2007).

According to Corbin and Strauss (2007), grounded theory is a design of inquiry from sociology in which the researcher derives a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of the participants. This process involves

using multiple stages and sources of data collection, and the refinement, and interrelationship of categories of information (Creswell, 2014). Also, “the procedures of grounded theory are designed to develop a well-integrated set of concepts that provide a thorough theoretical explanation of social phenomena under study” (Corbin & Strauss, 2007, p. 5). The grounded theory design is used when a researcher’s objective is to explain the existing conditions that contributed to the occurrence of the phenomenon. Thus, utilizing ground theory would further aid to uncover the lack of parent participation among African American parents of at-risk, low-performing African American students and why they were not more involved in their students’ academic achievement and progress but fully supportive of the athletic demand of the same students.

The wealth of information was gathered through interviews, open-ended questions, surveys, and open forum deliberations in this study. The perceptive manner of personal stories, lessons learned, and experiences shared by African American students, primarily the experiences of males, complement the findings from a multiplicity of qualitative observations, research, or studies. Given the limited qualitative studies on the deceased of parental involvement of African American students regarding academics and the increase of support for the same students. In regard to their athletic abilities, it is expected that this would yield purposeful insight into how effective and consistent parental involvement, mentoring, and student engagement influenced the academic experience and overall success of African American students. The surplus of literature in this study suggests that the effects of parental involvement to vary by several characteristics of students and their families. Thus, several control variables were included and coded as follows:

1. Prior standardized reading and math test scores: Because the current student

utilizes panel data, previous academic achievement was included. Previous academic performance and success is a strong predictor of future academic progress and student achievement.

2. Race-ethnicity: It has been shown that both levels of dimensions of parental involvement vary by race (Desimone, 1999). Studies show that White parents are more involved in school activities, but other minority parents have higher expectations. There is mixed evidence for which group benefits greater from parental involvement.

3. Gender: It has been shown that parents are more involved in their daughters' lives than sons unless it is centered on sports or extracurricular activities (Hill & Taylor, 2004).

4. Student's native language: This is an additional barrier that hinders effective and efficient parent involvement. Thus, children of parents who are English learners may experience difficulty with parental involvement.

5. SES: It has been shown that the type and effect of parental involvement varies by SES (Davis-Kean, 2009; Desimone, 1999; Sui-Chu & Williams, 1996). It can be hypothesized that lower SES parents would exhibit fewer school-based behaviors and mediocre expectations regarding the education of their child. Other studies show that middle-SES students benefit from consistent and regular parental involvement either in school or at home (Jeynes, 2010).

6. Family structure and number of siblings: Family structure and the number of siblings will be included to assess those parents who have to choose which child they will support or spend more time with due their unbalanced schedule (Jeynes, 2010).

Participants

The sampling procedure for this study was a nonprobability sample. According to

Bernard (2011), most narratives have a nominal number of cases, so every case needs to be selected purposefully because every case has to count. In this case, a quota sampling design was used when discovering the reasoning for the consistent parental support and involvement for student athletes in their extracurricular activities as well as the equal support for the same students as scholars in their academics. Researchers have found that there are many variables that can influence the behaviors of student-athletes, and how parental influence impacts their life aspirations and objectives. These include gender (Feltz et al., 2013; Gayles & Hu, 2009; Johnson et al., 2012: Milton et al., 2012), academics (Akmal & Larsen, 2004; Badri et al., 2014; Orrock & Clark, 2018; Parietti, 2015), scholarships status (Johnson et al., 2012; Milton et al., 2012), race (Feltz et al., 2013; Johnson et al., 2012; Melendez & Melendez, 2010), sport type (Feltz et al., 2013; Gayles & Hu, 2009; Johnson et al., 2012), and winning percentage (Johnson et al., 2012).

With this in mind, this study pulled from a variety of parents, students who excel in academics and athletics, administrators, teachers, and support staff (i.e., coaches, school sponsored clubs) with the intention of obtaining a more precise understanding of how parents influence student-athletes from diverse backgrounds. Feltz et al. (2013) suggested that women who are involved in professional sports tends to lead more toward the academic sector more than their athletic ability. It is possible that the choice made by student athletes are strongly influenced by the interactions of their parents. Also, the impact the parents on their child's sports and academic decisions are fashioned by the way a child interprets their parent's behavior.

The participants of this study included 15 African American male parents between the ages of 25 and 50, 15 African American female parents between the ages of 25 and 50, 15 African American male students between the ages of 15 and 25, 15 African

American female students between the ages of 15 and 25, 15 African American male teachers between the ages of 25 and 50, 15 African American female teachers between the ages of 25 and 50, five African American male coaches between the ages of 25 and 50, and five African American female coaches between the ages of 25 and 50 from at-risk, urban, inner city schools in Miami-Dade public schools. There were other ethnic groups that were surveyed from the demographics of the school and community, and the data were coded and transcribed accordingly. Each participant in this study was selected voluntarily, and participants were free to withdraw without feeling pressure to stay, continue, or leave the study at any time.

In addition, all participants were known to the researcher from his profession as a veteran educator and mentoring. Thus, he requested their participation in the surveys and/or questionnaires to be answered and/or distributed. They were informed of their willingness and consent to completing the necessary documentation including their privacy, rights to confidentiality, and their participation in this study. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the participants. This study covered all interviews, observations, focus-group discussions, and surveys accordingly. As a result, each participant signed a consent form about the above mentioned and had the option of terminating his or her involvement at any time during the study.

Semistructured interviews using open-ended questions, surveys, and questionnaires aligned with the research questions and problem statement, as noted. Also, it should be noted that the Harvest Church Center was located near multiple community schools classified as poverty stricken, with high crime and drug affiliation and low SES, which plays a role in the success of student academic performance in school. Consequently, the poverty level within the communities makes it difficult for students to

focus on school and their academics and for parents to provide the bare essentials for the family. Also, the consistent hardships due to unemployment contribute to these factors as well. The participants provided pivotal information to the research that will assist with addressing this phenomenon.

Data Collection

The data for this study were collected in the form of surveys (teacher, parent student, and coach), focus groups, questionnaires, interviews, journal notations, and open-ended questions parallel to the research questions. Also, the information was sent via email from the Google forms link to assist with gathering the data needed to complete this study. The number of participants surveyed was contingent upon the participants who attended school and parents available during the period the research was conducted and time frame covered. There was a process in place for students and parents who did not have access to the Internet or housing accommodations. In addition, calls were made to parents and students with conflicting schedules. This allowed them to participate in this study during the allocated time given.

The exclusive use of surveys, an anonymous instrument that provides profound insight into a problem, would not solely provide the necessary data that were vital to this study. Therefore, having focus groups and conducting interviews and structured surveys would be able to authenticate the problem that was the focus (Glanz, 1998). Surveys were sent from the director and/or researcher via email to parents, teachers, students, and coaches from various middle and high schools within the community and surrounding areas. The parents, teachers, students, and coaches were given 1 week to complete and return the surveys to the researcher. The participants' reported feedback was on a 4-point scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree* (see Appendices A, B, C, and D).

The focus group was designed to generate discussion in an informal setting, as well as describe and expound on the points of view of parents who were the focus of this study. The focus-group participants were chosen randomly from the targeted students in the classrooms. The group met for approximately 1 hour and was asked 10 questions (see Appendices E, F, G, and H).

Procedures

Each of the research questions was answered through surveys, focus groups, questionnaires, and interviews. The research questions were as follows:

1. How does inconsistent parental involvement affect at-risk African American students' performance, retention, and success in low-performing schools? The following survey questions from the parent, teacher, student, and coach surveys answered how the inconsistent support of parents affected at-risk African American students' performance, retention, and success in low-performing schools. They are as follows: Parents (12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 28, 36, 38, 39, 44, 45, 46, 47, 52, 57, 60, 62, 69, 75, 85), Teachers (12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 25, 26, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 42, 43, 44), Students (12, 23, 28, 29, 30, 31, 34, 46, 67), and Coaches (12, 22, 30, 31, 32, 33, 39, 40).

2. What constitutes the difference in parental involvement rates in other ethnic groups households as opposed to low-performing, at-risk African American students' parental involvement rates? The following survey questions from the parent, teacher, student, and coach surveys answered what constitutes the difference in parental involvement rates in other ethnic group and households as opposed to low-performing, at-risk African American students' parental involvement rates. They are as follows: Parents (12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63,

64, 65, 68, 74), Teachers (12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45), Students (10, 11, 12, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 45, 46, 47, 53, 59, 62, 64, 65, 67, 70, 80, 81, 83), and Coaches (25, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 43).

3. What constitutes the difference in African American parental involvement rates in low-performing, at-risk students' academics as compared to their involvement in the athletic arena? They are as follows: Parents (16, 19, 20, 21, 26, 44, 45, 46, 47, 57, 62, 63, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 75, 76, 77, 78, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85), Teachers (15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 24, 26, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57), Students (13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 34, 35, 39, 43, 78), and Coaches (44, 50, 53).

All information was distributed via email, Google forms survey link, and hand delivered. Another means of collecting the necessary documentation was for the participants to submit all documents to the director of the center and/or the researcher or through the secured Internet link that was furnished. As for the participants with no Internet access, physical copies of the surveys were available for them to complete and turn in. When conducting a phenomenological study, there is no assumption of what matters are being explored or discovered. To assure that all information was secured, and participants were comfortable with volunteering their services, the interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, and surveys took place at the Harvest Church Center.

The data were recorded via cell phone, laptop, and handwritten transcribed notes to better assist with coding and accuracy of information retrieved from all sources. This provided pertinent insight of parental involvement regarding academics as opposed to athletics of at-risk, low-performing African American students within urban, inner city schools. In addition, this knowledge after the findings will provide a better awareness

into how parental involvement, mentoring, and student engagement and accountability impact academic success. All participants were made aware that all interviews, surveys, questionnaires, and focus group discussions were voluntary, and their confidentiality was of high importance. All questions, surveys, and questionnaires were semistructured and aligned with the research questions as noted in the following format:

1. A broad open-ended forum discussion, prompting questions and purposeful dialect.

2. A series of questions that would allow realistic responses paralleled to the research questions to be answered.

3. A focus group on all participants and their individual story and contribution to this study.

4. The use of open-ended, clarifying questions to facilitate the interviews and to ascertain the meaning and dimension of each participant's experience.

5. A journal of responses was used to document targeted interviews and discussions.

Data Analysis

The research that was collected and transcribed came from handwritten interviews and recordings utilizing Microsoft word to properly notate and transcribe the interviews and focus-group discussions with as much as accuracy as possible, assuring the confidentiality of all are secured. After the data-collection process, a continuous review of the analysis of data was presented to identify, categorize, and funnel information into common themes on the parental involvement of at-risk, low-performing African American students who may have succeeded academically and sustained their athletic abilities as a student, as well as African American students who may not have succeeded

academically but favored their athletic abilities more than their academic achievement performance. This study also included ratings that were associated with the research questions. This provided information that would support gender, grade, age, and household demographics.

Ethical Considerations

As with any use of personal data, specific care and caution must be taken to avoid releasing personal or identifying information for any participant. Furthermore, it must be understood that the purpose of the surveys, questionnaires, open forum discussions, and classroom observations is to only gather data in an attempt to determine if there is a correlation between parental involvement and student academic success as opposed to parental involvement in student athletics and lessened parental involvement pertaining to student academic success. To add, this research would not be used to make or pass judgement on any ethnic group parenting skills. The data retrieved from the Harvest Church Center would be stored and encrypted at the center in which the authorization was granted to conduct the research and study.

To add, in an effort to ensure protection and rights of all participants, the researcher obtained permission for the use of human subjects in this study form the Institutional Review Board at Nova Southeastern University. Participants were not exposed to any psychological, physical, or legal risks, nor were they manipulated or coerced. All participants voluntarily participated and willingly answered the posed interview questions. The researcher also utilized an informed consent form during this study. This afforded the participants the opportunity to agree or decline their participation by signing the form. The form outlined the purpose of the study and reiterated that participation was voluntary. Participants were also cognizant of the fact that they could

withdraw from the study or research at any time without any cause or justification.

Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness and credibility of this research, the researcher utilized a semistructured interview format and fields notes in the data collection. To ensure credibility, the semistructured interviews were audiotape recorded using the approved interview protocol of questions as a guide for the discussion. In conclusion, the researcher transcribed the interviews as accurately as possible and reviewed them with the participants.

Role of Researcher

The researcher in this study is the principal of a Public Charter School that serves Grades 6 through 12 and has been a mentor for 22 years. The researcher has recognized the impact and influence of parental involvement of at-risk, low-performing African Americans students concerning student academic success and achievement. On the contrary, the researcher has also recognized parental involvement of at-risk, low-performing African American students during their sports or extracurricular activities, which seems to conflict with student academics. The researcher is aware that his restricted understanding of this study will allow him to apply information, literature, and personal experiences to strengthen the perspective methodology and add to the myriad of research and literature that speak to this study. Also, this study was designed to provide pivotal information that would bring insight to what the researcher was about to explore.

Limitations

This study experienced limitations due to not being able to retrieve all surveys and questionnaires. Also, there were limitations of retrieving approval for the necessary forms to participants, and time restrictions could hinder or alter the effectiveness of this

survey. Thus, the researcher planned accordingly to make sure that interview protocols measurements were in place and all accountability and confidentiality measures were followed and documents secured accordingly.

Chapter 4: Results

Overview

The purpose of this study was to discover the factors that contribute to parental involvement and support for athletics in low-performing schools in South Florida among at-risk African American students and the lack of parental involvement and support regarding academics in low-performing schools in South Florida among at-risk African American students. This qualitative study was expounded upon to answer the following three research questions:

1. How does inconsistent parental involvement affect at-risk African American students' performance, retention, and success in low-performing schools?

2. What constitutes the difference in parental involvement rates in other ethnic groups and households as opposed to low-performing, at-risk, African American students' parental involvement rates?

3. What constitutes the difference in African American parental involvement rates in low-performing, at-risk students' academics as compared to their involvement in the athletic arena?

The researcher created three focus groups, which addressed the lack of consistent parental involvement in academics among at-risk African American students within inner city schools and the excessively greater support for athletics that were notable among African American parents of at-risk students within inner city schools. The results of this study's data analysis are contained in this chapter.

Description of the Sample

The participants of the study were teachers, coaches, students, and parents who were in an inner city middle or high school setting as teachers, coaches, parents, or

students deemed as at risk and who were collegiate student athletes from inner city schools. The data used in this research entailed replies from the surveys taken, interviews conducted, and the focus-group sessions held. Of the 150 surveys that were disseminated during the informational meeting, 147 were completed and returned.

Demographic Findings

The four survey instruments used asked the participants to answer questions regarding their demographics: (a) gender, (b) ethnicity, (c) what age group describes you, (d) primary language spoken at home, (e) highest level of education, (f) relationship to your child, (g) which parent you stay with, (h) employment status, (i) marital status, (j) household income, (k) how many children attend school in the household, (l) what grade level represents the child/student, (m) how many years of teaching/coaching experience do you have, and (n) what grade level do you teach/coach. According to data recorded in the parent surveys, 71.7% were males, 26.1% were females, and 1.0% preferred not to answer. One hundred percent were African American; 63.8% represented the age group of 41 to 50; 17% represented the age group of 31 to 40; 17% represented the age group of 51 to 60; and 1% represented the age group of 65 or older; relationship to the child as the mother, 63.8%, relationship to the child as the father, 17%, relationship to the child as the step-father 2.1%, no response for the relationship as the step-mother, relationship to the child as the grandmother, 8.5%, relationship to the child as the grandfather, 2.1%, relationship to the child as the aunt, 4.7%, relationship to the child as the uncle, 2.1%. The primary language spoken in the home was 100% English.

The highest grade level completed was a Bachelor of Arts, 34%; Master of Arts, 23.4%, high school, 21.3%, general equivalent diploma, 19.1%, did not finish or complete school, there were no responses recorded, and doctorate, 2.1%. The

employment status for full time, 93.6%, there were no responses for part-time employment, unemployed, 2.1%, and retired, 4.3%. The marital status for single, 31.9%; married, 55.3%; divorced, 4.3%; widowed, 6.4%; and in a domestic partnership, 2.1%. No responses were recorded for household income for $0 to $24,999; $25,000 to $49,999, 25.5%; $50,000 to $74,999, 27.7%; $100,000 to $124,000, 14.9%; $125,000 to $149.999, 4.3%; $150,000 to $174,999, 8.5%; $175,000 to $199,999, 2.1%; and $200,000 and up, 2.1%. The number who attend school in the household: 0 to 3, 93.6%; 3 to 5, 6.4%; and no responses were recorded for five or more. The grade level that represents the children in the household: elementary, 10.6%; middle school, 34.0%; high school, 31.9%; college, 19.1%; and other, 4.3%.

According to data recorded in the teacher surveys, 74.3% were males and 25.7% were females. The ethnicity of African Americans who responded was 98.6% and 2.1% for mixed race; 54.3% represented the age group of 41 to 50; 20% represented the age group of 31 to 40; 14.3% represented the age group of 51 to 60; and 11.4% represented the age group of 18 to 30. The primary language represented in the classroom for English was 98.6% and 1.4% Spanish. No other language was reported being spoken in the classroom. The highest level of education completed: Bachelor of Arts, 29.4%; Master of Arts, 38.2%; Education Specialist, 14.7%; and doctorate, 17.6%. The years of teaching represented was 32.9% for 20 or more, 35.7% for 10 to 20 years, 14.3% for 5 to 10 years, and 17.1% for 0 to 5 years. The employment status represented was 90% full time, 7.1% part time, 1.4% unemployed, and 1.4% retired. The marital status represented was 45.7% married, 45.7% single, 7.1% divorced, and 1.4% domestic partnership. The household income approximation was represented as 33.3% ($75,000 to $99,999), 26.1% ($50,000 to $74,999), 15.9% ($25,000 to $49,999), 8.7% ($100,000 to $124,999), 8.7% (0 to

$24,999), 2.9% ($125,000 to $149,000), 2.9% ($200,000 and up), and 1.4% ($175,000 to $199,999). The children who attend school in their household was 90% (0 to 3) and 10% (3 to 5). The grade level that teachers represented was 30.6% (elementary school), 17.7% (middle school), 16.1% (high school), 17.7% (college), and 17.7% (other).

According to data recorded in the student surveys, 90% were males and 10% were females; 97.5% were African American/Black and 2.5% were White. The primary language spoken at home represented 100% English. Students having other siblings at home was represented as 57.5% (0 to 2), 35% (3 to 5), and 7.5% (five or more). Students who participated in the free or reduced-price lunch program at their school was represented as 86.8% (yes) and 13.2% (no). Students who stayed with a parent or guardian was represented as 90% (mother), 5% (father), and 5% (both). The age group that represented the students was 77.5% (18 or older), 20% (15 to 17), and 2.5% (11 to 14). The grade level that represented the students was 2.5% (middle school), 50% (high school), and 47.5% (college student). The grade point average of the students represented was 59% (2.0 to 3.0), 38.5% (3.0 to 3.5), and 2.6% (3.5 to 4.0).

According to data recorded in the coach surveys, 83.3% were males and 16.7% were females; 100% were African American/Black. The age group represented was 50% (31 to 40), 25% (41 to 50), and 25% (18 to 30). The primary language spoken among the coaches and students represented was 100% English. The highest level of education completed was represented as high school diploma (66.7%) and Bachelor of Arts (33.3%). The years represented for coaching represented were 41.7% (5 to 10), 33.3% (0 to 5), 16.7% (10 to 20), and 8.3% (20 years or more). The employment status represented was 75% (full time) and 25% (part time). The marital status represented was 66.7% (single) and 33.3% (married). The household income approximation represented was

33.3% ($50,000 to $74,999), 25% (0 to $24,999), 16.7% ($150,000 ton $174,999), 8.3% ($25,000 to $49,999), 8.3% ($75,000 to $99,999), and 8.3% ($100,000 to $124,000). The children in school in the household of the coaches represented were 100% (0 to 3). The grade levels represented of children of the coaches who were part of a sports program or extracurricular activity were 54.5% (middle school), 27.3% (high school), and 18.2% (elementary school)

Background Information

The primary source for this study involved the returned surveys from Google forms, the transcriptions from the three focus-group sessions, and the personal interviews conducted by the researcher. The Google form surveys program was used to store, manage, and analyze the data. The survey had responses that ranged from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree, yes* or *no*, and *always* to *never*.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked the following: How does inconsistent parental involvement affect at-risk African American students' performance, retention, and success in low-performing schools? The projected outcome was to provide realistic interventions and solutions for students who are considered at risk and attending inner city schools who are performing low, academically, due to the lack of consistent parental involvement for a plethora of reasons. The researcher created surveys that would address and document the responses accordingly.

According to the parent survey, the responses that answered this question were as follows: 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 28, 36, 38, 39, 44, 45, 46, 47, 52, 57, 60, 62, 69, 75, and 85. According to the teacher survey, the responses that answered this question were as follows: 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 25, 26, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 42,

43, and 44. According to the student survey, the responses that answered this question were as follows: 12, 23, 28, 29, 30, 31, 34, 46, and 67. According to the coach survey, the responses that answered this question were as follows: 12, 22, 30, 31, 32, 33, 39, and 40.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked the following: What constitutes the difference in parental involvement rates in other ethnic groups and households as opposed to low-performing, at-risk African American students' parental involvement rates? The expected outcome was to provide realistic interventions and solutions for students who are considered at risk and attending inner city schools who are performing low, academically, due to the lack of consistent parental involvement in African American households than in other ethnic groups and households. The researcher created surveys that would address and document the responses accordingly.

According to the parent survey, the responses that answered this question were as follows: 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 68, and 74. According to the teacher survey, the responses that answered this question were as follows: 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, and 45. According to the student survey, the responses that answered this question were as follows: 10, 11, 12, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 45, 46, 47, 53, 59, 62, 64, 65, 67, 70, 80, 81, and 83. According to the coach survey, the responses that answered this question were as follows: 25, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, and 43.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked the following: What constitutes the difference in

African American parental involvement rates in low-performing, at-risk schools as opposed to their involvement in the athletic arena? The projected outcome was to provide realistic interventions and solutions for parents who support athletics more than academics of the children of at-risk students who attend inner city schools. The researcher created surveys that would address and document the responses accordingly.

According to the parent survey, the responses that answered this question were as follows: 16, 19, 20, 21, 26, 44, 45, 46, 47, 57, 62, 63, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 75, 76, 77, 78, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, and 85. According to the teacher survey, the responses that answered this question were as follows: 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 24, 26, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, and 57. According to the student survey, the responses that answered this question were as follows: 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 34, 35, 39, 43, and 78. According to the coach survey, the responses that answered this question were as follows: 44, 50, and 53.

The researcher interviewed Parent 1 and asked Parent 1 to expound on why most parents within the African American community and inner city schools, especially our at-risk students, support athletics more than they do academics. Parent 1 stated the following:

> We as African Americans, for the most part, have allowed society to dictate how we raise, interact, or involve ourselves regarding the well-being of our children in school and life choices, all the while putting getting an education on the back burner.

Parent 2 stated, “While there are many successful stories of student-athletes who make it out and follow their athletic dreams and aspiration, the unsuccessful stories are more notable.” Parent 3 stated the following:

> Often times, there are many parents who try to relive their athletic or extracurricular activities through their children. With proper parental support or engagement, children will learn that there is way more to life than just being an athlete, because acquiring a quality education is vital to their success as an up-coming adult. Don't just shut up and dribble or shut up and score a basket or touchdown. Without a quality education, many doors will be closed to you, unless you know someone and we all know that comes with "favors!" Just because you can run, jump, or shoot; or run, hit, and score, does not mean that's all you are worth and have offer. You are not anyone's golden ticket or money maker as a student athlete. Stay educated and stay woke!

The researcher interviewed Teacher 1 and requested that Teacher 1 elaborate on why most parents within the African American community and inner city schools, especially our at-risk students, support athletics more than they do academics. Teacher 1 stated, "Parents must realize that their children's athletic and physical abilities are fleeting and can change at a moment's notice. Wherein, their mental capacity to which their education is acquired, remain always. "Teacher 2 stated, "Parental involvement in the life of a child's educational journey is paramount. However, until parents push harder to become more active and concerned about their child's welfare, than they will continue to fall to the bottom academically. Teacher 3 stated the following:

> Parental involvement should be mandatory for athletes to even be able to participate in any type of sports and extracurricular activity. Athletes should be disciplined throughout the entire school year by the parents and coaches, not just during their selective sports activity. Until we make parents accountable and allow them to stop making excuses about the welfare of their child academically,

nothing will change!

Teacher 4 stated the following:

> As educators, we do not gain the respect from parents, like the coaches do. Parents often see lucrative results stemming from children getting a great education. They see athletics as a definite avenue to earning millions of dollars, all without considering the hidden risks involved. Therefore, they spend years grooming their children for professional sports, but they to place the same energy toward securing their children's academic future.

Teacher 5 stated, "Educators must somehow try to convenience parents, of the advantages that acquiring a great education involves. From there, parents must be willing to support education and educators in helping students build academic success."

The researcher interviewed Student 1 and requested that Student 1 elaborate on why most parents within the African American community and inner city schools, especially our at-risk students, support athletics more than they do academics. Student 1 stated the following:

> Parents have to remember, especially African American parents, that there is a life after football or basketball. Sports don't last forever. Sports isn't a lasting career. You can get injured at any time and suffer a great loss as a result of your unforeseen injury. You always need a Plan B!

Student 2 stated the following:

> Many parents and coaches are doing things behind the scenes to make sure their child is gaining prime time or being accepted to schools within the African American communities that has a known reputation for athletics and college recruits, including private and Christian schools.

Student 3 stated the following:

> Many coaches lie to the parents about their concern for their children, in regards to their academic success. All the while, the coach is only concerned about the student's physical and athletic ability. After any severe injury, the student is thrown away or discarded like trash. No longer need or desire. Basically, just another number!

Student 4 stated, "There needs to be more programs that bring parents, coaches, and teachers together to find ways to work together in building academic success among all students, but certainly student athletes."

The researcher interviewed Coach 1 and requested that Coach 1 elaborate on why most parents within the African American community and inner city schools, especially our at-risk students, support athletics more than they do academics. Coach 1 stated, "As a coach, I can see how both academics and athletics could enhance and improve one's life, but it can work if both sides work together in harmony for the greater good of the student, their athletic and academic achievement. Coach 2 stated, "Parents should not only become actively involved when their children is involved in a sport but even more so in the classroom, regarding their academic performance and enhancement." Coach 3 stated, "We must continue to water our children with knowledge in order to see them grow. Anything else, is a bonus!" Coach 4 stated, "Parental involvement for student academic achievement is essential in development of the African American student athlete population." Coach 5 stated the following:

> Consistent parental involvement affords to ability to recognize multiple deficiencies, while overcoming academic obstacles that may hinder a child's ability to not only be a successful student, but also hinder them from being

eligible to participate in athletics as well.

In addition, there were three focus-group sessions conducted by the researcher. The teachers, students, parents, and coaches who participated in the survey gave a more indepth understanding, offered realistic suggestions, and provided relevant solutions regarding the additional questions that were discussed.

Summary

Chapter 4 included additional questions and discussions that provided detailed and candid responses. Data gathered from the research study portrayed the responses of the participants who answered the questions presented. The purpose of the study was to understand what causes the lack of consistent parental involvement among inner city, at-risk students academically and to explore why more parents support athletics than academics within our inner city schools and among our African American students, primarily Black male student-athletes.

Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the results, implications of the findings, limitations, and recommendations. The information in Chapter 5 serves as a pivotal tool for further study regarding the lack of consistent parental involvement among inner city, at-risk students academically and explores why more parents support athletics than academics within our inner city schools and among our African American students, primarily Black male student-athletes. Chapter 5 provides enlightening suggestions that could channel further study and discussion, as well as offers suggestions on how to improve parental involvement within inner city, at-risk schools regarding academics and not just solely athletics.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This applied dissertation was implemented to assess the lack of consistent parental involvement among inner city, at-risks student academically. The purpose of the study was to understand why more parents support athletics, than academics within our inner city schools and among our African American students, primarily black male student-athletes. The dissertation was executed as planned. Once approval for implementation was received from the university, the researcher proceeded to recruit parents, teachers, students, and coaches who attend, teach, coach, or have children who are African American at an inner city, at-risk school to participate in the study. They were informed of the study through a consent form, flyer, and assent letter that they were required to sign and return if they agreed to be a part of the study. A total of 147 individuals participated in the study.

Qualitative data were collected and analyzed for the explanation of the lack of consistent parental involvement among inner city, at-risk students academically and to explore why more parents support athletics than academics within our inner city schools and among our African American students, primarily Black male student-athletes. The study consisted of survey questions, selected interviews, and three focus-group sessions. The researcher administered the surveys and conducted the interviews and three focus-group sessions. This chapter provides a synopsis of this study and a discussion of the data acquired and presented in the previous chapter as answers to the research questions.

Overview of Study

The problem addressed by this study involved the lack of consistent parental involvement among inner city, at-risk students academically and why more parents supported athletics more than academics within our inner city schools and among our

African American students, primarily Black male student-athletes. Parental involvement is defined as parents being their children's first teacher and cheerleader, and for students to excel academically in school, parents must participate actively in the education of their children (Deplanty et al., 2007). Parents' active involvement regarding their children's education positively affects the children's dedication to school, enhances student academic performance and achievement, and promotes the overall self-motivation needed to succeed during their educational journey. Social class differences in how African American parents approach educational participation and engagement result from the interaction in the educational environments to which they are exposed, as well as race and SES, family history, and school experiences. The confluence of racial and social class provides an interesting examination in the engagement of parents and parental involvement regarding African American parents. Other factors also contribute to the lack of consistent parental support, such as one's SES, poverty, educational background, homelessness, and the difference in parenting styles.

Parents of student-athletes choose between supporting and promoting their child's athletics or academics. Beamon (2010) ascertained that parents who pushed for the athletic success of their children did not exert the same energy on their academics. Lauer et al. (2010) suggested that parents can have a healthy and balanced perspective on sports or extracurricular sport activities and promote balance between sports and academics in their child's life. The authors also found that parents who pushed winning and high sports accomplishments on the track or field did not encourage and promote their academic success in the classroom. While parents may understand the importance of their continued support regarding their child's athletic accomplishments and ambitions, others exhibit irregular, often unfavorable conducts in their pursuit of athletic success (Knight et

al., 2010).

Holt et al. (2008) noted the nature of parental involvement in student athletes is interestingly high and vocal, contrary to the parental involvement in relation to student academics, which is not as aggressive and vocal. To examine the factors that contribute to the lack of parental involvement and support for athletics in low-performing schools in South Florida among at-risk African American students and the lack of parental involvement and support regarding academics in low-performing schools in South Florida among at-risk African American students, this study was guided by three research questions:

1. How does inconsistent parental involvement affect at-risk African American students' performance, retention, and success in low-performing schools?

2. What constitutes the difference in parental involvement rates in other ethnic group households as opposed to low-performing, at-risk African American students' parental involvement rates?

3. What constitutes the difference in African American parental involvement rates in low-performing, at-risk schools as opposed to their involvement in the athletic arena?

The study relied heavily upon the survey questions answered, selected interviews, and focus-group discussion sessions. The collected data were analyzed and presented by means descriptive statistics. The statistical analysis used for the questions entailed percentages to determine the contributing factors to parental involvement and support for athletics in low-performing schools in South Florida among at-risk African American students and the lack of parental involvement and support regarding academics in low-performing schools in South Florida among at-risk African American students.

Conclusions and Implications

The individual research questions resulted in specific answers and conclusions, which generated and recommendations for future research and how to improve parental involvement regarding student academics within inner city schools for at-risk students and student-athletes and not primarily supporting athletics only.

Research Question 1

How does inconsistent parental involvement affect at-risk African American students' performance, retention, and success in low-performing schools? The first research question assessed factors that contributed to the lack of consistent parental involvement and the negative affects it has and may cause on at-risk, African American students' performance, retention, and success in low-performing schools. The data indicated that there was an excessively high percentage and concern in this particular setting. Perhaps, if more parents understood the educational matrix of academic success, and they were provided with workshops, presentations, and literature for them to be more involved in the academic achievement and success of their children, then there would be more parental support and involvement within the inner city schools regarding at-risk African American students. In addition, the lack of consistent parental support and involvement has a devastating effect on students of color more so than on their White counterparts.

Research Question 2

What constitutes the difference in parental involvement rates in other ethnic groups and households as opposed to low-performing, at-risk African American students' parental involvement rates? The second research question examined reasons why parental involvement in the African American households of at-risk students attending low-

performing schools differed from other ethnic groups' households. As the results indicated, there is a difference in the parenting style between African American parents, as opposed to other cultures and ethnics groups, even down to the demographics. Many African American parents feel that their children are at a major disadvantage with succeeding academically, due to the lack of certified teachers, inadequate finances, shortage of educational material such as up-to-date books, computers, and remedial services for the student body.

Many African Americans parents voiced that there is, without a doubt, a noticeable difference in the educational practices between inner city schools and affluent schools as in affluent schools, these complications are few to none in existence. Nevertheless, the attempted efforts to bridge the academic gap between at-risk African American students, as opposed to their White counterparts, definitely has to be dealt with realistically, truthfully, and fairly. There were also observations that other ethnic groups engage in more parental involvement academically for their children than most African American parents whose children attend at-risk, low-performing schools who place more emphasis on athletics and not academics.

Research Question 3

What constitutes the difference in African American parental involvement rates in low-performing, at-risk students' academics as compared to their involvement in the athletic arena? The third research question examined reasons why many parents support athletics at low-performing schools, more than they support academics. The data revealed a plethora of reasons. Many parents seemed to be reliving their own lives through their children or seemingly forcing them to participate in sports or other extracurricular activities to satisfy their desires but not necessarily the students. Many parents feel that

playing a favored and dominant sport, primarily football, is their golden ticket out of the hood or a fast track to success and popularity. Needless to say, the term student-athlete is self-explanatory: a student who is academically sound and successful and an athlete who has the athletic ability and performance to be great as well. Many parents have conditioned their children to believe that acquiring a quality education has no meaningful purpose. So, they feed the athletic part of the child without understanding the unforeseen dangers and uncertainties that severe injuries or inadequate performances can impose.

Limitations of the Study

A considerable limitation of the study was the COVID-19 pandemic and the mass limitations that were placed on sizeable gatherings inside of buildings and auditoriums. Therefore, the future researcher might investigate and gather additional factors that examine the lack of parental involvement and support for athletics in low-performing schools in South Florida among at-risk African American students and the lack of parental involvement and support regarding academics in low-performing schools in South Florida among at-risk African American students. The study was limited to fewer participants in one school district in an urban setting in Miami, Florida. These similar demographics may be generalized to other middle and high school students who attend low-performing at-risk schools in urban communities.

Another limitation was the availability of some of the participants and the changing schedules due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In a few cases, some were not able to make the Tuesdays session as agreed, so the researcher and participants had to switch to the following Thursdays to accommodate all the participants. Parental involvement has been described in two ways: by assessing the number of activities parents are able to participate in, such as meetings, games, and so on, or by the volume of influence the

parents exercise or experience as a result of their children's school and the individualized school experience (Wennerholm & Bremberg, 2005).

Recommendations

The results of this study indicated further studies need to be conducted on the level of parental involvement and support for athletics in low-performing schools in South Florida among at-risk African American students and the lack of parental involvement and support regarding academics in low-performing schools in South Florida among at-risk African American students. Previous researchers noted that parental involvement has been described in two ways: by assessing the number of activities parents are able to participate in, such as meetings, games, and so on, or by the volume of influence the parents exercise or experience as a result of their children's school and the individualized school experience (Wennerholm & Bremberg, 2005). Survey results in this study indicated that parental expectations and consistent involvement in the academic affairs of their children could have a positive and purposeful impact to improve academic achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001).

Parents who are more active and consistent provide a stable environment for academic success and growth, whereas the lack of consistent parental support and involvement has been associated with noted behavioral issues, poor attendance, poor academic performance, suspensions, and even expulsion from school. An indepth qualitative study needs to explore the level of parental involvement and support for athletics in low-performing schools in South Florida among at-risk African American students and the lack of parental involvement and support regarding academics in low-performing schools in South Florida among at-risk African American students.

Further research could also be conducted to ascertain ways to bridge the gap

between consistent parental involvement in low-performing schools and the achievement of at-risk African American students academically and athletically to provide a balanced curriculum and perspective. Another recommendation would be to host family workshops to assess home lifestyles, financial stability, employment opportunities, and family counseling. Implementing mentorship programs for the parents and students would also assist in communicating ways of reconciliation and a unified effort to consistent parental support and involvement. Researchers stated as students progressed to higher grade levels, parent involvement decreased (Epstein, 1995). Therefore, an indepth study with regard to the parents' perceptions of their role in their child's education and academic success in low-performing schools among at-risk African American students is recommended. Further studies with other school districts would add to the body of research and give results that can be compared to this in this study.

Further research could be in the form of a follow-up interview that presents reflective questions that would suggest a deeper understanding of their response. It would also be beneficial for the study site to have additional input from the parents, students, teachers, and coaches regarding how to improve parental involvement in low-performing schools that at-risk African American students attend and who are performing extremely low academically and not just supporting the athletics sector only.

Summary

While much of the existing research builds a firm case that parents' involvement in the education of their child positively impacts the child in low-performing schools, there is limited research suggesting that too much parental involvement hinders student-athletes' life and academic developmental skills. Parents continue to play an important supportive role for athletes during childhood and emerging to adulthood (Dorsch et al.,

2016). According to Ferguson (2002), students tend to be more successful in school when educators, parents, coaches, teachers, even community leaders, work together with one goal, support and improve academic learning in low-performing schools. Therefore, the statement “It takes a village to raise a child!” is relevant and needed more so now in this era of education and athletic unification.

Nevertheless, to ascertain the relationship among parental involvement, academic performance, academic self-efficacy, and athletic ability, and balance as a functional student-athlete among low-performing at-risk African American students who attend inner city schools was the purpose of this dissertation. Although this dissertation did not solve this problem, it assisted with filling in the gap in the literature and providing additional information to all stakeholders. The three research questions of this dissertation were answered and recommendations were made for future studies.

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Appendix A

Parent Survey

Parent Survey

Student academics versus Student athletics: Why do most parents choose athletics over academics among African American students, primarily males, within inner city schools and neighborhoods?

1. Gender
   Male
   Female
   Prefer not to answer
2. Ethnicity
   African American/Black
   White/Caucasian
   Asian
   Native American/American Indian
   Hispanic
   Latino
   Mixed Ethnicity
   Other
3. What age group best describes you?
   18-30
   31-40
   41-50
   51-60
   65 or older
4. What is the relationship with your children?
   Mother
   Father
   Step-Mother
   Step-Father
   Grandmother
   Grandfather
   Aunt
   Uncle
   Guardian
5. What is the primary language spoken in the home?
   English
   Spanish
   French
   Creole
   Italian
   German
   Other
6. What is the highest level of education completed?
   Less than a high school diploma/did not complete school
   High school diploma or G.E.D equivalent
   High school (grades 9 through 12)
   Bachelor's degree (i.e., B.A., B.S.)

Master's degree (i.e., M.A., M.S.)
Doctorate (i.e., Ph.D., Ed.D.)

7. What is your employment status?
   Full time
   Part-time
   Unemployed
   Retired
8. What is your marital status?

   Single
   Married
   Divorced
   Widowed
   In a domestic partnership
9. What is your approximate average household income?
   $0-$24,999
   $25,000-$49,999
   $50,000-$74,999
   $75,000-$99,999
   $100,000-$124,000
   $125,000-$149,000
   $150,000-$174,999
   $175,000-$199,999
   $200,000 and up
8. How many children attend school in your household?
   0-3
   3-5
   5 or more
9. What grade level represents your children?
   Elementary School
   Middle School
   High School or G.E.D equivalent
   College
   Other (i.e., drop out, military, etc.)
10. I feel welcome by the staff at my children's school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
11. The school host events that are parent-friendly or considerate of time for working parents.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly Agree
12. I am informed in a timely manner regarding events and school activities concerning my children.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Agree
Strongly agree

13. I have a difficult time meeting with my children's teacher, due to personal time restraints.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly Agree
14. I am in contact with my children's teacher concerning his/her academic success regularly.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
15. My work schedule allows me to be actively engaged in my children's academic progress.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
16. I assist my children with his/her homework every weekly.
    Always
    Often
    Sometimes
    Rarely
    Never
17. I attend PTA meetings or community events that assist my children in his/her academic preparation.
    Always
    Often
    Sometimes
    Rarely
    Never
18. I am concerned about my children's failing academic grades in one or more subjects.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
19. I am concerned about the excessive discipline infractions and referrals, as a result of my children's disruptive behavior in school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree

20. I reward my children for good grades and productive behavior on his/her progress reports and report cards.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
21. I work extended hours at more than one job, which prohibits my full participation in the academic affairs of my children consistently.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
22. My educational background limit me from assisting my children with his/her assignments, homework, or projects.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
23. I have more than one child and my time is not always divided equally.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
24. I am advocate for my children's education in and out of school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
25. As a single parent, balancing my children's academic and school affairs is challenging.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
26. Teachers often call for my children's failing grades and/or disruptive behavior.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
27. My community is predominantly composed of African American families.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
28. My community is culturally mixed.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree

Agree
Strongly agree

29. The teachers are genuinely concerned about the academic success of my children.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
30. The school my children attend is predominantly African American and/or mixed with other minority ethnic groups.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
31. My children's school promotes academic literacy, success, and parent participation.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
32. The administrators and school staff are genuinely concerned about my children and their academic success.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
33. There is more than one language spoken in our household.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
34. Transportation plays an important role for me in the involvement of my children's academics.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
35. Effective and consistent communication play an important role for me, in the involvement of my children's academics.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
36. Not having access to a computer, internet, or electronic device, plays a vital role for me being actively engaged in my children's academic achievement (i.e., responding to emails from teachers and/or administrators).
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree

Agree
Strongly agree

37. Having access to my children's assignments, homework, school events via the internet is important.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
38. Having alternative systems in place for parents without internet access or who are not electronically advanced will assist in promoting parental participation.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly Agree
39. I dropped out of school early.
    Yes
    No
40. I experienced hardships in school regarding disciplinary actions when I was a child.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
41. I struggled academically in school as a child.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
42. I invest additional educational resources at home for my children to excel academically in school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
43. I encourage my children to do good academically in school.
    Always
    Often
    Sometimes
    Rarely
    Never
44. I have conversations with my children about his/her academic progress in school.
    Always
    Often
    Sometimes
    Rarely
    Never
45. I have conversations with my children regarding his/her behavior in school.

Always
Often
Sometimes
Rarely
Never

46. I have conversations with my children concerning bullying/cyber bullying at school or at home.
    Always
    Often
    Sometimes
    Rarely
    Never
47. I have conversations with my children concerning inappropriate conversations with students and adults.
    Always
    Often
    Sometimes
    Rarely
    Never
48. I have conversations with my children concerning sex, drugs, and alcohol use.
    Always
    Often
    Sometimes
    Rarely
    Never
49. I have conversations with my children about the consequences of his/her actions.
    Always
    Often
    Sometimes
    Rarely
    Never
50. I have conversations with my children about the benefits of obtaining a college education and/or acquiring a skill or trade.
    Always
    Often
    Sometimes
    Rarely
    Never
51. My neighbors are not as involved in the educational affairs of their children as I am.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
52. There is a small percentage of African American parents represented at school events, including other minority groups.
    Strongly disagree

Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

53. Other ethnic groups are more engaged in the academic affairs of their children, than African American parents.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
54. There are language barriers between administrators and staff at school, which prevents me from being actively engaged with my children's academics.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
55. I attend parent conferences to address my children's grades and/or behavior.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
56. The father is absent in the home.
    Yes
    No
57. A mentor or father figure is in the home or around to assist in my child's academic and behavioral challenges.
    Yes
    No
58. There is a designated schedule set aside to complete assignments, homework, projects, or study time at home.
    Yes
    No
59. Single parents, primarily females as head of the households, struggle emotionally to support their children, primarily their male children.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
60. Economic challenges and hardships, as a parent, causes me not to be supportive consistently.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
61. My home is set up for my children to effectively learn.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree

Strongly agree

62. My family is close and supportive.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
63. Are the siblings supportive of each other?
    Yes
    No
    Sometimes
64. I have a blended family. (i.e., stepchildren)
    Yes
    No
65. We have family time together often (i.e., dinner, vacations, etc.).
    Yes
    No
    Sometimes
    Barely
    Never
66. I strive to be the best role model for my children.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
67. More time is given toward my child's extracurricular activities than his/her academic progress.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
68. I am a sports team mom/father.
    Yes
    No
69. As a parent, I promote balancing academics and athletics.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
70. I raise the awareness of my children's academic and behavioral struggles to his/her coaches.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
71. I support my children in his/his extracurricular activities, regardless of his/her academic failures.
    Strongly disagree

Disagree
Agree
Strongly agree

72. I am considerate of the time my children spends on his/her academic performance and progress.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
73. I monitor my children's extracurricular activities to have a reasonable balance, as academic student.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
74. Many parents at my children's school are equally supportive of athletic events and academic achievement for their children within inner city schools.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
75. Many coaches are not appreciative of teachers, who strive for students to be academically productive.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
76. Many coaches allow students to participate and engage in sports and/or extracurricular activities, regardless of behavior issues and/or academic struggles.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
77. Many coaches ask teachers to water down assignments or grades, to improve the student athlete's GPA or grades in one or more subjects, for students who are not producing academically and/or failing.
    Strong disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
78. Many coaches try to undermine teachers, by requesting grade changes for student athletes who are not performing academically from administrators, in order to be eligible to play in selected sports.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree

79. Many students focus more on their athletic abilities, than their academic achievements in school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly Agree
80. Many students respect their coaches, more than their parents and/or teachers.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
81. Many coaches are more influential with students, than their parents and/or teachers.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
82. African American students, primarily males, are used as bait to build high school, little league, and college sport programs, regardless of various deficiencies in their academic performance.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly Agree
83. African American parents support their children more athletically, than they do academically.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
84. Please feel free to leave any comments or suggestions to strengthen the parental involvement within our inner city schools for student academic achievement, primarily among the African American student athlete population, not just the sports or athletic events.

Appendix B

Teacher Survey

Teacher Survey

Student academics versus Student athletics: Why do most parents choose athletics over academics among African American students, primarily males, within inner city schools and neighborhoods?

1. Gender
   Male
   Female
2. Ethnicity
   African American/Black
   White/Caucasian
   Asian
   Native American/American Indian
   Hispanic
   Latino
   Mixed Ethnicity
   Other
3. What age group best describes you?
   18-30
   31-40
   41-50
   51-60
   65 or older
4. What is the primary language spoken in your classroom?
   English
   Spanish
   French
   Creole
   Italian
   German
   Other
5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
   Bachelor's degree (i.e., B.A., B.S.)
   Master's degree (i.e., M.A., M.S.)
   Specialist degree (i.e., Ed.S.)
   Doctorate (i.e., Ph.D., Ed.D.)
6. How many years have you been teaching?
   0-5 years
   5-10 years
   10-20 years
   20 or more years
7. What is your employment status?
   Full time
   Part-time
   Unemployed
   Retired
8. What is marital status?

Single
Married
Divorced
Widowed
In a domestic partnership

9. What is your approximate average household income?
   $0-$24,999
   $25,000-$49,999
   $50,000-$74,999
   $75,000-$99,999
   $100,000-$124,000
   $125,000-$149,000
   $150,000-$174,999
   $175,000-$199,999
   $200,000 and up
10. How many children in school, do you have in your home?
    0-3
    3-5
    5 or more
11. What grade level represents the children you teach?
    Elementary school
    Middle school
    High school or G.E.D. equivalent
    College
    Other (i.e., drop out, military, etc.)
12. The school host events that are parent friendly or considerate of time for working parents.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
13. As a teacher, I inform parents in a timely manner regarding school events and activities.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
14. As a teacher, I have a difficult time meeting with parent(s) concerning their children, due to the parent(s) personal time restraints.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
15. As a teacher, I am in contact with parent(s) regarding the academic achievement and progress of their children.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree

Agree
Strongly agree

16. Many parents assist their children with their assignments, homework, and/or projects.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly Agree
17. Many parents attend PTA, school events, or community events that assist in their children's academic preparation.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
18. Many parents are concerned about their children's failing academic grades in one or more subjects.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
19. Many parents are concerned about the excessive discipline infractions and referrals, as a result of my children's disruptive behavior in school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
20. Many parents reward their children for good grades and productive behavior on his/her progress and report cards.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
21. Many parents work extended hours at more than one job, which prohibits them from fully participating in the academic affairs of their children.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
22. Many parents educational background limit them from assisting their children with his/her assignments, homework, or projects.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
23. Many parents with more than one child, equally distributes their time concerning the academic achievement of their children.
    Strongly disagree

Disagree
Agree
Strongly agree

24. Many parents advocate for their children's education in and out of school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly Agree
25. Many single parents are having challenges balancing their children's academic and school affairs.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
26. Many parents respond to calls, letters, or electronic communication concerning their children's failing grades and/or disruptive behavior.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
27. I teach at a school that is predominantly African American and/or mixed with other minority ethnic groups.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
28. The community and school I teach at is culturally mixed.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
29. Many parents are genuinely concerned about their children's academic success.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
30. Many parents promote academic literacy and success for their children.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
31. The administrators and school staff are genuinely concerned about the parents and students at my school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree

32. Many parents speak more than one language at my school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
33. Transportation plays an important role in the involvement of many parents at my school concerning their children's academic progress.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
34. Effective and consistent communication play an important role in the involvement of many parents at my school concerning their children's academic progress.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
35. At my school, parents not having access to a computer, internet, or electronic device has a huge impact on them being actively engaged in their children's academic achievement (i.e., responding to emails from teachers and/or administrators).
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
36. Many parents are concerned about not having access to their children's assignments and academic progress via internet.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
37. Having alternative systems in place for parents without internet access to promote parental engagement, should be essential for academic achievement.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
38. Many parents did not complete high school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
39. Many parents experienced hardships in school as adolescents.
    Strongly Disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly Agree

40. Many parents experienced hardships in discipline as adolescents.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
41. Many parents struggled academically as a child.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly Agree
42. Many parents invest additional resources at home to assist in their children's academic achievement.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
43. Many parents encourage their children to good academically in school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
44. As a teacher, I encourage my students to excel and perform academically.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
45. As a teacher, I encourage students to explore college opportunities and trade schools after graduation.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
46. Only a small percentage of African American parents represent their children at school events, including other minority groups.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
47. Many parents respond better to their children's coaches regarding their sports activities, than the teachers regarding their children' academic success.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
48. Many coaches are not appreciative of teachers who strive for students to be academically productive.
    Strongly disagree

Disagree
Agree
Strongly agree

49. Many coaches allow students to participate and engage in sports and/or extracurricular activities, regardless of behavior issues and/or academic struggles.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
50. Many coaches ask teachers to water down assignments or grades, to improve the student athlete's GPA or grades in one or more subjects, for students who are not producing academically and/or failing.
    Strong disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
51. Many coaches try to undermine the teachers, by requesting grade changes for student athletes who are not performing academically from administrators, in order to be eligible to participate in selected sports.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
52. Many students focus more on their athletic abilities, than their academic achievements.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly Agree
53. Many students respect their coaches more than their parents and/or teachers.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
54. Many coaches are more influential with students than their parents and/or teachers.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
55. African American students, primarily males, are used as bait to build high school, little league, and college sport programs, regardless of their deficiencies in their academic performance.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly Agree

56. African American parents support their children more athletically, than they do academically.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
57. Many teachers are supportive of student athletes at the school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
58. Please feel free to leave any comments or suggestions to strengthen the parental involvement within our inner city schools for student academic achievement, primarily among the African American student athlete population, not just the sports or athletic events.

Appendix C

Student Survey

Student Survey

Student academics versus Student athletics: Why do most parents choose athletics over academics among African American students, primarily males, within inner city schools and neighborhoods?

1. Gender
   Male
   Female
2. Ethnicity
   African American/Black
   White/Caucasian
   Asian
   Native American/American Indian
   Hispanic
   Latino
   Mixed Ethnicity
   Other
3. What is the primary language spoken in your home?
   English
   Spanish
   French
   Creole
   Italian
   German
   Other
4. How many siblings do you have at home?
   0-2
   3-5
   5 or more
5. Have you ever participated in free or reduced lunch program at your school?
   Yes
   No
6. Which parent do you stay with?
   Mother
   Father
   Both
   Step-parent(s)
   Grandparent(s)
   Aunt/Uncle
   Guardian
7. What age group best describes you?
   11-14
   15-17
   18 or older
8. What grade level represents you?
   Middle School
   High School

College student

9. What is your current GPA?
   0-2.0
   2.0-3.0
   3.0-3.5
   3.5-4.0
   4.0 or higher
10. I stay in a predominantly African American community.
    Strongly Disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly Agree
11. I stay in a culturally mixed community.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
12. I am surrounded by negative influences in my neighborhood and community I live in.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
13. Sports or a sport's scholarship, primarily football, is a way to a better life for me, than making good grades in school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
14. My coach is in contact with my teachers regarding my academic achievement and progress.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
15. My coach assists me with my assignments and homework.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly Agree
16. Many coaches attend PTA, school events, or community events that assist student athletes with effective academic preparation.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
17. My coach is concerned about me failing academically in one or more subjects.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Agree
Strongly agree

18. My coach is concerned about excessive discipline infractions and referrals, as a result of any disruptive behavior in school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
19. Many coaches reward student athletes for good grades and productive behavior on his/her progress and report cards.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
20. Most coaches' educational background limit them from assisting student athletes with their assignments, homework, or projects.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
21. Many coaches show favoritism within various sports or extracurricular activities within the African American community and inner city school sports program.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
22. Many coaches are advocates for education regarding student athletes in and out of school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly Agree
23. Many single parents are having challenges balancing their children's academics and school affairs.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
24. Many coaches respond to calls, letters, or electronic communication concerning student athletes failing grades and/or disruptive behavior.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
25. Many coaches are genuinely concerned about student athletes and their academic

achievement in school.
Strongly disagree
Disagree
Agree
Strongly agree

26. Many coaches promote academic literacy and success for student-athletes.
Strongly disagree
Disagree
Agree
Strongly agree
27. The administrators and school staff are genuinely concerned about the parents and students at my school.
Strongly disagree
Disagree
Agree
Strongly agree
28. Transportation plays an important role in the involvement of my parent(s) at school concerning my academic progress.
Strongly disagree
Disagree
Agree
Strongly agree
29. Effective and consistent communication play an important role in the involvement of my parent(s) at school concerning my academic progress.
Strongly disagree
Disagree
Agree
Strongly agree
30. As a student, not having access to a computer, internet, or electronic device has a huge impact on parent(s) being actively engaged in my academic achievement in school (i.e., responding to emails from teachers and/or administrators).
Strongly disagree
Disagree
Agree
Strongly agree
31. My parent(s) are concerned about not having access to my assignments and academic progress via internet.
Strongly disagree
Disagree
Agree
Strongly agree
32. Having alternative systems in place for parents without internet access to promote parental engagement, should be essential for academic achievement.
Strongly disagree
Disagree
Agree
Strongly agree

33. Only a small percentage of African American parents represent their children at school events, including other minority groups.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
34. My parent(s) respond better to my coaches regarding sports activities, than my teachers regarding my academic progress in school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
35. Coaches are not appreciative of teachers who strive for students to be academically productive.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
36. Many coaches allow students to participate and engage in sports and/or extracurricular activities, regardless of behavior issues and/or failing grades.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
37. Many coaches ask teachers to water down assignments or grades, to improve the student-athletes GPA or grades in one or more subjects, for students who are not producing academically and/or failing.
    Strong disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
38. Many coaches try to undermine teachers by requesting grade changes for student-athletes, who are not performing academically from administrators, in order to be eligible to play in selected sports.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
39. I focus more on my athletic abilities, than I do on my academic achievement in school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly Agree
40. I respect my coaches, more than I respect my parents and/or teachers.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree

Agree
Strongly agree

41. Many coaches are more influential with students, than their parent(s) and/or teachers.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
42. African American students, primarily males, are used as bait to build high school, little league, and college sport programs, regardless of their deficiencies in their academic performance.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly Agree
43. African American parent(s) support their children more athletically, than they do academically.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
44. My teachers are supportive of student athletes at the school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
45. I have access to a computer.
    Always
    Sometimes
    Barely
    Never
46. My parent(s) or caregiver encourage me to do well in school academically.
    Always
    Sometimes
    Barely
    Never
47. My teachers care about me as a student.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
48. My friends encourage me to make good grades.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
49. My teachers encourage me to excel academically.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Agree
Strongly agree

50. My friends skip school.
    Always
    Sometimes
    Barely
    Never
51. I enjoy school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
52. I challenge myself in school academically.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
53. My parent(s) or guardian(s) completed high school.
    Yes
    No
54. One or both of my parents/caregivers has one or more jobs.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly Agree
55. My friends participate in gang activities.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
56. My friends are failing in one or more subjects academically in school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
57. My friends are constantly in trouble for their behavior in school.
    Always
    Often
    Sometimes
    Rarely
    Never
58. My friends participate in various sports and/or school activities, regardless of their poor academic performance in school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree

Agree
Strongly agree

59. My family takes vacations together.
    Always
    Often
    Sometimes
    Barely
    Never
60. I have friends who uses drugs and/or consume alcohol.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
61. My teachers provide additional assistance for struggling students.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
62. My parent(s)/caregiver(s) encourages me to attend college and/or attend a trade or technical college.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
63. I have internet access at home.
    Always
    Sometimes
    Barely
    Never
64. My teachers create an environment that is helpful for student to learn academically.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly Agree
65. I work hard to make and maintain good grades in school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
66. My parent(s)/guardian(s) attend PTA meetings, school activities, and/or parents' conferences.
    Always
    Often
    Sometimes
    Rarely
    Never

67. My friends influence my school choices.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
68. I am self-motivated to do well in school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
69. My teacher makes you feel comfortable when asking questions to understand the assignments or projects.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
70. I am enrolled in Dual Enrollment, Honors, or AP classes.
    Yes
    No
71. I skip school.
    Always
    Often
    Sometimes
    Barely
    Never
72. I use drugs and/or consumer alcohol.
    Always
    Often
    Sometimes
    Barely
    Never
73. I participate in gang activity.
    Always
    Often
    Sometimes
    Barely
    Never
74. I am constantly in trouble for my behavior and/or grades in school.
    Always
    Often
    Sometimes
    Rarely
    Never
75. My friends support me in making good grades.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree

Strongly agree

76. I have a part-time to help support my household.
    Yes
    No
77. I am actively involved in sports and/or extracurricular school activities.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
78. My friends are actively involved in sports and/or school activities.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
79. My teachers make class enjoyable.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
80. I complete my assignments, homework, and projects.
    Always
    Often
    Sometimes
    Rarely
    Never
81. Some of my friends have dropped out of school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
82. The school I attend is predominantly African American, including other mixed minority ethnic groups.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
83. Please feel free to leave any comments or suggestions to strengthen the parental involvement within our inner city schools for student academic achievement, primarily among the African American student athlete population, not just the sports or athletic events.

Appendix D

Coach Survey

Coach Survey

Student academics versus Student athletics: Why do most parents choose athletics over academics among African American students, primarily males, within inner city schools and neighborhoods?

1. Gender
   Male
   Female
2. Ethnicity
   African American/Black
   White/Caucasian
   Asian
   Native American/American Indian
   Hispanic
   Latino
   Mixed Ethnicity
   Other
3. What age group best describes you?
   18-30
   31-40
   41-50
   51-60
   65 or older
4. What is the primary language spoken in your sport or extracurricular activity?
   English
   Spanish
   French
   Creole
   Italian
   German
   Other
5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
   High school diploma/graduate
   Bachelor's degree (i.e., B.A., B.S.)
   Master's degree (i.e., M.A., M.S.)
   Specialist degree (i.e., Ed.S.)
   Doctorate (i.e., Ph.D., Ed.D.)
6. How many years have you been coaching?
   0-5 years
   5-10 years
   10-20 years
   20 or more years
7. What is your employment status?
   Full time
   Part-time
   Unemployed
   Retired

8. What is your marital status?
   Single
   Married
   Divorced
   Widowed
   In a domestic partnership
9. What is your approximate average household income?
   $0-$24,999
   $25,000-$49,999
   $50,000-$74,999
   $75,000-$99,999
   $100,000-$124,000
   $125,000-$149,000
   $150,000-$174,999
   $175,000-$199,999
   $200,000 and up
10. How many children in school, do you have in your household?
    0-3
    3-5
    5 or more
11. What grade level represents the children you coach?
    Elementary school
    Middle school
    High school
    College
12. The school host events that are community friendly and/or considerate of time for working parents and adults.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
13. As a coach, I am in contact with the student athletes' teachers, regarding their academic achievement and progress in school.
    Always
    Often
    Sometimes
    Barely
    Never
14. As a coach, I assist student athletes with their assignments, and/or homework.
    Always
    Often
    Sometimes
    Barely
    Never
15. Many coaches attend PTA, school events, or community events that assist student-athletes with effective academic preparation.
    Strongly disagree

Disagree
Agree
Strongly agree

16. As a coach, I am concerned about student athletes failing academic grades in one or more subjects.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
17. As a coach, I am concerned about the excessive discipline infractions and referrals, as a result of student athletes' disruptive behavior in school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
18. As a coach, I reward student athletes for good grades and productive behavior on his/her progress and report cards.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
19. Most coaches' educational background limit them from assisting student athletes with their assignments, homework, or projects.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
20. Many coaches show favoritism within various sports or extracurricular activities within the African American community and inner city school sports program.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
21. Many coaches are advocates for education, regarding student athletes in and out of school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly Agree
22. Many single parents are having challenges balancing their children's academic and school affairs.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
23. As a coach, I respond to calls, letters, or electronic communication concerning student athletes failing grades and/or disruptive behavior.

Always
Often
Sometimes
Barely
Never

24. I coach at a school or little league that is predominantly African American and/or mixed with other minority ethnic groups.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
25. The community and school I coach at is culturally mixed.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
26. Many coaches are genuinely concerned about student athletes' academic success in school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
27. Many coaches promote academic literacy and success for student athletes.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
28. The administrators and school staff are genuinely concerned about the parents and students at the school where I coach.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
29. Many parents speak more than one language on the team(s) I coach.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
30. Transportation plays an important role in the involvement of many parents at school concerning their children's academic progress.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
31. Effective and consistent communication play an important role in the involvement of many parents at school concerning their children's academic progress.
    Strongly disagree

Disagree
Agree
Strongly agree

32. Not having access to a computer, internet, or electronic device, has a huge impact on parents being actively engaged in their children's academic achievement (i.e., responding to emails from teachers and/or administrators).
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
33. Many parents are concerned about not having access to their children's assignments and academic progress via internet.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
34. Having alternative systems in place for parents without internet access to promote parental engagement, should be essential for academic achievement.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
35. Many parents of the students I coach, did not complete high school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
36. Many parents of the students I coach, experienced hardships in school as adolescents.
    Strongly Disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly Agree
37. Many parents of the students I coach, experienced disciplinary problems as adolescents in school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
38. Many parents of the students I coach, struggled academically as a child in school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly Agree
39. Many parents invest additional resources at home to assist in their children's academic achievement.
    Strongly disagree

Disagree
Agree
Strongly agree

40. Many parents encourage their children to good academically in school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
41. As a coach, I encourage student athletes to excel and perform academically.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
42. As a coach, I encourage student athletes to explore college opportunities, trade, or technical schools after graduation.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
43. Only a small percentage of African American parents represent their children at school events, including other mixed minority groups.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
44. Many parents respond better to their children's coaches regarding their sports activities, than the teachers regarding their children's academic success.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
45. Many coaches are not appreciative of teachers who strive for students to be academically productive.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
46. Many coaches allow students to participate and engage in sports and/or extracurricular activities regardless of behavior issues and/or academically failing.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
47. Many coaches ask teachers to water down assignments or grades, to improve the student athlete's GPA or grades in one or more subjects, for students who are not producing academically and/or failing.
    Strong disagree

Disagree
Agree
Strongly agree

48. Many coaches try to undermine teachers, by requesting grade changes for student athletes, who are not performing academically from administrators, in order to be eligible to play in selected sports.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
49. Many students focus more on their athletic abilities, than their academic achievements in school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly Agree
50. Many students respect their coaches, more than their parents and/or teachers.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
51. Many coaches are more influential with students, than their parents and/or teachers.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
52. African American students, primarily males, are used as bait to build high school, little league, and college sport programs, regardless of their deficiencies in their academic performance.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly Agree
53. African American parents support their children more athletically, than they do academically.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
54. Many teachers are supportive of student athletes at the school.
    Strongly disagree
    Disagree
    Agree
    Strongly agree
55. Please feel free to leave any comments or suggestions to strengthen the parental involvement within our inner city schools for student academic achievement,

primarily among the African American student athlete population, not just the sports or athletic events.

Appendix E

Interview Questions for Focus Group of Parents

Interview Questions for Focus Group of Parents

1. Why is the support greater within the African American, inner city schools and communities for sport events, than it is regarding academic achievements and accomplishments for students?
2. What are some of the reasons parents are not actively involved in the academic affairs of their children?
3. Are teachers and administrators genuinely concerned about your children?
4. Do you allow your child to participate in sports, regardless of his/her poor academic performance and/or behavior?
5. Do you stay in a neighborhood you feel is unsafe for your children?
6. Do you believe coaches have more influence than you as the parent?
7. How do you handle your children academically failing one or more subjects?
8. How do you handle your children behavioral dysfunctions at school?
9. Do you believe that your children's academic performance would change if they were not participating in sports?
10. Do you believe African American students, primarily males, are used as bait to promote the hidden agenda of many high school and college athletic programs?

• Please feel free to write or email me any additional feedback, comments, or suggestions for the improvement of parental participation within the African American community and inner city school sector.

Appendix F

Interview Questions for Focus Group of Students

Interview Questions for Focus Group of Students

What sport(s) do you participate in?

1. Do you believe that you sports is the only means for you to acquire a better living status after graduation?
2. Why do parents support sports events greater than they do academic achievements and accomplishments for their children?
3. Do coaches show favoritism during sport events?
4. Are coaches genuinely concerned about student athletes and their academic achievement status?
5. Do you believe that your grades would improve or deceased as a result of eliminating all sports activities?
6. Do you believe that coaches have more influence over students than their parents and teachers?
7. How do you handle peer pressure?
8. Are you planning on going to college or trade school after graduation?
9. Are your parents supportive of your decisions regarding academics and/or athletics?

• Please feel free to write or email me any additional feedback, comments, or suggestions for the improvement of parental participation within the African American community and inner city school sector.

Appendix G

Interview Questions for Focus Group of Teachers

Interview Questions for Focus Group of Teachers

1. Why is the support greater within the African American, inner city schools and communities for sport events, than it is regarding academic achievements and accomplishments for students?
2. What are some of the reasons parents are not actively involved in the academic affairs of their children?
3. Are teachers and administrators genuinely concerned about your children?
4. Do parents and/or coaches allow students to participate in sports, regardless of his/her poor academic performance and/or behavior?
5. Do you stay in a neighborhood you feel is unsafe for your children?
6. Do you believe coaches have more influence than you as the teacher?
7. How do you handle your students who are academically failing one or more subjects?
8. How do you handle who are behavioral dysfunctional at school?
9. Do you believe that student's academic performance would change if they were not participating in sports?
10. Do you believe African American students, primarily males, are used as bait to promote the hidden agenda of many high school and college athletic programs?

• Please feel free to write or email me any additional feedback, comments, or suggestions for the improvement of parental participation within the African American community and inner city school sector.

Appendix H

Interview Questions for Focus Group of Coaches

Interview Questions for Focus Group of Coaches

1. Why is the support greater within the African American, inner city schools and communities for sport events, than it is regarding academic achievements and accomplishments for students?
2. What are some reasons parents are not actively involved in the academic affairs of their children?
3. Do you believe that coaches are genuinely concerned about the academic achievement of students?
4. Do you allow students to participate in sports, regardless of his/her poor academic performance and/or behavior?
5. Do coaches show favoritism in sports programs within inner city schools?
6. Do you believe coaches have more influence than the parent and/or teacher?
7. How do you handle students who are academically failing one or more subjects?
8. How do you handle who are behavioral dysfunctional at school?
9. Do you believe that students' academic performance would change if they were not participating in sports?
10. Do you believe African American students, primarily males, are used as bait to promote the hidden agenda of many high school and college athletic programs?

• Please feel free to write or email me any additional feedback, comments, or suggestions for the improvement of parental participation within the African American community and inner city school sector.