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Aggressive and non-aggressive black female students: A comparative study of selected high school characteristics

Walter Cunningham
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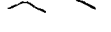
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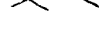
**Aggressive and nonaggressive Black female students: A
comparative study of selected high school characteristics**

Cunningham, Walter Lee, Ed.D.

University of Northern Iowa, 1991

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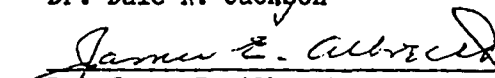


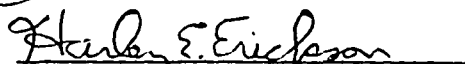
AGGRESSIVE AND NON-AGGRESSIVE BLACK FEMALE STUDENTS:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SELECTED HIGH SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

A Dissertation
Submitted
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

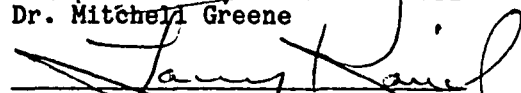
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December 1991

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AGGRESSIVE AND NON-AGGRESSIVE BLACK FEMALE STUDENTS:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SELECTED HIGH SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

An Abstract of a Dissertation

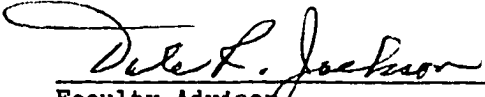
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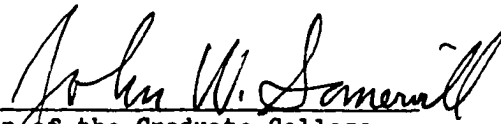
In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Approved:


Faculty Advisor


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December 1991

ABSTRACT

A major problem confronting education today is the at-risk student. In the opinion of some, the American school curriculum is a mirror of American society; and since our society has often oppressed the human potential and development of Black citizens, the school has done the same to many Black children. This writer was specifically concerned about the aggressive behavior of Black female students which places them more at-risk than the average Black student.

The purpose of this study was to analyze the characteristics of Black female high school students during their 9-12th grade school experience who were involved in aggressive behavior compared to those students who were not. A second purpose of the study was to propose intervention strategies that would affect the academic success of Black females who were potentially at-risk. The "place" Black females occupy is established by the interaction of multiple forces, including parents, teachers, peers, and societal norms.

To identify characteristics of Black female students, their school records were examined. Two groups were identified: (a) Students who exhibited aggressive behavior and (b) Students who were not aggressive. The characteristics included attendance, involvement in co-curricular activities, standardized test performance, grade point average, and family structure. To augment the information from student records, interviews were conducted with selected students from both groups to ascertain information

about the student's school experience, peer relationships, and family support. Data were summarized for females that exhibited aggressive behavior and those who did not. Frequencies and percentages were reported, and chi-square and the t test were used to further analyze the data. Policies, programs, and practices that schools could adopt and implement were suggested.

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Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Ruth, and to my mother, Susie. They have provided the inspiration and motivation for me to continue striving for excellence throughout my entire educational career.

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CHAPTER I
THE PROBLEM AND ITS COMPONENTS

Introduction

There is a dearth of information specifically about the Black female as an at-risk student. This writer's concerns are related to the aggressive behavior of some Black female high school students which places them more at risk than the average Black student. The aggressive behavior is often manifested in the form of verbal and physical offenses within the school setting which leads to suspension and sometimes expulsion.

In the work world, many people are terminated because of their inability to get along with others. Similarly, in a school setting, students are suspended or expelled because of their inability to get along with others. The suspension of students for physical offenses, no doubt represents the school's constant struggle to maintain order. Fighting policies and rules for physical offenses are usually strictly enforced and those who use violence to settle disputes are likely to face suspension rather than some lighter disciplinary action. Fighting is the most frequent cause for suspension of Black and White males and Black females (Billings, 1979). In Billings' study, 80 Black males, 86 Black females, 64 White males, and 21 White females were suspended for fighting. The Billings study was conducted in a desegregated school and suggests that fighting is a significant problem with Black females when there is a sizeable number of minority students in these settings. The

complexity of the problem is revealed when the reasons for fighting are examined. Black females will fight over boyfriends, gossip, aggressive looks, and about someone leaving their group to make new friends (Allen, 1964). It is not uncommon for two friends to fight when one of them begins to develop a relationship with a third individual whom the other does not like.

There is also a dearth of research that deals specifically with fighting in the schools, even though fighting, cheating, and stealing were selected by teachers as among the most serious offenses committed by students (Wooldridge & Richman, 1985). Fighting can be a very serious disruption of the educational process.

This writer has identified Black females as a focus of study due to his experience in a particular school setting where they were involved in considerably more fights than were other students, reflecting Billings' findings that, in some cases, they are involved in more fights than Black and White males (1979). Fights that involve Black females are difficult to stop and usually involve more than two participants. Many times, other females, boyfriends, and sometimes their parents, are involved in these confrontations.

There is a considerable amount of educational time lost when students are involved in these confrontations. These disputes can persist throughout the entire high school career of a student, moving from verbal to physical confrontations and disrupting the educational process for the participants and other students. Students who are involved in aggressive behavior do not seem to

have education as their number one priority. However, this could be changed if educators and parents were made aware of some of the underlying causes of disruptive behavior in schools. It seems possible to improve the school experience for Black females and reduce some of their aggressive behavior.

This is very important due to the role that Black females have as influential members in the Black family, which have for many years relied on a strong female for leadership. In many family settings, the Black female is often the dominant force that holds the family together. A combination of factors has increased the proportion of Black households headed by females. The percentage of female-headed families among Blacks increased 130% in the last decade. The proportion of Black children living with both parents declined in the last decade, and currently only 42% of children in Black families are residing with both parents (Staples, 1987). These statistics highlight the importance of educators and parents attending to the needs of potentially at-risk Black female students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze the characteristics of Black female high school students who were involved in aggressive behavior compared to those Black female high school students who were not. A second purpose of the study was to propose intervention strategies that would affect the academic success of Black female students who were potentially at-risk.

Clarification of the Problem

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are provided for terms which had special applications for this study.

Academic Achievement: The academic performance of students as measured by their cumulative grade point average (GPA) in high school and their achievement as measured by the Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED). ITED data consist of the percentile rank of ITED composite scores.

Aggressive Behavior: Behavior exhibited by students resulting in verbal or physical conflicts.

At-Risk Student: A student with school experiences and non-school experiences which negatively affect her academic achievement and retention in school.

Fate Control: The degree to which individuals feel they have power over their personal destinies.

Fighting: Involvement in a physical confrontation.

High School: High school consists of grades 9 through 12.

In-School Characteristics: A student's school experience related to attendance, co-curricular activities, academic achievement, and the student's attitude about school.

Non-School Characteristics: A student's experience outside the school setting related to family structure, home environment, and peer relationships.

Non-Offender: A student who was involved in no more than one physical conflict during her high school experience. (If the student was involved in a conflict situation, it was not initiated by her.)

Offender: A student who was involved in two or more physical conflicts during her high school experience. (When involved in a conflict situation, it was usually initiated by her.)

Non-Persister: A student who does not continue steadily toward the goal of completing her education.

Persister: A student who continues steadily toward the goal of completing her education.

Delimitations

This study focused on the analysis of the high school records of Black female students who graduated from one high school in an urban school district. This study was limited in the following ways:

1. Only the in-school and non-school characteristics of Black females were studied.
2. Only the obtainable and consistent information available from student records, and information obtained from students through follow-up interviews was used.
3. The record keeping over the students' high school experience may have been varied due to inconsistency in record keeping practices of different counselors.

Conceptual Framework

A review of literature suggests that there are in-school and non-school characteristics associated with Black female aggressive behavior in school. These characteristics may be visible in curricular and co-curricular activities, social status, and attitudes of students. The non-school characteristics may be visible in the family structure, parental support, peer relationships, and other characteristics of a student's experience outside the school setting. The literature also suggests that Black female educational experiences are different from those of other students due to the lack of opportunities for recognition in the school community.

In-School Characteristics

The school curriculum reflects American society, and Black females are left out more than any sub-group of students. Harper (1977) stated: "The traditional American school curriculum is no more than a mirror of American society; and just as the society has served to oppress the human potential and development of Black citizens, the school has done the same to many poor Black children" (p. 134).

In general, the Black child sees a curriculum that reflects the dominant culture or a curriculum that does not mirror the positive attributes of his/her race and culture. Subsequently, one begins to perceive oneself as powerless, worthless, and incapable of reaching the unreachable star. The same situation prevails in co-curricular activities. The Black female is often excluded from

more co-curricular activities than any other sub-group (Bickel & Qualls, 1979). This exclusion, as observed by the writer, leads to frustration and is often manifested in the students' aggressive behavior. Aggressive behavior also limits the students' social mobility.

Teachers and other educational authorities profess to support social mobility, and some children achieve such mobility through education. However, most children also encounter powerful pressures to conform to expectations of persons of their ascribed status. In subtle ways, most Black females are encouraged to assume stereotypical roles of Black women in American society, rather than to strive for alternatives (Grant, 1984). Even when the combined effect of race and gender on schooling have been explored, Black females have often received less attention than any other group. This is also true for Black women's experience in other areas of social life. Black females usually have higher levels of academic performance in desegregated schools than Black males. However, Black females are more socially isolated in desegregated classes than Black males. They receive less teacher and peer attention and have less social power (Grant, 1984).

A positive attitude toward school also has an effect on academic achievement. If one could help aggressive Black females develop a positive attitude toward school, this could help alleviate some of their frustrations and aggressive behaviors, and aid in developing the Black females' self-esteem. The building of self-esteem is

very important in eliminating aggressive behavior, and every avenue should be explored to enhance it. However, it is difficult to have a positive attitude if one is excluded from broad participation in the educational environment of the school.

Timberlake (1981) attempted to determine if attitudes of persisters and nonpersisters were different toward school, school work, teachers, and peers. She discovered that nonpersisters were more likely to be engaged in recreational activities outside of school. The persisters were more likely to participate in church activities and to be employed while attending school. Persisters held more favorable attitudes toward school than nonpersisters. This may be a contributing factor towards their relative academic success. These data were consistent with the general literature regarding attitudes; that is, in general, a positive attitude increases the chances for success. Therefore, a positive attitude toward school work and school in general are factors which aid the persistence of Black females to secure the high school diploma (Timberlake, 1981).

Non-School Characteristics

It is important that the role of the parents not be overlooked in helping the Black female to obtain a high school diploma and reduce aggressive behavior. In some cases, the lack of supportive parents can be a major barrier to success for the Black female. This is particularly true when one is talking about the physically aggressive Black female. Family life for some Black females is

almost non-existent at the very time that Black families are facing problems of staggering dimensions. Problems such as teenage pregnancy, unemployment, alcoholism, depression, homicide, poverty, and school failures are disproportionately more likely to affect Black than White families. Black females need a strong, stable family. Theorists and researchers have suggested that the following attributes are crucial in any definition of family strength and stability: a strong economic base, a high degree of religious orientation, achievement orientation, adaptability of family roles, strong kinship bonds, and family structure (Beatty, 1986). However, family strength is not contingent on family structure. Strong families can exist in many forms. Strong families are not families without problems, but they are families that can successfully cope with their problems or deal with crises.

A strong family is also very important for Black females when it comes to developing achievement related personality traits. These traits are forged through socialization experiences in family settings. Cummings (1977) discussed "fate control," which refers to the degree to which individuals feel they have power over their personal destinies. Individuals possessing a high degree of fate control see a direct connection between their own strivings and dispensation of rewards. Individuals with a weak sense of fate control may be fatalistic and pessimistic about their chances for success in life and pattern their achievement orientation and behaviors accordingly.

Family life does exert a weak to moderate influence in the determination of variation in fate control. Among all the facets of family life included in the Cummings' study, it appears that exposure to an occupationally successful or unsuccessful family role model and exposure to variations in educational attainment aspirations and parental praise are the most important determinants of variations in fate control among Black adolescents. The data strongly suggest that for Black males, the family setting is a weak, limited and unsystematic determinant of variations in fate control. For Black females, however, the family appears to be a rather strong and influential source of variation in fate control. The percentage of variance in fate control explained by the family variable for Black females was almost three times greater than the total explained variance for Black males.

Five family variables appear most important: occupational prestige, achievement aspirations, parental praise, educational attainment aspirations, and family size. The study strongly suggests that for Black males, feelings of fate control are forged and shaped by socialization experiences outside the family settings; for Black females, however, the family does appear to be a significant determinant of variation in fate control (Cummings, 1977).

The family socialization process is very important when it comes to the disenfranchised Black female. In order to alleviate some of the problems associated with aggressive Black females, one will

have to work with their families early in their educational career to help them develop more fate control.

Working with some Black families to develop more fate control will not be an easy task. Usually Black females who demonstrate aggressive behavior have substantial conflict with their families. These young Black females are reluctant even to discuss their family problems. They do not spend much time together with the family. They do not eat together or attend any social function together. Some Black females have a better relationship with their peers than they do with family members. These females develop strong relationships with some peers and find it very difficult to terminate them. It is also very difficult for them to make friends outside their own groups. Some Black females will fight about someone leaving the group and making new friends.

Allen (1964) learned that adolescent Black females from impoverished disrupted families are very difficult to help. There need to be services that will help reach troubled females before they begin to shoplift, street fight, and have illegitimate children. Allen stated that there also need to be some programs that will work with the whole family. The parents need help and guidance with child rearing and home management and finally, Allen stated that more could be done in our schools.

Need for the Study

In racially mixed high schools, Black female students are often not involved in the mainstream of the curricular and

co-curricular programs. This non-involvement often leads to a sense of alienation and aggressive behavior resulting in verbal and physical conflicts. The occurrence of these conflicts touches the school environment and the uninterrupted progression of students through their school experience.

This phenomenon is particularly apparent in racially mixed schools where the minority student is highly representative. If a relationship can be shown between certain characteristics of Black females and their involvement or non-involvement in aggressive behavior, insight may be gained into the curricular and co-curricular needs of these students and their academic achievement.

The quest to help Black females who are alienated from the system has created a need for a study that would focus on the characteristics of the aggressive Black female. There is a need to help reduce the number of Black females who are excluded or alienated from school because of such aggressive behavior. This study may provide insight into characteristics of Black females who have demonstrated aggressive behavior and may enable educators to take steps to rectify the conditions. This will enable some Black females to become a part of the school environment and return to the mainstream of society. This would help build self-esteem among some Black females while providing a more orderly school environment. Should a more orderly environment ensue, valuable administrative time could be allocated to other educational tasks.

Design Components of the Study

Research Questions

The following research questions were designed to study in-school and non-school characteristics of students who were involved in aggressive behavior (offenders) compared to those who were not (non-offenders) during their high school experience. These questions were focused on data obtained from school records.

In-School Characteristics

Research Question 1: Was there a difference in the attendance of students who were involved in aggressive behavior and those who were not?

Research Question 2: Was there a difference in the participation of students in co-curricular activities who were involved in aggressive behavior and those who were not?

Research Question 3: Was there a difference in the achievement test scores of students who were involved in aggressive behavior and those who were not?

Research Question 4: Was there a difference in the cumulative grade point average of students who were involved in aggressive behavior and those who were not?

Non-School Characteristics

Research Question 5: Was there a difference in aspects of the family structure of students who were involved in aggressive behavior and those who were not?

For the purpose of obtaining information that was not available from student records, interviews were conducted with selected offenders and non-offenders to elicit observation about in-school and non-school characteristics, (particularly about students' school experience), peer relationships, and family support.

Methodology of the Study

The case study method was selected as a research strategy because it can accommodate a wide variety of quantitative and qualitative information. The approach in this study is similar to historical research, except that the subject of the case study is a contemporary event. In this approach, additional sources of information are examined, including on-site observations, direct measurements, and interviews. Therefore, this study does not provide for external validity because the findings cannot be generalized to the population at large.

Data Collection

The study was primarily a descriptive analysis of student records of Black female high school graduates over a seven-year period in a midwestern city with a population of 75,000. Records of all Black females who graduated between 1983-1989 from a public high school in this midwestern city were examined. Records were sorted first into offenders and non-offenders by examining disciplinary records in the school district office. Information was recorded for high school (9-12). A data form (see Appendix A)

was used to record information about family structure, attendance, standardized test scores, co-curricular activities, and grade point.

In a pilot study (1987) five characteristics emerged from the analysis of student records: (a) standardized test scores (ITED), (b) attendance information, (c) parent information, (d) co-curricular activities, and (e) the students' cumulative grade point. In attempting to establish a profile of an offender, records of 12 students who were known offenders were examined. Six of the students had graduated and six were still in school. Four of the six students still in school were previously expelled for fighting. It was notable that only one of the 12 Black females was involved in any co-curricular activities. Only three of the 12 lived with both parents. There were only three who had a grade point above 2.00, although eight were capable intellectually, as indicated by their ITED scores. In the area of attendance, eight of the 12 averaged over 12 days absent per year.

By contrast, the same records of nine Black female seniors (1986-87) who were never involved in a fight were examined. One difference was apparent in the extent of participation in co-curricular activities. Seven of the nine were highly involved, and the other two were slightly involved in co-curricular activities. Six of the nine non-offenders lived with both parents; the other three lived with their mother only, but their mothers were highly supportive of their daughter and school. All nine had grade point averages above a 2.00; six of them had a grade point better than

2.5 and three of them graduated as honor students. Their attendance records were considerably better than the females who were offenders. This seemed to indicate that the Black female students who were a part of the school and had supportive parents were more likely to be non-offenders. The Black females who did not have strong family ties, who had problems with their attendance and citizenship, and who were not involved in co-curricular activities, seemed to be at high-risk to become offenders.

Data Analysis

Data were summarized for Black females who were offenders and those who were not offenders. Data were arranged in a table format and frequencies, percentages, totals, and means were reported. Chi-square was used to compare frequencies of offenders and non-offenders on each characteristic. The t test was used to compare means of the two groups. Each statistic was computed by use of the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). The .05 level of significance was used in this study. To augment the data and add clarification and depth to the study the case study method was used to gather additional information through student interviews.

Organization Design

This study is divided into four chapters. Chapter I includes introduction, purpose of the study, clarification of the problem, delimitations, conceptual framework, need for the study, design components of the study, and data analysis. Chapter II presents a review of related literature. Chapter III contains the methodology,

analysis, and findings of the study. In addition an analysis of the interviews held with students selected at random from each year of the study is included. Chapter IV includes a summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Several categories have been identified that focus on the characteristics of the Black female and her success in the school environment. For the purposes of this study, these categories are self-esteem and academic achievement, dropouts, suspensions, assertiveness training, and family life. While there is a dearth of research on the Black female in general, particularly, research about aggressive Black females, their families and other characteristics addressed in this study, and their impact on the academic achievement of these students, there is related material that will help to explain the characteristics of Black females and their involvement in the educational setting. The characteristics reviewed will focus principally on in-school characteristics and on non-school school characteristics.

In-School Characteristics

Self-Esteem and Academic Achievement

In the development of any student's potential for success, one's self-esteem and academic achievement are critical factors in the process. The fact that Black females have had a different experience in the school environment has had an effect on their self-esteem and academic performance. Grant (1984) completed 20-30 hours of ethnographic research by observing six desegregated first grade classrooms. Teachers in these classrooms rated Black

females' performance and skills as average or slightly below. However, in the area of social relationships, the Black females were rated high. Grant indicated that in the area of social relationships, the teachers identified Black females as mature, self-sufficient, and helpful. The teachers reported Black females as less cognitively mature than socially mature. This was observed when the children were at recess. The Black females were preoccupied with playing adult roles and were divided into different roles as they played house. They cooked, groomed hair, applied makeup, and prepared for dates with imaginary boyfriends. In subtle ways, teachers encourage Black females to pursue social contacts, rather than those activities which emphasize high academic achievement. Grant discussed how Black females received average to great amounts of day-to-day praise, but never the noteworthy type of praise reserved almost exclusively for White females. Teachers referred to White females as competent and trusted aides and assigned them high responsibility tasks such as the tutoring of peers or orienting new students. In the observed classroom, 18 of the 22 special assignments given to students were assigned to White females. Conversely the kinds of praise given to Black females, and their exclusion from special assignments, suggest that teachers did not view them as their most able students, although teachers gave them routine praise.

In each White teacher's classroom, one Black female almost always received the most praise. These Black females served as a

go-between, social integrator, or as a conduit of information from teacher to peers and peers to teacher. This is a role that tends to be played by Black females and not by children of other races and gender status. The Black female was uniquely suited for the go-between role due to the freedom they had from teacher monitoring (Hare, 1979).

The Black male, however, was monitored quite closely by the teacher. Parental socialization also contributed to the Black females' go-between role. The extent to which teachers in Grant's study encouraged the go-between role and the extent the role evolved from parental socialization which stresses social skills and loyalty to peers is unclear. Teachers seemed to reinforce the role. Five of the six teachers observed called on Black females almost twice as frequently as on any other race and gender group to help peers in nonacademic matters. Grant provided evidence that Black females' classroom roles differed from those of other children. Black females' everyday schooling experiences seemed more likely to steer them toward traditional domestic roles of Black women rather than toward more academic alternatives. They had high educational and career aspirations in spite of their apparent lack of opportunities to seek them (Grant, 1984).

Black males and females have high educational and career aspirations. There is no difference between the Black male and female in their educational and career aspirations at the high school level. On the other hand, there is a difference between

White males and females at the high school level. In addition, there is a difference at the college level, where the gap between the Black females' aspirations and that of the Black male is similar to the gap between the White female and the White male. The school is a microcosm of the society. Therefore, the racial and sex role stereotypes and biases prevalent in the society are often found in the school. The school environment may reflect those societal values that typically place male over female and Whites over non-Whites. This phenomena often has an effect on Black females' academic achievement (Scott-Jones & Clark, 1986). It was also pointed out by Jones and Clark that the socialization practice of Black families are relatively egalitarian. In Black families, a great deal of overlap exists between characteristics considered appropriate for males and those considered appropriate for females. Black children of both sexes are socialized to be independent and to achieve.

Additional research solidly established the fact that teachers' expectations of students vary as a function of the student's race. Teachers looked for and reinforced achievement-oriented behavior in White students more often than in Black students. Teachers were more likely to give White students praise and attention and held higher performance standards for White students than for Black students. The data supporting the fact that teachers treat boys and girls differently were consistent with those data supporting the fact that teachers' expectations vary according to the race of

students (Jones & Clark, 1986; Brophy, 1981; Byalick & Bersoff, 1974).

Harper (1977) discussed the need for the individual to have self-esteem before he/she can move comfortably toward an actualized learning experience. Because they are both Black and poor, many Black children find it difficult to meet their need to achieve self-esteem within the traditional educational structure. Moreover, a child's self-esteem is dependent upon a strong, positive self-concept.

Harper discussed how many students engaged in their own informal curriculum. Examples included:

- Smoking seminars in the school toilets
- Card playing
- After school "rap" sessions on the block
- Reciting Black poetry in the form of "playing the dozens"
- Engaging in street vandalism
- Playing a variety of sports (mainly basketball and football)
- Playing humorous games with the teacher to get the approval and laughter of peers and classmates. (Harper, 1977, p. 135)

This curriculum may have helped some Blacks tolerate school, but at the same time, it handicapped Black students in being able to succeed in another world outside their own culture.

Harper developed the following ten suggestions emphasizing the promotion of the achievement level of Black children. These suggestions required higher expectations and higher levels of performance and a sense of racial pride and human worth.

1. Encouraging cleanliness and neatness. The school can provide health education and health facilities that are often lacking in the child's home environment.

2. Sufficient nutritional intake. Some Black families may lack education or knowledge of proper diets or they may lack sufficient money for continual food supply. Proper nutritional intake is important to the child's health and school performance.

3. Adequate attention by teachers. Some Black students often feel worthless and slighted because of lack of attention from teachers. Teachers, as well as counselors, should give individual attention to Black youth who are unmotivated in order to help them realize their talent and potential.

4. Courses reflecting Black culture and history. When Black students can read about Blacks of the past and present, they can begin to identify themselves with the positive contributions and attributes of African Americans. Specialized Black studies courses alone cannot suffice; there is need to integrate every general course with the contributions and the culture of African Americans.

5. Responsibility. Black students should be given greater responsibility for their own behavior, for their learning and the learning of others.

6. Out-of-class involvement. There are many activities outside the classroom setting in which Black students can become involved, learn from, and feel good about. Teachers and counselors should identify activities that individual Black students can do well and encourage their involvement.

7. Community exposure. Education takes place not only in the school, nor is the curriculum limited to the activities of the

campus. Black students need to learn from and about community resources inside and outside their immediate community. Black educators, lawyers, doctors, civic workers, and craftsmen can be involved in the school as speakers and as models for Black children.

8. Positive reinforcement for achievement. The school should work to decrease the negative influences that lead to failure and the promotion of alienation and low self-esteem. Conversely, it should increase positive reinforcement through individual awards and individual recognition for the purpose of building self-esteem.

9. Equal opportunity curricular experiences. The tragedy is that many students are excluded from educational experiences because of a lack of money. This not only robs many poor Black students of an equal chance to learn, but it also lowers their self-esteem when their peers know that they are too poor to pay a fee for an educational experience.

10. School pride. Black students should know of the prideful history and accomplishments of their school and how Black people contributed to its development. Pictures of outstanding Black Americans should also be prevalent in various parts of the school.

The underlying assumption of Harper's research is that children who grow up in different sociocultural milieus approach educational institutions in different ways. Two examples follow:

1. Children from different groups emphasize different aspects of their social and psychological environment in their efforts to cope and achieve educationally.

2. People from different backgrounds use different motivations to attain similar goals. Educators will have to develop strategies to address these motivational differences.

Sleeter and Grant (1986) emphasized that young people should leave school empowered to take charge of their destinies. This needs to happen in a society in which the efforts of many have been characterized by failure, poverty, and despair. Children must learn to formulate problems and evaluate potential solutions based on their own life experiences. This means, for example, that female students should help define the issues worth studying in a history course. As the issues worthy of study are defined, students should help to design processes for studying them, and they should help to evaluate their learning or their solutions to problems. Sleeter and Grant also supported a more rigorous curriculum for students who are members of disenfranchised groups. A disproportionate number of such students are placed in vocational and other non-academic curricula.

Despite the fact that researchers have found school curricula to be racist, sexist, and classist, most research does not mention ways to address these biases. Content should help disenfranchised groups understand the world around them and the circumstances in which they live. Content is usually selected with little reference to the lives of the students who will be learning it. Thus, the traditional curricula tend to impose a view that conflicts with the students' view or that is totally unrelated to their lives.

The conflict of the students' views with the focus of the curriculum leads a number of students to drop out because they are bored and believe that school activities and classes are a waste of time (Sleeter & Grant, 1986; Tidwell, 1988).

Dropouts

The dropout problem is critical, complex, and multidimensional. The problem of dropouts became a national concern in the 1960s because of the need for a highly technologically oriented society. According to Jones (1977), of the 900,000 students projected to drop out in the decade 1970-80, 85% were poor and Black. In 1980, Ebony Magazine indicated that 22.4% of the Black population (1977-1978) ages 16-34 were not enrolled in or did not graduate from high school. However, the participation in high school has continued to increase throughout this century. To illustrate, the proportion of 14-17 year-olds enrolled in high school increased from 11% in 1900 to 94% in 1978 (Grant & Eiden, 1980). But recent evidence from several states indicates that this trend may be reversing. Enrollment data for Ohio show that the number of dropouts has increased 15% from the 1975-76 school year to the 1978-79 school year (Kaeser, 1980). In California, the attrition rate between the 9th and 12th grades increased from 12% in 1967 to 22% in 1976 (Camp, 1980).

Although there is evidence that dropping out of school in some states appears to be increasing among White youths, historically, the problem has been more prevalent among minorities,

particularly Blacks and Hispanics. Recent data illustrates that widespread racial differences remain. Among all youth 16 to 24 years of age, 12.6% were high school dropouts in 1989. For Whites, the proportion was slightly lower (12.4%); for minorities it was higher (13.8% for Blacks, 33% for Hispanics) (Educational Research Service, 1991).

Black and other minorities bear the brunt of being poor and uneducated. There is a direct correlation between the education level and unemployment (Tannenbaum, 1966; Wallace, 1974). Of even greater concern is the disproportionate number of Black females who leave school at a time in our highly technical society when dropping out leads to definite frustration because of poor future prospects for employment. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data (1991) show greater unemployment among Black and other minority females age 16-19 than any other group. Unless something is done to turn this situation around, the economic dependency of Black females upon their parents will increase and eventually be transferred to society (Ladner, 1972).

Many studies have focused on Black children's failure in school, but most have failed to explain how and why other Black children have been successful. Mackler (1970) and Edwards (1976) discussed the need to study academic success of Black students. Mackler stated: "Little is known about the process of academic success in deprived areas. Less is known about who succeeds and how" (p. 211). Edwards believes that the Black students who have completed

high school have the ability to cope with a multitude of unfavorable conditions.

Timberlake (1982) discussed how some students persist and achieve a diploma, even though they have to cope with unfavorable conditions. The major purpose of Timberlake's study was to examine the differences and/or similarities between the Black female secondary students identified as potential dropouts who persisted in their efforts to secure a high school diploma, and the Black female secondary student who was identified as a potential dropout, and, indeed, did drop out of high school. This study was conducted on 66 Black females, and the criteria used to determine whether students were potential dropouts included those who had: (a) been suspended from school and/or separated from school by administrative referral on the secondary level, (b) accumulated a high rate of illegal absenteeism on the secondary level (35 or more days in the 1976-77 or 1977-78 school year), or (c) been referred at least three times for discipline problems in the 1976-77 or 1977-78 school year. Statistical analysis utilizing chi-square, revealed that the following factors were significant: age of subject, participation in activities outside of school, involvement in church, and employment status of the subject. A significant difference was found between the age distribution of the two groups. Approximately 79% of persisters were in the age range of 17 to 18, as compared to approximately 52% of non-persister. Nearly five times as many non-persisters were age 16 than persisters.

Consistent with other studies, these results support the hypothesis that potential school dropouts are not apt to be active in extracurricular activities (Snepp, 1956; Sullivan, 1964; Walsh, 1966; Tidwell, 1988). However, the difference in participation of persisters and non-persisters in non-school-related activities held in the school building during the evening hours was significant; i.e., non-persisters were more likely to be engaged in evening recreational programs than persisters. This may be explained in part by the fact that a significant number of persisters were employed after school hours as compared with a small number of non-persisters. The data further revealed that persisters' participation in church activities was significantly different from non-persisters. The persisters (63.6%) participated with a greater frequency than the non-persister (27.3%). Persisters indicated that church provided support by engendering feelings of self-worth and dignity.

Regarding employment patterns, it was found that persisters tended to be employed in greater numbers than non-persisters. Perhaps employment supports persistence by alleviating the financial strain experienced by many poor students and their families. Matthews (1962) cited financial strain as a prevalent factor in causing youths to leave school prematurely. Much of the literature on dropouts identified the following factors as those which influenced persistence: students involved in extra-curricular activities, the level of education of the student's mother, the

employment status of the head of the household, whether a student's closest friend attended school, the person with whom the student lives, and the student's parental status. However, in Timberlake's study, these variables did not significantly contribute to or detract from Black female student persistence.

Patterns of behavior and activities within school have also been used to predict likelihood of dropping out. Poor achievement in high school was often, but not always, indicative of dropout behavior (Bachman, Green, & Wirtanen, 1971; Howell & Frese, 1982). Differences in other activities in high school also distinguished between dropouts and graduates (Combs & Cooley, 1968). Even early problems with repeating grades and absenteeism in the primary grades have been used to predict dropping out (Howell & Frese, 1982; Stroup & Robins, 1972). Several other factors have been linked to dropout behavior. Early school separation often appeared to be related to early marriage and pregnancy (Howell & Frese, 1982; Stroup & Robins, 1972).

Tidwell (1988) conducted interviews with 374 urban high school dropouts. Female and male respondents from five ethnic groups gave replies to closed and open-ended questions concerning (a) dropout history, (b) reasons for leaving school, (c) feelings about various high school experiences, (d) past and present activities, (e) academic and general future plans, (f) reflections about school, and (g) recommendations for school improvement.

The specific reasons given for leaving school before graduating were of five types: boredom with school, feeling that school activities and classes were a waste of time, failure to accumulate necessary school credits, poor grades, and numerous home and family responsibilities. The number one reason for dropping out was "poor grades" for all groups except Blacks, who cited family reasons most often. Male and female Black dropouts differed somewhat in their responses to questions about school and education. In this study, Black females were less likely to talk to principals or counselors about educational concerns (Tidwell, 1988).

Increased attention has been focused on students who leave school early and their reasons for leaving. It appears that the attitudes students have toward school and the amount of student social integration in the school environment are related to early school departure. Dropouts nearly always experienced alienation from their school, home, neighborhood, and society in general. Such perceptions were grounded in the students' belief that they had suffered great injustices because of their race, language, culture, or religion. Potential dropouts sometimes had inferior social and communication skills and rarely participated in extra-curricular activities. Rates of delinquency were far higher among dropouts than among those who remained in school. Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds were more likely to leave school prematurely than were students from high socioeconomic status. Dropouts faced additional problems because they often were judged

negatively by others as well as themselves. Students who left high school before graduating were more likely to experience racial discrimination, to receive disapproval from parents, friends, and society, and think less of themselves.

Zane's research (1988) on young women utilized interviews with six groups from various ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. There were 75 females, aged 13-19, living in Philadelphia. This research brings together a collective voice of the pain and pleasures of everyday life in and out of school for these 75 females. More than half of the teens believed female students were treated differently than male students by teachers and principals. When girls were disruptive (i.e., talking back to teachers or getting into verbal or physical fights), they were allegedly more severely punished by teachers and principals than boys because they were violating certain behavioral norms. The teens perceived Asians and Whites as quieter and smarter. Blacks and Hispanics were perceived as students who liked to fight. They were perceived as "wild," so teachers responded to them differently. The teachers' ethnic background did not make a difference. Asian and White students were favored and Blacks and Hispanics were ignored. The students expressed the need for caring principals, teachers, and parents. They believed classes needed to be smaller. The classroom size seemed to be a major determinant of whether females participated in class discussion. The larger the class, the more likely it was that females remained silent and experienced feelings of isolation

and exclusion. These feelings often reinforced a sense of powerlessness and low self-esteem. The teens discussed low self-esteem and how they were simply bored or frustrated with school and preferred to spend their time outside the school. They also cited incidences of racial discrimination and negative treatment toward Black and Hispanic students as reasons for leaving school (Zane, 1988).

Suspension

Research suggests that racism in the referral process makes it appear that Blacks exhibit more physically aggressive behavior. Aquila and First (1980) found that Black and White students tended to commit school rule offenses in equal numbers, but that Black youngsters were referred in far greater numbers for a broad range of offenses. These offenses shared an important common denominator: the adult in whose presence the misbehavior occurred made a subjective judgment concerning whether the act was an offense. Referrals for these "discretionary offenses" were, in the authors' view, the underlying cause for racial disproportionality in school suspension (Aquila & First, 1980).

The tendency to view suspensions as a solution to student behavior problems has always been an issue. During and after desegregation, it becomes even more pronounced. It is important that teachers and administrators develop some understanding of cultural and ethnic differences. The absence of this understanding

appears to be one of the causes minority youngsters are suspended.

Streitmatter (1986) stated:

The equitable implementation of due process for all students may not be an issue. Regardless of a student's racial/ethnic membership, the procedure is consistent. The question, however, may deal with the manifestation of bias; that is, which students are originally identified as rule breaker? (p. 140)

Only by examining why students are identified as candidates for serious disciplinary action may the school monitor, to some degree, the equitable treatment of students regardless of gender or racial/ethnic group membership. The lack of equitable treatment could possibly create an atmosphere of hostility. This could also create an environment for minority students to be physically aggressive if they perceive that they are in a hostile environment. Pollard (1979) stated: "It has been suggested that poor performance on the part of Black school children is not so much a function of limited ability as it is a response to a hostile educational system" (p. 189). If the educational setting for Black females is to be improved, elements of the environment perceived to be hostile will have to be eliminated. This environment may not be the major cause of aggressiveness, but it is a factor that must be considered for the improvement of the educational setting.

One philosophical assumption to consider is the belief that Blacks are expected to act in an aggressive manner, so in fact, they do act in such a manner. Hanna (1978) stated: "Aggression also occurs because it is expected. In a self-fulfilling prophecy, some Whites emit signals suggesting Blacks fight, and some Blacks

pick up the gauntlet" (p. 6). African Americans have been described as aggressive, unindustrious, rebellious, hostile, and unintelligent (Wooldrige & Richman, 1985). These researchers described how teachers were consistent in their concern for controlling the anti-social behavior of gifted White males, but accepted such behavior from gifted Black males, since Blacks have been perceived as being hostile and aggressive. It is possible that the expectations of White teachers were simply confirmed because, "that is just the way they are." In other words, punishing Blacks for this behavior will not change them. When teachers bypass misbehaving students because they think that is the way they are, the illusion can be given that this behavior is acceptable. This type of behavior at the intermediate or secondary level will eventually cause some Black females and other students problems. Participation in fighting, since this is unacceptable, will lead to the exclusion of some Black females who are already alienated from the system.

In the early 1970s, the Southern Regional Council, supported by the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Foundation, released the findings of its large scale survey of school learners, and concluded that a significant number of children were not dropping out of school, but were actually being pushed out by a combination of forces. The institutional rules of the school were being used as resources for retaining the school to its prior racially segregated status (Billings, 1979). The data from Billings' research has limited generalizability because the data were gathered from a single county

school district in the Southeast, and the specific offenses resulting in suspension were available for the 1977-78 school year only. However, when suspensions are distributed consistently in a way that yields a disproportionate number of occurrences involving minority children, one may ask whether one is confronted with ordinary problems or decorum, or with actual challenges to the authority of the school.

Billings indicated that student fights of various types represent the occasion for suspension in more cases involving Black and White males and Black females than any other single offense. The number of suspensions of Black females for these purposes is marginally lower than the number involving Black males, but higher than the number recorded for either White males or females. Smoking is the offense most often committed by White females, while the three remaining groups find themselves most often in trouble because of fighting. Billings also pointed out that the racial pattern of these offenses differed, with Blacks being involved in a wider range of authority defiance offenses than Whites. This "non-consent" posture taken by Blacks accounted for their higher suspension rates.

Assertiveness Training

To reduce the suspension rates, assertiveness training has proven to be effective. Assertiveness training may help Black females to express their anger more appropriately. Research with White participants has shown that assertiveness training increased interpersonal competence, self-confidence, self-esteem and perceived

self-control, and that it decreased fear and anxiety (Alberti & Emmons, 1970; Bower & Bower, 1976; Lefevre & West, 1981). A number of authors (Alberti & Emmons, 1970; Bower & Bower, 1976; Lange & Jakubowski, 1976) have postulated that assertiveness training will result in changed attitudes toward self, including increased self-esteem.

Most literature on assertiveness training has focused on groups other than Blacks. Donald Cheek (1976), however, has devised a model of assertiveness training that takes the Black social perspective into account in dealing with interracial assertiveness. He contended that ideas about "appropriate behavior" such as standing up for rights and really expressing feelings are not automatically adopted by Blacks, that the message of assertiveness is heard and defined differently by Blacks than by Whites. Cheek argued that assertiveness is a tool to use in attaining personal goals.

Stewart and Lewis (1986) examined two research questions in their study: (a) Would training Black inner-city high school students in assertive behaviors (e.g., standing up for their rights, expressing their anger appropriately, confrontation, dealing with criticism and derogation, refusing unreasonable requests, and giving and receiving compliments or messages of positive affect) increase the students' use of these behaviors?, and (b) Would this training positively affect students' self-esteem? Participants in this study were 49 Black male and female students ages 16 to 18, who attended a midwestern high school with a total enrollment of 1,049

students. During the training process, males often equated an assertive response with being non-active or passive. This response was not apparent among females. Females gained in assertiveness from pre-test to post-test. These findings are consistent with those of Lineberger and Calhoun (1983), who reported that women have a more positive attitude than men toward being assertive. One possible explanation for males scoring lower on the post-test may be that being aggressive has a positive connotation for men. It has long been a matter of pride among members of the Black community to be seen as aggressive. However, the findings in this research suggest that inner-city secondary schools could provide a valuable service to their Black female students by making assertiveness training available to them.

Non-School Characteristics

Family Life

Assertiveness training, along with strong supportive families, can be critical to Black females succeeding in the educational environment. Parents can influence their children's educational aspirations and they can spend more time with them. Efforts in this direction will increase the child's ability and ultimately, their likelihood of remaining in school (Hill & Stafford, 1977). Schooling has always been a key to progress and Blacks have been ardent believers in this educational credo. The fraction of Blacks finishing high school increased from 10% in 1940 to 70% in 1980.

Since 1980, the Black high school completion rate has hovered around 70%, as compared to the 83% rate for White youth (Wharton, 1987).

Black gains in schooling and elsewhere have stalled at a time when the Black family as an institution has been under severe stress. Problems in education that confront Black students will not disappear without the establishment of the Black family as a channel for the transmission of sound values. Much of the time, strong self-images and driving personal aspirations are most firmly rooted in close, supportive, and demanding families (Wharton, 1987).

It is generally acknowledged that children's behavioral development is affected by the environment in which they live. Studies have suggested that specific transactions between parent and child, routine experiences and events in the family, and the objects available in the home, are related to a wide array of developmental outcomes. These outcomes are: intelligence, language, health and growth, social competence, locus of control, behavior at home and school, and school achievement.

In a study by the Center for Research on Teaching and Learning at the University of Arkansas, the families of 35 Black children (18 males and 15 females) 8 to 10 years of age were administered the Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment Inventory. The H.O.M.E. Inventory is a measure of the quality and quantity of cognitive, social and emotional support for development available in the home. Two subscales of the home environment (Parental Responsivity and Emotional Climate) showed substantial correlations

for Black females. Results from this study indicated a substantial relationship between the home environment of Black children and their school performance. Black females who were rated as well-adjusted tended to come from homes with a positive emotional climate, encouragement toward maturity, and homes with the availability of growth-fostering materials (Bradley, Rock, Caldwell, Harris, & Hamrick, 1987).

Family structure also appears important. Children from broken families--where one or both parents are absent--may be less likely to find the support and encouragement needed to keep them in school (Howell & Frese, 1982; Masters, 1969). Yet, the absence of natural parents in itself may be less important than the financial difficulties that arise with it (Shaw, 1982). Finally, some other aspects of family background such as family size, housing conditions, and geographic location also affect the propensity to drop out of school (Hill, 1979; Mare, 1980).

Findings indicate that growing up in a female-headed household increased the probability of not graduating from high school and increased the risk of poverty; however, these effects were not necessarily due to the father's absence (McLanahan, 1985). The link between family structure and social mobility has been a topic of considerable sociological speculation. For some years now, there has been a running controversy among scholars working in the area of the family as to whether certain kinship arrangements are especially conducive to success in an industrial society. A general

proposition was set forth that the most prevalent family form in this society was the nuclear household. The nuclear household emerged at about the time of industrialization in response to demands of the economy for a highly flexible, mobile, emotionally bonded, small kin unit (Parsons, 1942).

In recent years, however, another even more compelling reason for gathering further information on this problem has arisen. At the locus of this disagreement was the question of whether "structural defects" in the Black family accounted for the economically disadvantaged position of Blacks in American society. Since the earlier writing of Frazier, the sociological writings on the Black family were heavily laced with references to the destructive legacy of slavery, the missing male, and the matrifocal character of Black family life (Frazier, 1939). Frazier's observations were amplified and extended in the early 1960s in Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan's book, Beyond the Melting Pot (1964). While acknowledging the impact of prejudice and economic discrimination, Glazer and Moynihan, following Frazier, traced the current position of Blacks in America back to slavery. Both the proposition that slavery resulted in a permanent deterioration of the Black family structure and that family structure accounted for economic disadvantage were accepted uncritically. Moynihan later prepared a report for the Johnson administration that further amplified the fact that family structure accounted for the current fate of Black Americans.

New historical studies provide compelling reasons to question the destructive impact which slavery allegedly had on the Black family. Research by Gutman (1976) examined the family patterns of those Negroes closest in time to actual chattel slavery. His results did not reveal instability, chaos, or disorder. Gutman found viable two parent households ranging from 70% to 90%. Gutman's data made clear that the vast majority of Black families were headed by both parents and they convincingly contradicted the view that slavery destroyed the Black family (Gutman, 1976).

In place of the subcultural "legacy of slavery," an explanation for disorganization in the Black family (Furstenberg, Hershberg, & Modell, 1975), argued that the primacy of urban economic and demographic factors accounted for disorganization of some Black families. These economic circumstances bore a direct and powerful relationship to the incidence of female-headed families. Differential wealth accounted for some observed disparity between Black and White family composition.

Contemporary studies of family life among the poor tend to stress illegitimacy, desertion, and divorce. In understanding female headship in the nineteenth century, one will also have to look at the mortality rates among Black families. Sickness and death have played a very important part in family structure. Those most ravaged were the urban poor Blacks, irregularly employed, segregated, and neglected in matters of public health.

Much of the speculation about the origin of the matrifocal Black family has been based on uninformed historical data. In recent years, historians have begun to correct this situation. Black families were just as likely to be organized in nuclear households, although a somewhat higher proportion of Black families were headed by a female than was true of other ethnic groups. The great majority of Black families were couple-headed households. Ex-slaves were more likely to reside in a couple-headed household. When property holding among the different ethnic groupings was held constant, variations in family composition largely disappeared. Furstenberg, Hershberg, and Modell (1975) were able to show that economic status had a powerful effect on the structure of the Black family. Blacks suffered extremely high mortality rates and females with children faced difficulties in remarrying. Female headed families appeared not as a legacy of slavery, but as a result of the destructive conditions of urban life. So what is apparently needed, is to confront the injustices of our contemporary socioeconomic system. There are several variables that need to be examined in understanding the success of Black families.

Among the principal variables that undergird family life are education, employment, and income. In education, as noted previously, the proportion of Blacks graduating from high schools in the 1980s increased slightly. However, there are two important aspects of education to consider in assessing its relevance to Blacks. First, Black women tend to be slightly more educated than

Black men at all levels (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983). An increase in the educational level of the Black population will not automatically mean a rise in income or employment opportunities. Black women, whether they are educated or not, tend to be concentrated in lower paying jobs than Black men. Another significant factor is the sexual discrimination that women in our society face in the labor force (Bianchi, 1981; Collier & Williams, 1982).

The second important aspect of education is that it does not have the same utility for Blacks as it does for Whites. The equal educational achievements of Blacks and Whites still are not reflected in income levels. The 1980 census reveals that Blacks are still paid less for comparable work than Whites. Over one-third of the nation's Black population is still living in what is officially defined as poverty and about one-fourth are receiving public assistance. More than 70% of these Black families living in poverty are headed by females. The unemployment rate for Blacks in 1982 was at its highest level since 1945. Just as significant is the unemployment rate of Black teenagers (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983).

Another variable to consider is the significant change in the marital and family patterns of many Americans. The sexual revolution has arrived and Blacks are very much a part of it (Staples, 1981). By the age of 19, Black women were twice as likely as White women to have engaged in sexual intercourse. Black females were not

using reliable contraceptives and 41% had been, or were, pregnant (Zelnik & Kantner, 1977). There is no indication that the situation has changed in the last 14 years.

One result of this increased premarital sexual activity among Blacks is the large number of Black children born out of wedlock. More than half of every 1,000 Black births were illegitimate in the year 1980 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983). A combination of factors increased the number of Black female headed households: high divorce rates; Black males as economic providers; larger numbers of Blacks serving in the Armed Forces; Black males in prison; a percentage of the male population who are homosexual; Black males with serious drug problems; some confined to mental institutions; Black males marrying outside their race; Black females choosing to remain single; and fewer Black males over the age of 14. In 1980, according to the U.S. Bureau of Census (1983), there were almost 1,500,000 more Black women than Black men over the age of 14. By the Census Bureau's own account, the undercount of Black males means about 925,000 Black males were not added to the Black population total. It should be noted that the uncounted Black male is likely to be transient and unemployed (Joe & Yu, 1984). Since there is an excess number of Black males at birth, the subsequent shortage of Black males over the age of 14 must be attributed to their higher infant mortality rate and the considerably greater mortality rate of young Black males through such means as homicide, accidents, suicides, drug overdoses, and work casualties (Staples, 1982; Stewart & Scott, 1978).

The crisis of the Black family is, in reality, at least partly the crisis of the Black male and his inability to carry out the normative responsibilities of husband and father in the nuclear family. It seems clear that the institutional decimation of Black males represents the legacy of institutional racism. While many Black children rise out of poor families to become successful adults, the odds are against them. Only by resolving the problems of the Black male can we restore the Black family to its rightful place in our society. The future of the race may be at stake (Staples, 1987).

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY, ANALYSIS, AND FINDINGS

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze the characteristics of Black female high school students who were involved in aggressive behavior compared to those Black female high school students who were not. A second purpose of the study was to propose intervention strategies that would affect the academic success of Black female students who were potentially at-risk.

Introduction

Data were collected for 150 Black female students by a case study approach using school records and non-structured interviews of students who graduated from 1983 to 1989 in a midwestern city with a population of 75,000. Records of all Black females graduating between 1983 and 1989 from a selected public high school in this midwestern town were examined. Records were sorted for offenders and non-offenders. There were 44 offenders and 106 non-offenders. Information was recorded for the students' high school experience using the following characteristics: attendance, co-curricular activities, family structure, achievement test scores, and cumulative grade point average. For the purpose of this study, students were divided into two different groups:

1. A student was classified as an offender if she was involved in two or more physical confrontations during her high school

experience. When involved in a conflict situation, it was usually initiated by her.

2. A student was classified as a non-offender if she was involved in no more than one physical conflict situation during her high school experience. If she was involved in a conflict situation, it was not initiated by her.

In a pilot study, it had been determined that the five characteristics differed for the offenders and non-offenders. Black females who did not have strong family support, who had problems with attendance, and who were not involved in co-curricular activities, seemed to be at-risk of being offenders and being less productive in the educational setting, as determined by the achievement test scores and the cumulative grade point average.

This researcher has observed offenders at the intermediate and high school levels for more than 20 years. Offenders, from this perspective, seemed to be less productive. It is also significant to note that, from this perspective, the five characteristics were different for offenders and non-offenders throughout their school careers.

In this portion of the study, only quantitative data are presented. Though individual records were studied from kindergarten through twelfth grades, data were restricted to grades 9-12. The data were used to establish the profile of an offender.

The following research questions were designed to study the in-school and non-school characteristics of students who were

involved in aggressive behavior (offenders) as compared to those who were not (non-offenders) during their high school experience. The first research question of this study focused on attendance. Percentages, chi-square, and the t test were used to analyze the data. Each statistic was computed by use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

In-School Characteristics

Research Question 1: Was there a difference in the attendance of students who were involved in aggressive behavior and those who were not?

The data for days absent and the mean for each year, and the total number of days absent from 1983-1989 and the mean are presented in Table 1. When examining the data on attendance, one notes that non-offenders had better attendance than offenders. There was a total of 3,970 days missed by 106 non-offenders over a seven year period, for a mean of 37.5 days missed. There was a total of 2,614.5 days missed by 44 offenders over a seven year period, for a mean of 59.4 days missed.

The data in Table 2 present the number of absences by attendance categories and the percentage of non-offenders and offenders in each category. As shown in categories one through five, 61.5% of the non-offenders as compared to 18.1% of offenders missed 35.5 absences or less. In categories 6 through 10, the data show that 81.7% of the offenders as compared to 38.6% of the non-offenders missed 37

Table 1

Total Days Absent and Mean Number Days Absent

(N = 150)

Category	1983		1984	
	<u>N</u> /Days	Absent/Mean	<u>N</u> /Days	Absent/Mean
Non-Offenders	18	688.5 / 38.3	21	845.5 / 40.3
Offenders	5	273.0 / 54.6	7	345.0 / 49.3

Category	1985		1986	
	<u>N</u> /Days	Absent/Mean	<u>N</u> /Days	Absent/Mean
Non-Offenders	16	631.0 / 39.4	13	633.5 / 48.7
Offenders	10	710.0 / 71	6	297.0 / 49.5

Category	1987		1988	
	<u>N</u> /Days	Absent/Mean	<u>N</u> /Days	Absent/Mean
Non-Offenders	12	338.5 / 28.2	14	509.0 / 36.4
Offenders	4	245.5 / 61.4	7	523.5 / 74.8

Category	1989		Total Days Absent 1983-1989	
	<u>N</u> /Days	Absent/Mean	<u>N</u> /Days	Absent/Mean
Non-Offenders	12	324.0 / 27.0	106	3970.0 / 37.5
Offenders	5	220.5 / 44.1	44	2614.5 / 59.4

Table 2

Attendance Data by Categories

Category	1st Category 0-11 Absences		2nd Category 12-16 Absences	
	<u>N</u>	%	<u>N</u>	%
Non-Offenders	11	(10.4)	15	(14.2)
Offenders	2	(4.5)	0	--

Category	3rd Category 16.5-23.5 Absences		4th Category 25.5-31.5 Absences	
	<u>N</u>	%	<u>N</u>	%
Non-Offenders	11	(10.4)	13	(12.3)
Offenders	3	(6.8)	2	(4.5)

Category	5th Category 32-35.5 Absences		6th Category 37-44.5 Absences	
	<u>N</u>	%	<u>N</u>	%
Non-Offenders	15	(14.2)	9	(8.5)
Offenders	1	(2.3)	6	(13.6)

Category	7th Category 45.5-50.0 Absences		8th Category 50.5-63.0 Absences	
	<u>N</u>	%	<u>N</u>	%
Non-Offenders	8	(7.5)	8	(-7.5)
Offenders	7	(15.9)	6	(13.6)

(table continues)

Category	9th Category 63.5-79.5 Absences		10th Category 82.0-141.0 Absences	
	<u>N</u>	%	<u>N</u>	%
Non-Offenders	10	(9.4)	6	(5.7)
Offenders	7	(15.9)	10	(22.7)

% = % of the total number of Non-Offenders (106) or Offenders (44)

or more days. It can also be noted that only 5.7% of the non-offenders missed 82 or more days compared to 22.7% of the offenders.

The t test (Table 3) for the difference in means indicated the mean number of days absent for offenders (59.4) and non-offenders (37.5) were significantly different ($p < .001$). Chi-square (Table 4) calculated using the 10 categories of attendance for offenders and non-offenders was also significant ($p < .002$). Female students who demonstrated aggressive behavior had significantly more absences than those students who did not exhibit aggressive behavior.

Research Question 2: Was there a difference in participation of students in co-curricular activities who were involved in aggressive behavior and those who were not?

The data for the total number of co-curricular activities and the mean for each year, and the total number of co-curricular activities from 1983-1989 and the mean are presented in Table 5.

Table 3

t test for Attendance of Non-Offenders and Offenders

Categories	<u>N</u>	Mean	Standard Deviation	<u>t</u>	p
Non- Offenders	106	37.4528	26.361	-4.49	.000
Offenders	44	59.4205	29.467		

Table 4

Chi-Square for Attendance of Non-Offenders and Offenders

Chi-Square	Value	df	p
	27.70770	9	.00107

When examining the data on activities, one notes that non-offenders have better participation in co-curricular activities than offenders. The 106 non-offenders were involved in a total of 923 activities for a mean of 8.71 or approximately 9 activities during their high school career. The 44 offenders were involved in 161 activities for a mean of 3.66 or approximately 4 activities during their high school years.

Table 5

Total Number and Mean of Co-Curricular Activities

(N = 150)

	1983			1984		
	<u>N</u>	Total Activities	Mean	<u>N</u>	Total Activities	Mean
Non-Offenders	18	58	3.22	21	195	9.29
Offenders	5	7	1.4	7	25	3.57
	1985			1986		
	<u>N</u>	Total Activities	Mean	<u>N</u>	Total Activities	Mean
Non-Offenders	16	107	6.69	13	76	5.85
Offenders	10	20	2	6	28	4.67
	1987			1988		
	<u>N</u>	Total Activities	Mean	<u>N</u>	Total Activities	Mean
Non-Offenders	12	184	15.33	14	138	9.86
Offenders	4	17	4.25	7	32	4.57

(table continues)

	1989			1983-1989		
	<u>N</u>	Activities	Mean	<u>N</u>	Activities	Mean
Non-Offenders	12	165	13.75	106	923	8.71
Offenders	5	32	6.4	44	161	3.66

The data in Table 6 present the number of co-curricular activities by category and the percentage of non-offenders and offenders included in each category. Data indicates 15.1% of the non-offenders were involved in one or fewer activities, while 45.5% of the offenders were involved in one or fewer activities. The data also show 33% of the non-offenders compared to 9.1% of the offenders participated in 11 or more activities.

The t test (Table 7) for the difference in means indicated the mean number of co-curricular activities for offenders (3.66) and non-offenders (8.71) were significantly different ($p < .001$). Chi-square (Table 8) calculated using the four categories of co-curricular activities for offenders and non-offenders was also significant ($p < .001$). Female students who demonstrated aggressive behavior had significantly less involvement in co-curricular activities than those students who did not exhibit aggressive behavior.

Research Question 3: Was there a difference in achievement test scores of students who were involved in aggressive behavior and those who were not?

Table 6

Number and Percentage of Co-Curricular Activities by CategoriesN = 150

Category	1st Category 0-1 Activities		2nd Category 2-4 Activities	
	<u>N</u>	%	<u>N</u>	%
Non-Offenders	16	(15.1)	30	(28.3)
Offenders	20	(45.5)	8	(18.2)

Category	3rd Category 5-10 Activities		4th Category 11-35 Activities	
	<u>N</u>	%	<u>N</u>	%
Non-Offenders	25	(23.6)	35	(33.0)
Offenders	12	(27.3)	4	(9.1)

% = % of the total number of Non-Offenders (106) or Offenders (44)

Table 7

t test for Co-Curricular Activities of Non-Offenders and Offenders

Categories	<u>N</u>	Mean	Standard Deviation	<u>t</u>	p
Non-Offenders	106	8.7075	8.401	3.81	.000
Offenders	44	3.6591	3.959		

Table 8

Chi-Square for Co-Curricular Activities of Non-Offenders and Offenders

Chi-Square	Value	df	p
	20.21721	3	.00015

The data for the mean ITED score for each year and the mean for 1983-1989 are presented in Table 9. When examining the data on achievement test scores, one notes that the non-offenders had higher mean percentile ranks. The non-offenders had a mean of approximately 49, compared to a mean of 30 for the offenders.

The data in Table 10 present the ITED scores by percentile categories and the percentage of non-offenders and offenders in each category. As shown in categories one through five, 38.6% of the non-offenders as compared to 79.5% of the offenders scored at the 39th percentile or lower. In categories 6 through 10, the data show that 61.3% of the non-offenders as compared to 20.5% of the offenders scored at the 40th percentile or above. Data show 5.7% of the non-offenders compared to 15.9% of the offenders scored at or below the 13th percentile. Of those who scored higher than the 76th percentile, 14.2% were non-offenders, compared to 2.3% of the offenders.

Table 9

The Mean ITED Percentile Score for Non-Offenders and Offenders

(N = 150)

Category	1983		1984	
	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>N</u>	Mean
Non-Offenders	18	42.22	21	47.05
Offenders	5	24.4	7	29.29

Category	1985		1986	
	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>N</u>	Mean
Non-Offenders	16	38.81	13	48.31
Offenders	10	31.4	6	25.17

Category	1987		1988	
	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>N</u>	Mean
Non-Offenders	12	64	14	50.5
Offenders	4	41.25	7	35.43

Category	1989		1983-1989	
	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>N</u>	Mean
Non-Offenders	12	59.25	106	48.90
Offenders	5	25	44	30.23

Table 10

Test Score Characteristics by Percentile Categories

Category	1st Category Scores 8-13		2nd Category Scores 14-18	
	<u>N</u>	%	<u>N</u>	%
Non-Offenders	6	(5.7)	7	(6.6)
Offenders	7	(15.9)	7	(15.9)

Category	3rd Category Scores 19-25		4th Category Scores 27-32	
	<u>N</u>	%	<u>N</u>	%
Non-Offenders	8	(7.5)	12	(11.3)
Offenders	7	(15.9)	3	(6.8)

Category	5th Category Scores 33-39		6th Category Scores 40-44	
	<u>N</u>	%	<u>N</u>	%
Non-Offenders	8	(7.5)	5	(4.7)
Offenders	11	(25.0)	4	(9.1)

Category	7th Category Scores 46-56		8th Category Scores 57-64	
	<u>N</u>	%	<u>N</u>	%
Non-Offenders	17	(16.0)	14	(13.2)
Offenders	1	(2.3)	2	(4.5)

(table continues)

Category	9th Category Scores 67-76		10th Category Scores 79-95	
	<u>N</u>	%	<u>N</u>	%
Non-Offenders	14	(13.2)	15	(14.2)
Offenders	1	(2.3)	1	(2.3)

% = % of total number of Non-Offenders (106) or Offenders (44)

The t test (Table 11) for the difference in means indicated the mean ITED percentile scores for offenders (30.23) and non-offenders (48.90) were significantly different ($p < .001$). Chi-square (Table 12) calculated using the 10 categories of ITED percentile for offenders and non-offenders was also significant ($p < .001$). Female students who demonstrated aggressive behavior had significantly lower percentile scores than those students who did not exhibit aggressive behavior.

Table 11

t test for ITED of Non-Offenders and Offenders

Categories	<u>N</u>	Mean	Standard Deviation	<u>t</u>	p
Non-Offenders	106	48.8868	23.370	4.80	.000
Offenders	44	30.2273	16.815		

Table 12

Chi-Square for ITED of Non-Offenders and Offenders

Chi-Square	Value	df	p
	32.85343	9	.00014

Research Question 4: Was there a difference in the cumulative grade point average of students who were involved in aggressive behavior and those who were not?

The data for the mean grade point average for each year and the mean grade point average for the years 1983-1989 are presented in Table 13. When examining the data on grade point average, one notes that the non-offenders had a better grade point average than offenders. The non-offenders had a mean grade point average of 2.41 as compared to a mean of 1.77 for offenders.

The data in Table 14 present the cumulative grade point averages by category and the percentage of non-offenders and offenders in each category. As shown in categories one through five, 32.9% of the non-offenders as compared to 88.7% of the offenders had a G.P.A. of 2.14 or lower. In categories 6 through 10 the data show that 67.1% of the non-offenders as compared to 11.3% of the offenders had a G.P.A. of 2.15 or higher. Data indicate 4.7% of the non-offenders, compared to 20.5% of the offenders, attained a G.P.A.

Table 13

Grade Point Average for Non-Offenders and Offenders

(N = 150)

Category	1983			1984		
	<u>N</u>	Total GPA	Mean	<u>N</u>	Total GPA	Mean
Non-Offenders	18	(42.17)	2.34	21	(49.46)	2.36
Offenders	5	(9.80)	1.96	7	(12.79)	1.83

Category	1985			1986		
	<u>N</u>	Total GPA	Mean	<u>N</u>	Total GPA	Mean
Non-Offenders	16	(36.67)	2.29	13	(26.10)	2.01
Offenders	10	(15.99)	1.60	6	(10.76)	1.79

Category	1987			1988		
	<u>N</u>	Total GPA	Mean	<u>N</u>	Total GPA	Mean
Non-Offenders	12	(31.28)	2.61	14	(35.28)	2.52
Offenders	4	(6.99)	1.75	7	(12.56)	1.79

(table continues)

Category	1989			1983-1989		
	<u>N</u>	Total GPA	Mean	<u>N</u>	Total GPA	Mean
Non-Offenders	12	(34.70)	2.89	106	(255.67)	2.41
Offenders	5	(8.79)	1.76	44	(77.67)	1.77

Table 14

Grade Point Averages by Categories

(N = 150)

Category	1st Category 1.00-1.49		2nd Category 1.50-1.68	
	<u>N</u>	%	<u>N</u>	%
	Non-Offenders	5	(4.7)	8
Offenders	9	(20.5)	6	(13.6)

Category	3rd Category 1.70-1.88		4th Category 1.89-2.02	
	<u>N</u>	%	<u>N</u>	%
	Non-Offenders	5	(4.7)	7
Offenders	11	(25.0)	8	(18.2)

(table continues)

Category	5th Category 2.03-2.14		6th Category 2.15-2.36	
	<u>N</u>	%	<u>N</u>	%
Non-Offenders	10	(9.4)	13	(12.3)
Offenders	5	(11.4)	2	(4.5)

Category	7th Category 2.37-2.51		8th Category 2.53-2.64	
	<u>N</u>	%	<u>N</u>	%
Non-Offenders	13	(12.3)	14	(13.2)
Offenders	3	(6.8)		

Category	9th Category 2.67-3.03		10th Category 3.04-3.60	
	<u>N</u>	%	<u>N</u>	%
Non-Offenders	15	(14.2)	16	(15.1)
Offenders				

% = % of the total number of Non-Offenders (106) or Offenders (44)

below 1.50. Of the students with a cumulative G.P.A. higher than 2.51, 42.5% were non-offenders, with no offenders in that category.

The t test (Table 15) for the difference in means indicated the mean for the G.P.A. for offenders (1.77) and non-offenders (2.41) were significantly different ($p < .001$). Chi-square (Table 16) calculated using the 10 categories for G.P.A. for offenders and non-offenders was also significant ($p < .001$). Female students who demonstrated aggressive behavior had significantly lower grade point averages than those students who did not exhibit aggressive behavior.

Table 15

t test for GPA of Non-Offenders and Offenders

Categories	<u>N</u>	Mean	Standard Deviation	<u>t</u>	p
Non-Offenders	106	2.4119	.563	7.04	.000
Offenders	44	1.7653	.361		

Table 16

Chi-Square for GPA of Non-Offenders and Offenders

Chi-Square	Value	df	p
	47.15871	9	.00000

Non-School Characteristics

Research Question 5: Was there a difference in the family structure of students who were involved in aggressive behavior and those who were not?

When examining the data on family structure (see Table 17) one notes that more of the non-offenders lived with both parents than did offenders. The non-offenders (53.8%) lived with both parents, compared to only 25% of the offenders.

Table 17

Family Structure

(N = 150)

Category	Mother		Father	
	<u>N</u>	%	<u>N</u>	%
Non-Offenders	38	(35.8)	2	(1.9)
Offenders	25	(56.8)	2	(4.5)

Category	Both Parents		Other	
	<u>N</u>	%	<u>N</u>	%
Non-Offenders	57	(53.8)	9	(8.5)
Offenders	11	(25.0)	6	(13.6)

The non-offenders (35.8%) lived with their mother only, compared to 56.8% of the offenders. The t test (Table 18) for the difference in means indicated the mean for family structure for offenders (1.9545) and non-offenders (2.3491) were significantly different ($p < .05$). Chi-square (Table 19) calculated using four categories for family structure for offenders and non-offenders was also significant ($p < .05$). Females who demonstrated aggressive behavior had a significant difference in family structure than those students who did not exhibit aggressive behavior.

Table 18

t test for Family Structure

Categories	<u>N</u>	Mean	Standard Deviation	<u>t</u>	p
Non-Offenders	106	2.3491	1.060	2.01	.047
Offenders	44	1.9545	1.180		

Table 19

Chi-Square for Family Structure

Chi-Square	Value	df	p
	10.58127	3	.01422

From analyzing the data on all characteristics, it was determined that significant differences existed for those students who were involved in aggressive behavior and those who were not. The statistical treatment of the data involved the use of frequencies and percentages. Chi-square was used to ascertain if frequencies differed for offenders and non-offenders. The t test was used in analyzing the difference of means of the two groups.

Interviews

Interviews were held to obtain additional insight into how selected Black females whose records were included in this study felt about their school experience, peer relationship, and parental support while attending school. The entire transcript of these interviews are found in the Appendix. The interviews were held with seven offenders and seven non-offenders. Interviewees were randomly selected from each year of the study from 1983 to 1989.

Several factors formed the basis for the interviews. Access was, of course, the first major issue; the next important factor was building a relationship. The quality of the data are dependent on the quality of the relationship that one builds with the people being interviewed (Measor, 1985). It was simpler than is typically the case to gain access and build a relationship because the researcher has known the interviewees and their families for many years. The researcher also had rapport with interviewees and their families.

At the beginning of each interview approximately 15 minutes was used to relax the interviewees by reminiscing about events that happened when the interviewees were in school. All interviewees were assured that the information given would remain anonymous. The interviews were taped with the approval of the interviewees. Each interview was approximately one hour long. Though interviews were not formally structured, the questions focused on school experiences, peer relationships, and family support. One of the unexpected outcomes of the interview was the surprising recurrence of certain themes. Though students were not led to respond to specific topics, they nevertheless cited common concerns and recommendations again and again, thus lending credence to the generalizations drawn from the interviews.

In-School Characteristics

Attitudes About School

Table 20 summarizes the major attitudes and characteristics discovered from the interviews about school experiences. Part of the research was designed to determine how Black females felt about their high school experience. Several areas of concern were obvious: five offenders and four non-offenders indicated that teachers and administrators should be tougher. They indicated that teachers have to show students "who the boss is." They talked about how students must be held accountable for turning in homework. They stated that rules must be enforced and students should not be allowed to slide through. They indicated that students need pressure put

Table 20

School Experiences (See Interviews in Appendix B)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Offenders								
1	X	X						
2	X	X		X		X		X
5		X						
9	X	X						X
11	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
13		X					X	X
14	X	X	X				X	X
Non-Offenders								
3		X		X	X	X		
4		X		X	X		X	
6	X	X	X	X	X	X		
7	X	X		X	X	X		
8	X	X	X	X	X		X	
10		X	X	X	X	X	X	
12	X	X	X			X	X	

- A Teacher, administrator, and rules should be tougher
 B There is a general need for caring teachers
 C My teachers actually cared about me
 D Heavy student participation in co-curricular activities
 E Involved in college preparatory classes
 F Involved in organization to build self-esteem
 G Teaching about Black people's contributions was important
 H Statements about Black females taking school seriously

on them to succeed. In dealing with offenders over a period of twenty years, this researcher would have never expected offenders to make statements about teachers or rules and regulations not being "tough" enough. Five of the offenders stated that Black students should be serious about school. They also indicated that teachers should care enough to inform students about the consequences of not getting a good education. The majority of the non-offenders interviewed had a good school experience and they took mostly college preparatory classes.

All of the offenders and non-offenders related the need to have teachers who cared. They felt this was important because some Black females experienced problems at home and at school. Interviewees expressed the need to have someone give them advice and tell them the consequences of making a bad decision.

Offenders had the experience of teachers determining that they could not be productive, therefore giving them less attention. Most of the offenders had negative experiences with teachers. They felt as if some teachers did not care and would let them slip through the cracks. One offender mentioned her experience with a counselor who told her she was "dumb and stupid." Offenders noted that a few teachers helped make their educational experience less rewarding. However, the non-offenders noted that good students also need someone who cares. The major difference between offenders and non-offenders was that most non-offenders thought that their teachers did care about them. They reported positive educational

experiences. Several of the non-offenders mentioned having one outstanding counselor that they knew cared for them. While both groups recognized the need to have a caring teacher, they realized some teachers tended to "pigeon-hole" offenders, thereby ensuring a negative school experience. It is clear from the interviews that offenders and non-offenders were treated differently by teachers. Some offenders wanted teachers to demonstrate concern by encouraging their involvement in school activities.

The whole topic of school involvement was of great interest to most of the students interviewed. Six of the non-offenders were highly involved in co-curricular activities. They stated that being involved made school more enjoyable. It also helped them to be more popular. The encouragement to become involved, for non-offenders, came from within themselves or from having other family members participate in school activities. Only in a few cases were students approached by teachers with regard to extra-curricular activities. The majority of non-offenders interviewed said they would recommend that all students take part in co-curricular activities to ensure a better educational experience.

In contrast to the non-offenders, only two offenders mentioned that they were involved in co-curricular activities. Six of the offenders later recognized the importance of getting involved in school activities. They stated that school involvement should be encouraged. Four of the offenders talked about pregnancy reducing

their participation in activities. The majority of both offenders and non-offenders stated that involvement should be encouraged for a more positive educational experience. The data obtained from interviews about student involvement in co-curricular activities is consistent with the data obtained from student records. One offender affirmed needing someone to ask her to get involved as a means of showing her that someone cared and to help her build self-esteem.

The building of one's self-esteem is very important to the females who were interviewed. The majority of the non-offenders stated that students need to know more about Black people's contributions in history. They indicated that knowing about Black history would aid in developing pride and self-esteem. Several students thought Black history should be a required class. They also mentioned that having sessions where they can talk about their problems would also help to develop pride.

A few offenders talked about Black history as being extremely important for building self-esteem. A few offenders mentioned that organizations such as CLASSI (Classmates Listening and Supporting Self Images) are needed to help instill pride. They felt that one's self-esteem has a lot to do with the acceptance of one's self and others.

Non-School Characteristics

Peer Relationships

Table 21 summarizes the major characteristics identified from interviews about peer relationships. Six of the non-offenders

Table 21

Non-School Experiences--Peer Relationship (See Interviews in Appendix B)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Offenders								
1			X	X	X	X	X	
2		X	X	X	X	X	X	
5			X				X	
9			X					
11		X	X			X		
13			X		X		X	
14			X		X		X	
Non-Offenders								
3	X	X			X	X		
4	X							X
6	X							X
7					X			
8	X					X		
10	X	X						X
12	X	X		X		X		X

- A Many girlfriends
 B Popular with boys
 C Lots of fights over boyfriends or hearsay
 D Strong resentment toward White females
 E Pregnant while in school
 F Statements about girls being possessive concerning boys
 G Lots of anger and resentment
 H Jobs were important while attending school

mentioned having many friends. Three of the non-offenders also mentioned being popular with boys. (In addition, they asserted that while they were popular with boys, they did not think boys could be trusted because they would not be faithful in a relationship.) Every offender stated she had very few friends. They spoke of not valuing girlfriends because they were a lot of trouble. One offender said she could count her friends on one hand and still have two fingers left. They talked about how girlfriends gossip, talk about other's personal business, "stab them in the back," and try to take their boyfriends. The majority of the offenders interviewed did not trust their boyfriends, although a few of them mentioned that they had more boyfriends than girlfriends.

All of the females interviewed talked about boys being the major cause of most of the fights they were involved in. They mentioned "hearsay" issues as the next significant cause. They stated that girls will fight if they do not want their girlfriend to be friends with another girl they do not like. With some girls, peer pressure can be a significant problem. The need to belong can cause one to conform and be very possessive. The reason for fighting over boys apparently stems from the girls' possessive nature. A few girls mentioned that some girls have observed their mothers, aunts, and cousins without a man. Therefore, when the girls do "get a man," they want to hold on to him at all cost. Others mentioned low self-esteem as a reason for being possessive.

Whatever the reason, some of them will fight over their boyfriends. Some Black females (both offenders and non-offenders) have a strong resentment toward White females for dating Black males. A few of the Black females interviewed recognized that there is a shortage of Black males and that the White female is just another obstacle. A few of the non-offenders mentioned that White females dating Black males was a problem. They said they were not bitter because they did not perceive the White female as a threat, nor would they fight over their boyfriend.

Even though offenders would often fight over their boyfriends, the majority of the females interviewed stated that boys could not be trusted. Every interviewee indicated that getting pregnant while attending school was a definite problem. They talked about how parents and teachers should be more informative about sex education. Four of the offenders interviewed got pregnant while in school. They stated that they received very little help from their child's father. Two of the non-offenders became pregnant while in school and had similar experiences in their relationship. All interviewees highly recommended that girls refrain from getting pregnant while attending school. All of the girls who did get pregnant during high school affirmed that a girl could make it if she had the desire to continue through school. These girls stated that getting pregnant is no excuse for quitting school. Each interviewee reported that she would tell other Black females to "concentrate on the books, not the boys."

Most of the non-offenders were employed and asserted that holding a job was a means of keeping busy, thus lessening the risk of getting into trouble. The majority of non-offenders stayed away from places where alcohol was served. The non-offenders mentioned wanting to do some of the things that were considered risqué, but were afraid of the consequences if their parents found out. There was notably more supervision and structure placed on the time of the non-offenders.

Parent Support

Table 22 summarizes the major characteristics identified from interviews about family support. While supervision, high expectations, and family support were probably the main differences between offenders and non-offenders in achieving success, family support is arguably the most critical factor of all. All non-offenders stated that they were very close to their families and participated in such activities as going on vacations and eating out together. Some non-offenders also reported close bonds with grandparents. Most of the parents of non-offenders pushed students to succeed and had high expectations for them to succeed. Two of the non-offenders discussed being taught how to be competitive. Even if they were raised by the mother only, high hopes for success were prevalent. Four of the non-offenders reported not having to be forced to study by parents. These students had a desire to please their parents as evidenced by motivation to study and achieve without pressure.

Table 22

Non-School Experiences--Family Support (See Interviews in
Appendix B)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Offenders							
1		X			X		X
2					X		
5	X		X				
9	X		X				
11	X		X				
13				X	X		X
14					X		X
Non-Offenders							
3	X	X	X	X	X	X	
4	X		X				
6	X		X	X			
7	X		X	X	X	X	
8	X	X	X	X			
10	X	X	X	X			
12	X		X	X			X

- A Family support when needed
 B Strong desire to please parents
 C Participants in family activities
 D Statements concerning parents and teachers telling them more about sex
 E Pregnant while in school
 F Strong support from parents to help raise the child
 G Statement about drugs being a serious problem in some families

Four of the offenders stated that they did not have the support from parents when it was really needed. Some of the offenders invariably wound up living on their own or with grandparents before they graduated. Some offenders had support from their mothers, but not from their fathers. They found themselves existing in the same situation as their mothers: raising children with very little help from a man. Three of the offenders mentioned non-involvement in activities with their mother. This made their life extremely difficult, faced as they were with raising children alone with very little support.

Some of the non-offenders had a tremendous amount of pressure from their fathers not to become pregnant. They reported wanting to participate in some of the same activities as other girls, but they were afraid of their fathers. (In two cases, the strictness of the fathers backfired, resulting in pregnancy for the non-offenders.) Six of the non-offenders asserted that parents, teachers, or counselors need to emphasize the consequences of sexual relationships more. Even though the two non-offenders became pregnant, they related that their parents still held high expectations for them to succeed, and gave both the girl and their child support. In cases where strong family support, high expectations, and family participation with young Black females was evident, the girls appeared to have high self-esteem. These Black females have already given evidence that they will be more successful in life than offenders with the opposite experience.

Some offenders reported being frightened of what the future holds for them. Some expressed the feeling of being "the most downgraded thing on earth." These girls seemed to recognize they face a society riddled with sexism, racism, and drugs. Three of the offenders and two non-offenders discussed the seriousness of drug availability, and the potential impact of that reality on both them and their children.

Several of the interviewees recounted how some parents spend too much time in the streets and using drugs and spoke of the importance of spending more time and effort raising their children. They discussed the need to teach children about sexual relationships and to have high expectations for their children to achieve.

Most of the offenders and some of the non-offenders mentioned that parents let some girls grow up too fast. They talked about the need to have respect for parents and other adults. The offenders indicated that there is great value in listening to others who have "been there" and had some of the same experiences. Several offenders and non-offenders stated that girls "had better listen to their parents." This point was well illustrated by one offender who said she wished she was a child again. She also stated that she would tell young Black females, "You'd better listen to your mama." Apparently even the hard-core offenders do not want to disappoint their parents.

Other Notable Characteristics

Many other statements made by interviewees were important to this study. Several of the girls reported a great deal of anger and resentment stemming from various incidents throughout their high school career. Because there is an oversupply of anger in some Black females, particularly the offenders, it seems important to address ways to help relieve this anger. Interviewee Number 13 stated that she was angry and hateful. When her father left, it changed her attitude. Interviewee Number 2 has a bitter hatred for White people because her boyfriend dated a White girl. Interviewee Number 5 was angry and stated she would never forget that her counselor told her she was dumb and stupid. Educators should take note that what they say to students may have a lasting effect on them; one needs to be extremely careful about what is said to young people. Students tend to remember negative remarks--sometimes for a lifetime.

Interviewee Number 1 was angry because her boyfriend was dating a White girl and her mother and father were in prison. When explaining her anger, she said she kept it "pinned up" inside. She ended up going to prison for attempted murder, where she learned how to handle her anger from small group counseling sessions. It might prove beneficial to have more group counseling sessions in school in order for some Black females to talk about their anger and resentment.

The lack of freedom and/or parents being too strict can also cause problems. Interviewee Number 2 stated that she missed being a teenager because she had to do everything from taking care of her mother's children to cooking for the whole family. She stated she could not wait to leave home. She said that she had had no freedom and when she had a chance, she would do everything her mother had told her not to do.

Interviewee Number 7 had a strict father who practically kept her under lock and key because he did not want her to get pregnant. She noted when she did get a little freedom, she didn't know how to handle it. She stated she would have been a little more responsible if her father had not been so protective. Several interviewees mentioned that they wanted to rebel, but were afraid. Apparently there are some cases where being strict and protective are beneficial, but the degree and reasonableness of restrictions are what appear to make the difference.

Several girls mentioned that being on open enrollment was a good educational experience. Interviewee Number 9 talked about how she was involved in extra-curricular activities while on open enrollment. She stated that she did not then get into difficulties with fighting. She discussed the adjustment she had to make when she discontinued open enrollment--having to associate with more Black students. Interviewee Number 8 also had a positive experience while on open enrollment. She was able to make friends with a large number of White students. She indicated she had gotten a

chance to "see the other side." Interviewee Number 1 had an opportunity to attend a parochial school and said that teachers pushed students harder to complete their homework. Interviewee Number 4 attended a preschool academy. She said that because it taught her to be competitive, it made a big difference in her life. Open enrollment, attendance at parochial schools, preschool academies, and other private schools might be an answer for some students who are experiencing difficulty in achieving a successful educational experience.

Interviewee Number 4 reported that there is a lot of pressure to conform. She stated that peer pressure is so intense that "whatever your friends do, you will do the same." Open enrollment, parochial, and private schools could perhaps also relieve some of this peer pressure. The experience could give some Black females a chance to model positive behaviors from other students who are having successful educational experiences.

Interviewees also mentioned the importance of having Black teachers as role models. Interviewee Number 7 stated she only had one Black teacher in elementary school and one in high school. Interviewee Number 10 mentioned that someone of one's own race would have a better understanding of the problems faced by Black students. Interviewee Number 8 mentioned that the only contact she had with Black people was in church. Thus, it seems extremely important that students have contact with other professional Black people. It is perhaps particularly important to have the teaching

staff reflect the racial background of the students. Teachers who understand the students' culture can be more effective as role models.

In order for some Black students to be successful, Black teachers will need to be seen as role models. Students will have to have teachers who genuinely care about them. Some Black females are going through difficulties in our society that no other group of students has to deal with. Interviewee Number 8 made the statement that, "teachers have to be more of a social worker these days than anything." The preceding statement summarizes the urgency, for these students, to have someone who understands and cares about the problems faced by Black female students.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study was primarily a descriptive analysis of student records of selected Black female high school graduates over a seven-year period in a midwestern city with a population of 75,000. Records of all Black females who graduated from 1983-1989 were examined. Records were sorted first into offenders and non-offenders by examining disciplinary records in the school district office. Information was recorded for high school (9-12). A data form (see Appendix A) was used to record information about family structure, attendance, standardized test scores, co-curricular activities, and grade point. Additional information was gathered through interviews with selected students.

Data were summarized for Black females who were offenders and those who were not offenders. Data were arranged in a table format and frequencies, percentages, totals, and means were reported. Chi-square was used to compare frequencies of offenders and non-offenders on each characteristic. The t test was used to compare means of the two groups. Each statistic was computed by use of the Statistical Package of the Social Science (SPSS). The .05 level of significance was used in this study. To augment the data, and add clarification and depth to the study, the case study method was used to gather additional information through student interviews.

Summary

Answers to the research questions in this study were based upon the findings reported in Chapter III. The major findings of the study are as follows:

1. Significant differences were found between offenders and non-offenders in attendance. Offenders had a mean of 59.4 days absent as compared to 37.5 days absent for non-offenders. Of those who missed 37 or more days, 81.7% were offenders and 38.6% were non-offenders.

2. Significant differences were found between offenders and non-offenders in co-curricular activities. Non-offenders were involved in 8.71 co-curricular activities as compared to 3.66 activities for offenders during their high school career. Of those who were involved in one or no activities, 15.1% were non-offenders and 45.5% were offenders.

3. Significant differences were found between offenders and non-offenders on achievement test scores. Offenders had a mean ITED percentile rank of approximately 30, as compared to 49 for the non-offenders. Of those who scored at the 39th percentile or below, 38.6% were non-offenders and 79.5% were offenders.

4. Significant differences were found between offenders and non-offenders in their cumulative grade point averages. The non-offenders had a mean cumulative grade point average of 2.41, as compared to a mean of 1.77 for offenders. Of those who had a cumulative grade point at or below 2.14, 32.9% were non-offenders

and 88.7% were offenders. The non-offenders (42.5%) earned a cumulative grade point average above 2.51, but there were no offenders with a cumulative grade point average above 2.51.

5. Significant differences were found between offenders and non-offenders in aspects of the family structure. The non-offenders (35.8%) lived with their mothers only, compared to 56.8% of the offenders. In addition, non-offenders (53.8%) lived with both parents, compared to 25% of the offenders.

Interviews were conducted to obtain information about in-school and non-school characteristics, particularly students' school experience, peer relationships, and family support. Eight major findings drawn from these interviews related to school experience:

1. The majority of non-offenders and offenders indicated that teachers and administrators should be "tougher."

2. All students expressed a need to have teachers who genuinely cared about students.

3. Most offenders had a negative experience with teachers but most non-offenders thought their teachers cared and reported a positive experience.

4. Non-offenders were highly involved in co-curricular activities and offenders were not, confirming the statistical conclusion reported earlier.

5. Non-offenders were more likely to take college preparatory classes than offenders.

6. Some offenders and non-offenders were involved in support groups like CLASSI and mentioned it as being important in helping to instill pride and build one's self image.

7. Students indicated the need to know more about contributions made by Black people. Some interviewees thought Black history should be required as a means of aiding self-esteem.

8. Most offenders made comments that Black females should take school seriously.

There were six major findings related to peer relationship:

1. The majority of the non-offenders reported having many girlfriends but offenders reported having very few girlfriends and did not value girlfriends because "they are a lot of trouble."

2. Some offenders and non-offenders mentioned being popular with boys.

3. Some girls made statements regarding the possessive nature of other girls toward their boyfriends. Boyfriend problems were identified as the major cause of most fights with "hearsay" being the second major cause of fights.

4. Some had strong resentment toward White females for dating Black males.

5. Most offenders harbored substantial anger and resentment.

6. Most non-offenders were employed during their high school career.

There were six findings related to family support:

1. Supervision, high expectations, and family support were among the main differences between offenders and non-offenders in achieving success.

2. There were strong desires among some Black females to please their parents.

3. All non-offenders and some offenders stated they were close to their families and participated in vacations, eating out, and other activities.

4. All of the non-offenders and some offenders wanted parents and teachers to be more informative about sex education.

5. Four of the offenders became pregnant while in high school and had a very difficult time completing school due to the absence of strong family support to raise their child. Whereas, two of the non-offenders became pregnant, but received parental support. Their parents continued to hold high expectations for them to achieve and attend college.

6. Some interviewees recounted how some parents spend too much time "in the streets" and using drugs.

Five additional findings were drawn from the interviews:

1. The lack of freedom and/or parental strictness had sometimes contributed to problems.

2. Open enrollment, attendance at parochial schools, preschool academies, and other private schools may be a key to some students achieving success.

3. Pressure by peers to conform has been a problem for some.
4. Having Black teachers as role models seemed very important to some.
5. Teachers may need to adopt social worker concern in addition to traditional teacher attitudes.

Conclusions

Literature and research findings support the fact that Black females have a different educational experience in the school environment than do other students, and it has an effect on their self-esteem and academic performance (Grant, 1984). This study has also documented the fact that some Black females, particularly the offenders, have had an experience different from other students.

Offenders speak of their negative experiences with teachers, of teachers who have let some Black females "slip through cracks," and of teachers who do not see Black females as cognitively mature. It is this perceived indifference to some Black females that leads to their negative self-esteem. Negative self-esteem can in turn lead to other problems in the educational setting. The end result is often a student who simply does not like school. Some parents, of course, are also partly responsible for this negative self-esteem. (Grant (1984) also supports the fact that the "place" Black females occupy is established by the interaction of multiple forces, including parents, teachers, peers, and societal norms.)

This study illustrates the interaction of these forces as students discussed the effect teachers have on their success or

failure. Non-offenders interviewed talked about teachers having a positive effect on their education. Offenders recalled how teachers who didn't really care had a negative effect on their educational experience.

It is evident from both research and this study that teachers can have an everlasting effect on a student's self-concept. A child's self-esteem is basic to a strong, positive self-concept. There have been research correlating self-concept with academic achievement (Scott-Jones & Clark, 1986). Some offenders have a negative self-concept and this in turn, has influenced their attendance, involvement in co-curricular activities, and their academic performance. It can also be concluded from the literature and this study that when Black students can learn more about contributions made by Blacks and identify with Blacks of the past and present, it will increase self-esteem and probably improve academic performance (Harper, 1977).

Teachers must work to get Black females involved in their educational setting. From the interviews conducted for this study, one can conclude that involvement is necessary for some Black females to have a successful educational experience. There are many co-curricular activities in which Black females can become involved. Educators need to learn which activities Black females can excel at and encourage their involvement. Getting students involved helps to improve their self-esteem, which is a major factor in academic success. It can be concluded, further,

that offenders with minimal involvement and low self-esteem will be at-risk in the educational environment.

Allen (1964) discussed the power of peers to affect the role of Black females. This study underscores the fact that peers are very important. Non-offenders reported having many friends and associating with girls who were like them. The majority of the non-offenders interviewed were persisters and they persisted in activities that ensured their success. Those activities included studying, getting involved in co-curricular activities, and holding a job. As in Timberlake's study (1981) the non-persisters were more likely to engage in activities outside of school.

One non-offender stated that the pressure to conform can be a problem. The pressure to conform is an important factor in whether one has few friends or many. Black females who have few friends are very possessive of those few. They will also fight about their friends making friends with people they do not like. One can also conclude that the lack of friends and low self-esteem on the part of the offenders may have something to do with their possessive nature. The Black female with low-esteem and a possessive nature tends to act in an aggressive manner if threatened in any way.

Parents are also a major part of that multiple force that can have a strong influence on Black females' academic achievement. Cummings (1977) suggests that strong families can be a critical factor in Black females' success in the educational arena. It is generally acknowledged that the behavioral development of children

is affected by the environment in which they live. In this study, all of the non-offenders interviewed reported having close family ties. Most of the offenders had a different experience with their families. This study offers powerful support for the conclusion that a supportive family (not necessarily strict or over-protective) is critical to a Black female's success. It also supports the research that deals with fate control that suggest that Black females' families appear to be a significant determinant of variation in fate control (Cummings, 1977).

There is a substantial relationship between the home environment of Black children and their school performance. The literature also suggests that family structure appears to be important because children from broken homes, where one or both parents are absent, may be less likely to find the support and encouragement needed to help them succeed in school (Masters, 1969; Howell & Frese, 1982). Growing up in a female-headed household increases the probability of not graduating from high school and increases the risk of poverty. This study documented the difference in the family structure of offenders and non-offenders, but this study also suggests that while there is a difference in the family structure of offenders and non-offenders, the support of the family is more important than the structure of the family. Those interviewed stressed time after time the importance of having caring parents who held high expectations for them to succeed. These students relied on their parents for support and advice.

In particular, they said they would have benefited from having more advice on sexual relationships. Others have noted that by the age of 19, Black women were twice as likely to have engaged in sexual intercourse than were White women (Zelnik & Kantner, 1977). Black females were not using reliable contraceptives, and 41% had been or were pregnant. These facts support those interviewed who stated that parents, teachers, and counselors need to emphasize the consequences of early sexual relationships.

It is imperative that offenders particularly be given encouragement and support from their families. Clearly family support is the most critical factor in the Black females' success in the educational setting. One point stressed by interviewees was that students need to listen to their parents. They believed there is need to respect those who have already "been there." Few of the students want to displease their parents. Caring parents with high expectations for success will net positive results and improve the students' self-esteem and fate control.

Summarily this study suggests that one's self-esteem is very important, perhaps the key to the problem. Self-esteem is mentioned over and over as being critically important to academic success. The literature suggests that training in assertiveness will result in changed attitudes toward self, including increased self-esteem (Alberti & Emmons, 1970; Bower & Bower, 1976). One can deduce that some type of training or counseling is important in dealing with the anger present in some Black females. However, the key

concept is to improve the Black female students' self-esteem by providing them with a better educational environment, getting them involved in co-curricular activities, improving their peer relationships, and having the parents become a real partner in their educational endeavor. Parents can be trained to be supportive, encouraging, and to hold high expectations for their students to achieve. This will improve self-esteem and reduce aggressive behavior, improve attendance, increase involvement, and improve academic performance. Black females are affected by multiple forces, including parents, teachers, peers, and societal norms. Each of these factors must be dealt with to make the changes which will improve Black females' educational environment with an eye to increasing academic performance and reducing aggressive behavior.

Recommendations

1. A profile should be established of an offender and steps should be taken to provide counseling for those who fit that profile. The profile should consist of information about the student's attendance, involvement in co-curricular activities, achievement test scores, cumulative grade point average, and certain parent information. Since the same academic patterns generally exist at the intermediate levels, the profile should be established early in the student's school career. Certain Black females can be targeted early for special assistance to alleviate future problems.
2. It is essential that young Black females fitting the offender's profile receive counseling and assertiveness training

to cope with anger and other problems faced on a daily basis.

Research has indicated that young Black females can benefit from having assertiveness training. It is recommended that assertiveness training be provided in the intermediate schools, along with more traditional counseling.

3. Each school should provide a support group like CLASSI (Classmates Listening and Supporting Self-Images). Support groups such as this provide a unique experience for some girls to belong to an organization that listens and gives support in working out problems encountered in school and the home. These support groups can start at the elementary level and participants paired with students at the intermediate and high school levels. This provides an excellent opportunity for students to join together and discuss life's problems and perhaps find answers to those problems.

Many times in a support group of this nature, there is no need to have a specific topic to discuss because someone always has a problem. Hearing how someone else would have handled it can be very beneficial. This group not only promotes discussion, it promotes pride and commitment as well. The group can be involved in activities from drug awareness programs to fashion shows. Older girls can take younger girls bowling, to athletic contests, the movies, and to many other activities. Support groups such as CLASSI are essential to the development of certain Black females in the educational setting.

4. It is not only important that young Black females join a group like CLASSI, it is essential that they become involved in their school, as well. Each Black female should become involved in at least two co-curricular activities per year. Involvement makes the educational experience more rewarding and can also help build self-image. The activity program is also an excellent way for some teachers to demonstrate that they care about students, especially if teachers ask students to become involved in activities sponsored by the school. (Instead of suspending students for aggressive behavior, the student should perhaps be required to complete a period of involvement in a school sponsored activity, if they are not already involved.)

5. Courses reflecting Black culture and history should be required. Specialized Black study courses alone are not enough to fill this requirement. Each general course should also be integrated with Black people's contribution. Interviewees often talked about the study of contributions made by Blacks as being necessary for instilling pride and self-esteem, which appears to be the key to improving the educational environment of Black females.

6. Programs should be implemented to pair Black females with other successful adult female role models. Recently, interest has grown concerning programs of this nature for all students. This study suggests it is even more important for young Black females to have role modeling programs.

7. Open enrollment, parochial schools, and other private schools should be available as options for some Black females. Several Black females have benefited greatly from being separated from negative influences/environments, and some of the interviewees reported the positive rewards of being on open enrollment, attending a parochial school, or private school.

8. Parent training should be recommended for those parents whose children fit the profile of an offender. Most parents want to do the right thing to help their children achieve success, though some parents are not sure what they should do. It is imperative that parents attend training sessions that will teach them how to support their daughters. Parents need to be given skills in discipline, how to present information on sex and drugs, how to be involved with their daughters, and other topics of their choice. Parents must realize the importance of having high expectations and encouraging their daughters to be appropriately competitive in life.

9. All teachers should have inservice training in dealing with aggressive Black female (offenders) problems. Teachers and parents both have to be made aware of ways they can help to alleviate problems faced by and caused by offenders. A caring teacher can make a tremendous difference, because most students do not want to disappoint caring teachers or parents. Teachers need to be sensitized to the many ways they let some Black females know they are second-class citizens. These include:

- a. exclusion from co-curricular activities;
- b. unwitting encouragement of Black females to assume stereotypical roles of Black women in American society;
- c. more social isolation in desegregated classes than Black males face;
- d. a school curriculum that reflects the majority American society, but leaves out Black females more than any other subgroup of students;
- e. indirect encouragement to pursue social contacts rather than high academic achievement;
- f. Black females not receiving the noteworthy type of praise often reserved for White females; and
- g. having Black females serve as a go-between or social integrator, and as a conduit for information from teachers to peers and peers to teacher.

There are many other areas teachers should be inserviced in to be aware of the problems faced by some Black females. As stated by one interviewee, "A teacher needs to be more of a social worker these days than anything." The school environment reflects the pattern that suggests society values male over female and White over non-White. This definitely has an effect on Black females' academic achievement.

This study suggest that more effort should be concentrated on the plight of the Black female. The answer to helping young Black males and the Black family may very well be through helping young

Black females. Black females generally love their children and will help them more than anyone if they are able to do so. In the interest of bettering the society, the education of the Black female is critically important, particularly for those this study has termed as offenders. The area of education for the Black female remains a fertile, critical, needed focus for additional research.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

DATA FORM

NAME _____ SCHOOL _____

PARENT INFORMATION

Lives with mother only _____ father only _____ both parents _____

other _____

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

9th _____

10th _____

11th _____

12th _____

ATTENDANCE--DAYS ABSENT 9th _____ 10th _____ 11th _____ 12th _____

Ave. _____

COMPOSITE ON ITED _____

ACCUMULATIVE GRADE POINT AVERAGE _____

APPENDIX B

Interviews

Interviewee 1

When interviewee number one was asked about her school experience, she said she wished she had taken more math and science classes.

"I wish teachers would have pushed me harder to do my school work. I didn't like math when I was in high school, but now I realize how important math and science are to being successful. I started cosmetology school and I discovered that you need to know something about science and math; it was just not doing hair. I think that math should be pushed more because math has something to do with everything. I did not like history because they did not discuss the contributions made by Black people. I did like my writing course because I had a very good teacher and he was understanding of student needs.

I had an opportunity to attend a parochial school for a couple of months. The teachers pushed the students harder to complete their homework. The students were afraid not to turn in their assignments. There were only a couple of teachers in high school that cared enough to push you and talk to you about your personal problems. There were a couple of teacher associates and one counselor that I could talk to on occasion. I disliked one teacher who was always gossiping about other students' business. Teachers should not talk about students' personal business to other students.

Teachers should help students and make the class interesting. They should encourage students to get involved in extra curricular activities.

I was involved in extra-curricular activities when I was at the intermediate level, but when I got to high school, I was interested in other activities. I got involved with a few friends that were not that interested in school. I got pregnant in the 11th grade and missed a year of school. I had to take care of my baby because my mother was in prison and I did not have anyone to help me.

I did not have any real close friends. I knew a lot of smart students, but I did not socialize with them. I spent most of my time with about three girls who were like me. I have one person I consider to be a close friend now, but we fall out with each other a lot and then we go our separate ways. I have only had one true friend--she stayed by my side through all of my personal problems.

I have had a lot of personal problems and I ended up going to prison for attempted murder. I got into a lot of fights when I was in high school. Most of the fights were hearsay stuff and people bothering my boyfriend. My boyfriend played a lot of mind games with me. I was very angry and I kept most of the anger inside. I was really angry because my boyfriend was dating a White girl. This was part of the mind game that he was playing with me. He would tell me how much he loved me, but he would always end up dating the White girl. I was also angry because my mother and

father were in prison. The person everyone thought was my father, was not my real father. I did not want to tell people who my real father was because he was in prison.

I was not aware of all my anger until I was incarcerated for nine months for attempted murder. I was in a very stressful relationship and I did not handle the situation well. I got mad at this girl who was a friend. I felt sorry for her and was trying to help her. This girl's mother would drive her over to my house to start a fight. She still picks at me to this day. I will admit that I tried to run over her in my car. My mother was with me when it happened. My mother could not stop me when I tried to run over her and I don't want her to try to give me any advice now.

I have learned to control my anger better since I have been in Mitchellville. The counselors in the reformatory said that my anger goes back to childhood. They held small group counseling sessions to let you work through some of your problems. I did not fight with anybody when I was in Mitchellville because the consequences were too heavy. I had a few friends that were lifers and they were the best people to talk to because they did not try to cause any trouble. I was on my best behavior because I wanted to get out of prison to see my child. My mother took care of my son when I was in prison.

My mother tries to give me advice now and tell me how to raise my son. When I was in high school, she did not help me. My mother was in prison most of the time I was in high school. The only time

I remember her helping me in a positive manner was when she bought me a typewriter. I would sneak back to school for extra help in typing because I did not want to let my mother down after she had bought me that typewriter. I had to pass that class. My friends didn't even know that I was sneaking back to school for extra help.

The only problem was that when I really needed my mother, she was not there. I was on my own most of the time. I did get some occasional help from my grandmother, but I received very little help and encouragement from my mother. I lived in my grandmother's old house by myself during most of my high school years.

The only real mistake I made was in not being able to control my temper. I did not do any drugs. I learned a lot about not doing drugs from watching the trouble my mother got into. Drugs are getting a lot of people in trouble. Parents need to pay more attention and help their children when they are young and need help. They need to know about drugs and having babies. My mother tries to give me advice now, but it is too late for her to tell me anything now. There are too many girls getting into trouble and their parents are not helping them. Some girls are doing more to help their parents than their parents are doing to help them.

If I had a chance to go back and talk with young Black girls, I would tell them that they need to stay in school and be careful not to get pregnant, like I did. Young girls need to be careful with boys. I would also encourage them to take more math and science

classes. I would tell them to get involved in high school activities. If you get involved, you can get your mind off boys.

I would also like to see the teachers push students harder to do their homework. I particularly think they should push math and science. It would help if teachers talked to Black kids about Black people's contributions. This would help some of them to be proud of themselves. I also believe the district's discipline and attendance policies were good because some students would take days off because they knew nothing would happen. I just think teachers should be tougher."

Interviewee 2

When interviewee number 2 was asked about her high school experience, she said she enjoyed the social aspect of school better than the academic portion.

"I enjoyed the few activities I was involved in and this helped me to complete my education. In the social activities I was involved in, there were few people who indicated they cared. I needed someone to say that they wanted me. It meant a lot to me when someone would ask me to join a certain club. I needed a teacher to care about me. That meant more to me than anything--to have someone care about me and not just be teaching to earn a paycheck.

I really didn't get serious about my academic work until my senior year. I knew I had to get enough credits to graduate, so my academic work took on a little more significance. If I had to do it all over again, I would start in the 9th grade and tend to

business. It was not that I couldn't do it, I spent so much time goofing around. I was determined to make it because I got pregnant in my senior year and everybody thought I wouldn't make it. I attended the Hawkeye Tech Success Center to get extra credits. I didn't get to see my baby from early in the morning until after 9:00 at night. I didn't know if my child was with my mother or my aunt--I would block it out of my mind because I was determined to make it. If any girl wants to make it through school, she can, even if they do have a child because I did it and I had a lot of personal problems. School was actually a relief to me because I did not have a chance to enjoy life at home.

My mother had my baby sister and brother when I was ten years old. I ended up taking care of my sister and brother. I'm real bitter about that because I missed being a teenager. I changed diapers, combed their hair, cleaned the house, cooked, and then fed the babies. I had to take my little brother and sister to school in the morning and pick them up after school. My mother did not work and I still had to do everything. My mother never cooked or cleaned the house because I did those chores. I was thankful for some of the things my mother did for me, but I was very resentful because of the other things she did. I was resentful because I had to raise my brother and sister like it was my family. That is why I decided to have my own family. I moved out of my mother's home before I finished high school because my mother would make me do everything and my older brothers did not have to do

anything. They could come and go as they pleased. I got tired of being their maid. I missed a vital part of my life. I can't remember giggling like a teenager or having a boyfriend take me out to eat or to a movie. I hate to hear my sister giggle when she comes over to my apartment. I know that this is not right, but I never had a chance to giggle, be silly, and call boys because I had to take care of my sister. I was very bitter about having all those responsibilities.

I got into a lot of fights, especially at the intermediate level. I fought a lot over "he say" "she say" types of stuff. My mouth got me into a lot of trouble, but I didn't fight so much when I got older. I was into it the whole year with this one girl. Some of us would fight simply because we did not want the other girl to be friends with another girl that we did not like. That is one of the reasons why most of my friends were males in high school. A lot of people thought I was having sexual relationships with them, but I was not. It was just easier to get along with boys than girls. Even now, the guys are my best friends. Girls like to talk too much and tell other people your secrets. Even the good students were always putting on a front. They were a bunch of phonies and they would talk about you behind your back.

I used to hold a lot of stuff inside. I got sick and threw up a couple of times because I would hold things in. I had one teacher asstte who would encourage me to talk about things that were bothering me. I didn't have any freedom to do things and

when I did, I would do everything that I had a chance to do. I would do everything my mother told me not to do.

I was also bothered tremendously about my boyfriend going with this White girl. My boyfriend was an outstanding football player. I was with him when he was a nobody. Then this White girl came along and started messing with him. I have a bitter hatred for all White people as a result of this. I know it is wrong to hate, but I can't deal with talking to White people. My brother brought a White girl to my apartment and I asked her to leave. I know that she didn't do anything to me, but I just can't handle dealing with White people. I tried to accept the fact that he wanted this White girl, but I loved him. He would lie about his relationship with her and it caused me to have a lot of bitterness and anger. My boyfriend has not done anything for his children. He bought his daughter a can of milk; he has not bought anything for his son.

I am going to make sure that my children have everything they want. I'm a little afraid that I feel that way because I'm not sure if giving them everything they want is the right thing to do. I have a friend that is jealous because of the things I bought my daughter. This friend would come into my apartment and look through my closets just to see what I bought new for my daughter. She was my friend until I started to fix up my apartment and buy things. She wanted to check my closets to see if I had more than she had. I do not value any girlfriend because they are a lot of trouble.

If I could talk to young Black females, I would tell them to love themselves before they love anything else. Don't let anyone put you down. You can do what you want to do. If you want something, go to work for it and get it. I would tell young girls to be serious about school and do their homework. My mother never did check to see if I ever did any homework. She didn't care, as long as I cooked and cleaned the house. I never remembered doing any homework at home. I was too busy at home to do homework. I didn't do any activities with my mother. Things will be different for my children.

I would also like to tell teachers to care about kids. Teachers should ask kids to join in on extra-curricular activities. They should show that they really care. There were not a lot of classes that really helped me to feel proud. I was proud to be Black, but there should be classes to help instill pride in Black kids. I thought the discipline policies in the schools were good. The policy on fighting was good because, on the second fight, you were out of school for the year. If this type of policy were not in effect, some students would fight all year. Teachers and administrators should enforce all rules because that will help some students to make it through school. Black students must know that school is serious business."

Interviewee 3

When interviewee number 3 was asked about her high school experience, she said she liked math best.

"I took all the college preparatory classes. I was also very interested in all kinds of extra-curricular activities--they were very important to me. I was involved in cheerleading, volleyball, basketball, and show choir. I had a lot of friends and being in extra-curricular activities helped me to be the homecoming queen and made me more popular with the boys. I was involved in extra-curricular activities in intermediate school and continued in high school. I was highly involved because my sisters and brother were involved, and it was just something I wanted to do. Our family was very close and I always wanted to do the things they did. As a family we did a lot of things together. We went on vacation and many other places together. My parents never pushed me to get involved in activities, but they did push me to succeed in the academic area. I studied very hard in school. I finished a lot of my work in study hall, while a lot of students were shooting the breeze. I did not waste a lot of time. I had a cousin and a few other friends that I was real tight with. I did not worry about being in any clique. It was not cool to get good grades, so I did not run with many students. I had a lot of friends, but I did not hang with them. I was always careful not to hang with the wrong people. I never got into any fights. I think fighting is stupid. Most of the girls I know that got into fights were fighting because of boyfriends. Black girls are very possessive of their boyfriends. They don't want them to see anyone else. They feel like "this is my man--don't touch him--he's all mine." The guys

don't think that way and they will go with anybody. They go with a lot of White girls. The White girls are more lenient with them. Black girls won't take any crap from them. Black girls are also more verbal. They will tell you if they don't like you. Black girls are not going to let you get away with nothing. Sometimes fights get started over gossip. Sometimes fights start because one friend may not want you to be friends with another girl she doesn't like. I remember one time rolling my eyes at another girl and acting a fool because I was trying to hang with the group. I hung out with my family the most. I had good support from my parents. Some teenagers rebel against their parents because they think their parents don't understand them. I was scared to rebel against my father. He didn't spank me, but it was the tone of his voice that told me I had better not cross him. I also wanted to please my parents. The only time I really disappointed my parents was when I got pregnant in 11th grade. They still supported me and I finished school and later completed college. There was never a time when I did not think that I was not going to college. My mother took care of my baby. My parents always expected me to do something. My parents pushed me and told me when I turned 18, I must be ready to take care of myself. They supported me and had high expectations for me to do things. I have plans now to go back to school and pick up my Master's Degree. The only way my parents let me down was that they did not talk about sex. I had one sexual relationship with a guy and I got pregnant. Parents

need to talk to their children about sex. My father did not let me date, he made sure I was 16 years old before I had a chance to date. When I did start dating, my boyfriend put a lot of pressure on me to have sex.

I wish I could have had someone to talk to about sexual relationships. I could not talk to my parents or teachers about this. There was one counselor at school I could talk to. There were a lot of good teachers, but they were men and I didn't feel I could talk to them. I think counselors need to encourage students to do their best. Counselors need to tell students which subjects to take in order to be successful in life. If it was not for my parents, sisters, and brother, I would not have gone to college. My sisters and brother went to college and I knew I was going to go. Teachers need to be more caring and encourage students. They need to encourage students to do their best academically and to be on their best behavior. I think that having strict school policies is good. If you give a student a certain amount of days they can miss, they will take them. I think attendance and behavior are important. I didn't have any problems because my parents expected me to be in school every day and behave.

If I could talk to young Black females, I would tell them to stay in school and not to get pregnant. If they get pregnant, it will destroy their will to continue to strive for their goals. I would also encourage young Black females to find someone to confide in when it comes to personal matters. They should try to find a

teacher or counselor to talk to if they can't talk to their parents. I would also encourage them to set goals to achieve and to get involved in extra-curricular activities.

Kids in high school cannot think past tomorrow. I would ask teachers to help encourage them. I believe Black rap sessions might help students to talk about their feelings. Day care centers in the schools would be helpful for pregnant girls. They could take turns helping at the day care center in order to complete their educations. I know they can make it because I did and I completed my degree in Sociology."

Interviewee 4

When Interviewee number 4 was asked about her school experience, she said she liked her school experience at the intermediate level better.

"I liked the intermediate level better because it was more relaxed. There was a lot less pressure from school and from peers. In high school, you have a lot of pressure from trying to please people and from trying to be something that you are not. You worry about dressing and who is the baddest when you should be worrying about your books.

I did enjoy being involved in activities in high school and I especially liked music. I was involved in musical activities all the time I was in high school. I was asked to play the piano for 9th grade chorus and I got a little tired of people taking advantage of my talent. When I was in high school, I always liked math,

even though I was not good in math. I did not like history and English. I did like my music teacher because he liked Black music. The other academic classes did not really talk about Black contributions. I remember once when I mentioned a Black person's contribution in history class, and the teacher ignored my comment. I was very irritated by this. In history, the teacher only talked about a few famous Blacks. They did not spend enough time on history concerning Blacks. They spent a lot of time talking about Hitler and the Jews. I realize that the history about the Jews and the Germans is important, but not as important to me as history about my people. To have one Black history class that is taught separate and it is not mandatory, is not enough. We do not have enough role models and it is important that schools do a job to help young Black people be successful.

I was also the secretary of the student senate in my senior year. I was involved in student government as a homeroom representative during 9th through 11th grades. I was the manager for the track team. I enjoyed sports because my father and brothers were involved in sports and I wanted to get involved. My involvement helped to make school enjoyable for me. I think it is important to do something other than to study books. Some Black students might get a little involved in some activities like drama if they were not so White oriented. All in all, my involvement helped me to get along well with others. I never got involved in a fight. Most of the fights that I know about were fights over boyfriends.

There were also a lot of fights over "he say" "she say" stuff. I think fighting is ridiculous. I have only seen a couple of fights in four years at the college level. Someone was fighting or wanting to fight every day in high school.

When I was in high school, I had about four close friends. We were friends at the elementary level and we continue to be friends to this day. In high school, we would ride around together, but we never went to places where they were drinking alcohol. My friends and I would have slumber parties and stay overnight at each other's homes. I think it is important to find a group of people who share the same ideas that you have, then you do not have the pressure to do something against your will. Peer pressure is so rough that if your friends do something, chances are you will do the same thing. Sometimes girls will lie about what they do. So, if some girl lies about what she does, someone else will do it so that they will fit into the group. It is hard to be yourself in high school. I know how to deal with all of the girls, even the ones who got into trouble. I was friends with everybody and got along well with all people. I always knew better than to do anything that was wrong. I didn't feel like I was above anybody, I just knew how to relate with them. I always felt that I knew how to get along with others and I always thought that I was going to be successful. I'll tell you what I think helped me to be successful. I went to Parker's Academy. My mother got me and my brothers into the Academy before we attended kindergarten. I think that going

to the Academy made a tremendous difference because I was taught to be competitive at an early age. We were taught that we were somebody. The Academy made us believe in ourselves. My mother never forced us to study. She would chastise me if I got bad grades. My mother and father got divorced when I was in elementary school. My mother was the one who was tough on us. She would include my dad in decisions concerning us. My dad was more passive and he would talk to us. My mother might spank us. We knew that the final results of what we did had to be positive. If they were not, I knew I was in trouble.

My father would also talk to us whenever we got into trouble, but my mother was the person who gave us a lot of support. My mother took us on vacations each year. I did a lot of things with my mother. My dad also took us on some trips. When my dad took us on a trip, we stayed in hotels. This was important to me because I learned how to eat in public. It also made me feel good and it helped to build my self image when I was dressed up nice and going out to eat.

I also had a job in 10th grade. It was important to me to have a job because I learned to be responsible. Having a job also kept me out of a lot of trouble. The more spare time you have, the more trouble you get yourself into. I didn't have time to get into trouble. I did most of my studying early in the morning before I went to school. I did not have to be told to study because I always wanted to be competitive. I know some parents who made

their children study from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. But my mother did not set a time. I never wanted to be on the bottom. I always wanted to be on the top with the valedictorian. Dr. Parker always stressed and made students say, "I am somebody." If I could go back to school and talk with young Black females, I would stress to them that they can be somebody. It is important to be yourself and tell them that they do not have to please anybody. They should not have to worry about peer pressure. Nobody can change you and you have to be the best person you can be. You should be careful who your friends are. You should also be careful with boys because once you have a baby, you will be down. Only a few girls that I know that had babies made it through school successfully. I would also tell students to take whatever subject they like very seriously. They should take subjects that are challenging. It might be better to take a course where you might get a "C" than to take an easy course and get an "A."

I believe that teachers should take a job because they care and want to help. Teachers should never embarrass students. They should build students' self-esteem. Teachers should be willing to stay after school to help students. I remember one teacher giving me extra help. He really cared and that made a big difference to me. He knew when I was not ready for a test and he would give extra encouragement and individual help. That also was my favorite subject, even though I only received a "C" for a grade.

It is important for students to stay in class, even though it is tough. It is important to have rules and to enforce them, but I do not agree with rules that drop students out of class. I just don't believe there should be any way a student should be dropped from class. Some students want to be dropped. You have to approach students as a friend and show them that you care. I think it is too late to try to get tough with kids once they are in high school. Teachers need to understand that there are a lot of homes that are not right. Some parents let their mothers take care of their children and sometimes the grandmother can't do anything with the kids. It is important for teachers to understand that they will have to care and help kids if they want to make a difference in their lives."

Interviewee 5

When Interviewee number 5 was asked about her school experience, she stated that she hated school.

"I hated school because of the people there. I couldn't wait until school was out so I could go home. I was never involved in anything. I do remember getting into a lot of fights. Some of the fights started because kids would talk about other people all the time. They would pass rumors around and I got tired of hearing about people talking about me. Most of the fights started because of boyfriends and people passing rumors. I really never started the fights, but I sure would finish them. I remember getting expelled from high school because of fighting: I returned the

next year to finish because I knew I needed a high school diploma to half-way make it in the world today. I simply did not like school or the people there. There were some teachers that I did not like, but mostly it was the students that I did not like. I had a couple of close friends, but that was it. I didn't want to get involved with others because they would talk about you. I think they did this because they were jealous. Some of the students really made school miserable, along with a few lousy teachers.

I tell you right now, you really need teachers who care. There were only a few teachers I liked. I liked my math and accounting classes because of the teacher. The fact that he cared made a difference to me. Too many teachers just do not care. They need teachers who care whether you learn. Some of them will let you slip right through the cracks. They have got to let you know they care. I reached a level where I could not do the work and the teachers should have recognized that I needed help. They never recognized this. If they realize it, they didn't care because I did not receive the help I needed, and I had to really struggle.

I made a mistake in that I did not tell my mother that I couldn't do some of the work and I didn't tell the teachers I couldn't do it. I thought the teachers would recognize I couldn't do it and help me. I tell you, they will just let you slip through. I will never forget the counselor who told me that I was dumb. I remember how mad it made me because he was supposed to be a person

to help. I will never forget it because he told me I was dumb and stupid.

My mother and father did care about me getting an education. They never set aside any certain time for us to study, but they did care a lot. My mother was a very hard worker and she has worked hard all her life. That is why everybody in my family has held down a job and worked hard to get what we want. I'm working at IBP right now and the job I have is not easy.

If I could talk to young Black females now, I would tell them to stay away from having babies and get their education. I have two children now and I am married, but it is rough out there. Kids need to have the right priorities. There is a time for everything. I would also tell them to pick the right friends. If you have the right friends, it will help keep you out of a lot of trouble.

Parents also need to do their part. Some parents are letting their children grow up too fast. They let them wear too much make-up early in their lives and they grow up much too fast. Parents should let girls be little girls for awhile. Some of these girls are so bold, they are calling boys on the phone and bothering them. Parents should try to help each other work out some of the problems concerning young girls having these babies. If one parent knows something or sees something, they should let each other know. It is a definite mistake to have two or three babies and no one to help you raise them.

I would like to tell teachers that they really need to care about kids. Some kids have some real problems in their lives that the teachers don't even know about. Teachers should encourage them and be careful what they say to kids. I will never forget that my counselor called me dumb and stupid."

Interviewee 6

When interviewee number 6 was asked about her high school experience, she stated that she enjoyed school

"I honestly believe that my teachers were interested in what I was doing. If I got a "C" on a test, they would come to me and talk and try to assess what was going on because they cared about how I was doing. There were two teachers that cared a lot. My math and English teachers were outstanding. There were some teachers that would write off some students because they did not think they could learn. My teachers did not write me off because they knew I was a good student.

School was a good experience for me because I got involved in a lot of activities. I was in Model United Nations, cheerleading, Olympiad Club, Young Christian Athletes, Spanish Club, Human Relations, and the swing show. Being involved was very positive and a good experience. The only negative experience was that I came close to getting into a fight. Some girls will start trouble over boys for no reason. Nine out of ten fights were about boys. I can see the same thing happening in schools today. I am a cheerleading coach at the high school and the same problem continues.

I believe the only way to stop girls from fighting is to go into the home and teach them that fighting is wrong. These girls are socialized in the home to fight for what is theirs. They are to protect what is theirs at all cost. There is nothing wrong with fighting to protect what is yours. I believe they pick up fighting from their mothers and other family members. I do not think fighting is related to income because I know a lot of poor White females and they just don't fight as much as Black females. White girls don't fight as much over boys as Black girls do. Black girls do not want you to look, touch, or say anything to their boyfriends.

I have a cousin who got into a lot of trouble in school for fighting all the time. She ended up dropping out of school in the 9th grade. She has four children and none have the same father. Her father tried to encourage her to get back in school. She would not go back to school to get her GED. She now has a child in the school system and his test scores are in the 10th percentile and she thinks this is all right. She is in one vicious cycle and she does not realize she is in serious trouble. I tried to tell her that she needs to socialize with the right people.

I always socialized with girls that did not get into trouble. I had about five good friends I ran around with most of the time. We did not get into any trouble. We would go out to eat a lot of the time. I did not go to any bars or places where they were drinking alcohol because I would have been in serious trouble with my parents. I couldn't go to a house party and stay too long. I

always had to come home early. I wanted to do some of the things that the other girls were doing, but I knew better than to even think about it too long. My friends and I would drive by some places, but we would never stop. My father was all business. I knew better than to do certain things because I did not want to get into trouble with my parents. If a teacher called home about something that I did wrong, I was in trouble. My parents always backed the teacher. It did not matter what I said, if a teacher called, I was in trouble. No questions asked--you were in big trouble.

My parents were really special people to me. We would take vacations together. We would watch television together or we went to movies together. We also did some things with our grandparents. There wasn't a choice. You didn't say you didn't feel like going--everybody went together.

My father would never let me quit anything that I started. I joined a chess club and I wanted to quit because I did not enjoy chess. My father made me stay in the club. I now enjoy playing chess and it is due to the fact that he made me stay in that chess club. If you started something in my family, you had to finish it.

My father would never let me come home without homework. I had to bring work home and sit at the table and do it. I remember when I was in 7th grade, I tried to tell my father that I didn't have any homework to do. He got me an encyclopedia and made me

write a report. That was the last time I forgot to bring school work home. I always found something to do.

I worked at Montgomery Wards when I was a senior and that helped me to stay busy when I was not doing my homework. I especially enjoyed my English classes, but my father required me to take math every year. I did not like science or math as well, but I learned to do it because I was required to take math. I also believe that there should be more courses to give Black females more pride. The classes that I took at Spelman College were full of intense Black history. You had a certain pride that you were Black and you could do anything. Things are a little better at the high schools now. CLASSI (Classmate Listening and Supporting Self-Images) is a good example of schools trying to work with Black girls to give them more pride. However, some of them are joining CLASSI for the wrong reasons. It is very important for Black females to have self pride. The girls need to have something positive to do. They do not necessarily need to be in competition with each other, but they need to have positive things to do. I have seen girls make a miraculous change by being involved in cheerleading. They started off with a bad attitude, but they learned a lot from working with other girls to do the cheers. They really change a lot from just working with other girls. I think if they were an officer of a club or involved in any activities, it would make a tremendous difference. It might not be a bad idea to require Blacks

to get involved in extra curricular activities as part of their graduation requirements.

I think the school discipline policies are important. I don't think the rules and regulations are tough enough. If some students are allowed seven tardies, they will take six. If they are allowed fourteen days to be absent they will take thirteen. I think that it is possible to never be tardy. There are some students who think that it is not cool to study. Some students will accuse you of trying to be White if you study. I remember a girl telling me how stupid I looked at graduation because I was wearing my top 10% honor medallion (required if you graduate in the top 10% of your class). Some girls do not have their priorities straight. They need help from parents and counselors.

I did not have that much help from my counselors. I knew what I had to do and I did it. I knew I was going to take math because my father insisted. Some things are changing because some girls are a little more sophisticated. Some of them are talking about wanting to be engineers, but I'm not sure this is due to counselors and teachers encouraging them or their parents encouraging them. It could be people other than teachers or parents that are encouraging some girls. I know they need encouragement. I have worked with Black Images and CLASSI to help build Black student's self pride. There needs to be more organizations out there to build self-esteem. I am in a sorority now that wants to help Black girls

at the high school and elementary level. I'm trying to do all I can to help, now that I have made it.

I'm still very concerned about young girls because there is still a lot of trouble they can get into. My friends were all pretty good students, but some of them ended up with babies and messing with drugs. Some of my friends got hooked on the things that drug dealers gave them and later they got hooked on drugs.

If I could go back and talk to young Black females, I would tell them to think about the future. I would tell them not to be short-sighted and think about next year. They need to think about three years from now and think about everything they do. Most of the girls are thinking about what they can do right now. They think about immediate gratification. They should put some things aside and wait. They should definitely wait before they have sex.

If I had a chance to talk with teachers, I would tell them not to pigeon hole the kids. The teachers must give them support and not give up on certain kids. Don't say that this is the best they can do and write them off. The school is supposed to be the institution that cares."

Interviewee 7

When interviewee number 7 was asked about her school experience, she mentioned that she liked math.

"I also enjoyed extra-curricular activities. I enjoyed being in the color guard. The extra activities helped to make school more enjoyable. I do think that a lot more credit should have

been given to Black people's contributions. They talked about slave trade, but no other significant contributions of Blacks. Talking about Black people's contributions would help build pride. It is important for Black girls to have pride so they can make it in today's world.

I didn't have a lot of friends when I was in school. I was never the outgoing type. I didn't have lots of friends because they would stab you in the back. Some of the girls did a lot of talking behind your back. I got into one fight that was started by another girl. I really think fighting is ignorant and it is hard to do something about ignorance. Some of the girls would jump on other girls about their boyfriends, when they should have jumped on the boy. Girls will really degrade themselves for a guy. I did not feel possessive about my boyfriend. I was just plain stupid. I didn't wake up until I saw him with another girl. I was a totally different person after that. My eyes have been open ever since.

I wish I could redo my four years of high school--I would do everything different. I was a good student academically, but I was very naive about boys. My eyes are wide open now. I was blind and I thought I was in love. I should have listened to my parents.

My parents were very strict and they did not allow me to do too much of anything. My father put a lot of pressure on me because my other sister got pregnant before she was married. A day did not go by that my father did not talk to me about getting pregnant.

I was not allowed to take driver education until I was a senior. I did not have a car to drive to school like some kids. My father would not let me go to any house parties. I could go to school dances, on occasion. I was not allowed to go to any bars. I wanted to go to some of these places because some of my friends went. When I got old enough to go to these places, I didn't want to go. I just didn't get a chance to do a lot.

I understand my parents better now, but because they were so strict, it caused me to sneak around. I got pregnant in my senior year and had a baby that summer. I ended up being the father and mother to my child. My boyfriend did not help at all with the child. Everybody tried to tell me that he was no good because he was going with this other girl. I was so in love that I couldn't see. He got the other girl pregnant too. We both had babies by him in a matter of three days time. I did not realize I was being used until I saw him with the other girl.

I want to go into social work to help other young girls because the teenage pregnancy rate is alarming. I was able to bounce back because of my parents instilling values in me. However, other girls are being devastated because they are getting pregnant. If it were not for my parents, I would have more kids by now. Society will just about write you off if you get pregnant in school and you are not married. I saw a poster indicating that the child would finish school before the mother finished and I thought that was a negative message. You don't want to encourage pregnancy,

but you don't want to send out negative messages like it's impossible to make it if you do get pregnant. I made it with the help of my parents. The only thing I fault them for was their strictness. When I got a little freedom, I couldn't handle it. My parents should have explained more to me about sex and I would have realized that I was not missing anything. It would have helped if they were not so protective. I would have been a little more responsible. I know they think they were doing this for my good, but I did not get a chance to see what it was like to fall and come back up. I would have learned how to be more responsible and make better decisions.

My parents did not make me study, it was kind of automatic. I studied a lot because I didn't really have anything else to do. I couldn't go any where. I also knew in my family, you came home and did your homework. I was close to my mother and we talk a lot now. I told my mother that I was thinking about moving out of town and she cried. My older sister is not at home and my brother is getting ready to go to college, so I am the only person around. I'm planning on finishing college this summer and getting a job in social work. I am planning on staying in this area to be with my mother. We used to load up the van and travel. We would travel to Mississippi because both my parents are from there. We do a lot of things together now. I think kids should be close to their parents. It helped me to have a positive attitude.

I also think it is important to start more groups like CLASSI to build positive attitudes and self-esteem. Girls should not feel obligated and be submissive to these boys who are taking over their lives. Whatever they find in these boys to make them feel good, they should find in themselves. If I would have had a chance to visit with girls in a group like CLASSI, it would have helped because they know about some of these experiences. I would have had a chance to learn from other girls. It would also be good to have other girls who have been there, go back and help other girls. Sooner or later their eyes will be open.

My school counselors were not of any help in the area of dealing with boys. There was one teacher associate I could talk to. I needed someone in school who genuinely cared and not someone who would tell your parents if there was a problem. Give me an opportunity to work the problem out before you contacted my parents. I remember one teacher associate that would call my parents regardless of having a legitimate concern. She would call my mother if I was walking down the hall with my boyfriend. It is extremely important to have people around who are concerned. It is also important to have Black teachers. I had one Black teacher in high school and one in elementary school.

If I could go back to school and talk with young Black females, I would tell them how important it is to get a good education. The better your transcript, the better your chances are of getting a scholarship. I would also tell them that it may be very difficult,

but be obedient to your parents. My father had a heavy hand and a hard swing and I was scared of him. But, when I look back, I know he had my best interests at heart. I think now they know they were too strict, but they were doing what they thought was right. I did not have a job when I was in school because my father really wanted to literally keep me under lock and key. This was mainly because of my older sister's problem. My father would tell me that he didn't want me to have a child. He was sincere when he talked to me about this. Severely strict guidance may have caused some problems, but it is better than being totally permissive. My father was tough and it would benefit the schools to be a lot tougher. Missing 14 days is too many. Seven is also too many times to be tardy. If you give students too much slack they will take advantage of it. Teachers need to care and lay down the law and do what they know is the right thing for kids."

Interviewee 8

When interviewee number 8 was asked about her school experience, she indicated that she liked the involvement in extra-curricular activities.

"I really enjoyed being in the swing show, human relations, and choir. I loved to sing, so it was easy to get involved in choir. My counselor influenced me to get involved in the human relations program and student government. I was also influenced by my math teacher. The academic work was easy. School would have been very boring without extra-curricular activities.

In the academic area, my favorite subject was English. The subject I cared the most about was math. I remember telling my math teacher that I hated math. She told me that she was going to change my mind about it. Math was hard for me, but once I solved a problem, I felt good about it. I also cared a lot about science because of my teachers. Some of the other classes were not enjoyable, but that was due to the teachers.

Black history was very important to me. Black history should be taught in the early years so students can develop some pride. Most Black students can't name five famous Black people. They need to have pride in themselves and develop some self-esteem. I developed my self-esteem early.

I was bad and stubborn when I was in elementary school. My elementary teacher called me aside and had a good talk with me. She explained to me that I had potential, but I was going to have to behave and pay attention. That talk by my teacher had a serious effect on me. My teacher cared and that made a difference. It is so important to have adults who care. It is very important to have adults that are not related to you, to talk to you and take an interest in you. You know that they really care because they are not related to you. If an adult is related to you, it's important that they care, too. A child can tell when you are really interested in them. When I was in intermediate school, my music teacher took a special interest in me. He saw that I had leadership potential. He told me that I had potential to turn the whole choir

around with my leadership ability. He was right, I exercised my leadership skills and the whole class changed. I recognized my own ability by the time I reached high school and became a real leader. Students need to learn about their abilities early. I think once you get into high school, it's too late to capitalize on your abilities.

My leadership abilities allowed me to have a bunch of friends and I was able to relate to both sides. You have to know how to play the game. In order to get somewhere you have to know how to deal in the White man's world. I had a lot of White friends. It started when I was on open enrollment. I made a lot of friends with White students because I would visit their homes and sometimes they would visit mine. I remember staying overnight at White students' homes quite a bit. It influenced my life quite a bit to see the other side. A lot of people are seeing the wrong side of things. They see people getting material things from illegal activities. I got a chance to see how you could get things because of people who had a good education. I learned how to articulate. I would see how they behaved and I learned a lot about manners. I learned some self-discipline. I see how important it is to get an education. I saw how they saved and spent their money. I hesitate to talk about this sometimes, but it was important to me. The only contact I had with other Black people was in church.

I did not go out to any bars because my parents did not approve. I went to a few school dances, but I didn't go to many because I

was not a good dancer. Partying was not a priority with me. I really didn't fit in well with people who wanted to party. I felt I really fit in when it came to extra-curricular activities. I got along well with most people in school. I had one problem with one of my best friends. She stabbed me in the back by playing a joke on me with a boy. I hate to admit it, but I distrusted Black females ever since then. I was also careful when I was dealing with boys. There are a lot of girls who fight over boys. They can't see the future. They fight over silly things. They can't see that the grades they get will determine if they will be able to go to college. Some girls don't care if they go to college--all they want to do is talk about who is going with who. They gossip a lot and some of them are very jealous of others. They spend their time worrying about insignificant things. I know they are very possessive of their men. I think the reason they are like this is because there is a shortage of Black men. There is a shortage because some Black men will go with White women, some are gay, some are in jail, some are on drugs, and some of them, you just don't want to associate with. The pickings are slim. When a good one comes along, you want to hang on. Black women will definitely fight when it comes to their men. I didn't fight because I did not want to get into trouble. I didn't want to let anybody down. I wanted to make my parents proud.

I made my parents proud by getting good grades. I knew I should not bring home any "D"s so I put pressure on myself to

perform. I had self-discipline and that is something you have to learn. My parent were supportive of me and I simply wanted to please them. My family spent time with us in church activities and we also went on vacation together. My parents spent a lot of time with us.

If I could go back and talk to teachers, I would tell them that they really need to care. If they are teaching for a paycheck they should get another career. Kids know when teachers don't care. I know a lot of this caring should start at home, but if some parents don't care, teachers have to care. Teachers can pull students aside instead of sending them to the office. Show them that they care. If a teacher sees a girl in trouble and she is crying because of a guy, that teacher should sit down and tell the girl that it's not the end of the world. The teacher should tell her to get herself an education and then she can be with who she wants to be with later. Some girls see that their mother is single, their aunts, and cousins are single, so they think they must hold on for life with this boy. Women teachers need to take a special interest in female students because they believe too much of what their peers are saying. If female teachers who have had some of these experiences would talk to the girls, it would give them some incentive not to let some of these boys ruin their lives.

I would also tell teachers not to be lenient with students. If they are not supposed to chew gum, don't let them chew gum. If a student sees the teacher let one student slide, they will have

to let the other students slide; then you have a big mess on your hands. So whatever you do for one, you are going to have to do for all. I think that rules and regulations need to be tougher because some people will go right to the limits.

I would also tell teachers to incorporate more college level courses to challenge students. Students need something to feel good about. They will feel better if they are challenged. I think they should be encouraged to get involved in extra-curricular activities. Teachers know about some student's abilities better than anybody. They should encourage students to get involved. If you see a student that talks a lot, a teacher should encourage them to get on the debate team. If a student is always humming in class, the teacher should encourage them to get involved in the choir. When they get into these activities, go and see them and let them know that you saw them perform. It meant a lot to me when my teachers mentioned that they had seen me perform my act in the swing show. If it is an athletic event, the teacher should tell the student they saw them make the touchdown. A teacher has to be more of a social worker these days than anything. You don't know what atmosphere kids are leaving home with. You don't know if they left home with a good meal, a piece of candy, a kiss on the cheek, or whether they got cussed out before they came to school. You have to be the one who makes things right for students. If teachers don't want to do these things, they should get out of the business. Things are a lot more complicated for students than

most teachers realize. All students need support, even the good students. If a teacher sees a child hanging around a certain trouble spot, the child should be asked what the attraction is. The teacher should tell the student what they know is right. It could make a tremendous difference once they are shown the teacher really cares. I think most teachers would be surprised if they knew students don't want to disappoint them when they know the teacher cares. To counselors, I would say, if you don't want to do your job, you should definitely get out of the business because you have the ability to influence a lot of children's lives.

If I had a chance to talk to Black girls, I would tell them they have a double strike against them. At one time things were a little more positive because of affirmative action. They could hire a minority female and kill two birds with one stone. I would tell them that they definitely need the best education they can get. If you get your education, you can get material things and self-respect.

High school girls need to know that they should not get pregnant. You have another strike against them if they get pregnant. Chances are they will have to raise the child alone. Even if they get married, that is not a sure thing. Some students can't see until they have some hard life experiences. They get possessive because they think they can't make it without that person. They see lots of other women without a husband. They need to know the right courses to take that will help them to be self-reliant and

independent. They need to concentrate on their education so they can take care of themselves. They also need to respect their elders."

Interviewee 9

When interviewee number 9 was asked about her school experience, she indicated that she liked math and science.

"Math helped me when I attended NIACC. I enjoyed being involved in extra-curricular activities, which I started in the intermediate level as an open enrollment student. Being on open enrollment was a good experience for me. In high school, I was involved in track and basketball. No one encouraged me to go out for these activities, I went out because I was a self-starter. I wanted to keep busy. A lot of girls should get involved in activities after school and keep busy. This would help them to keep their minds off the boys.

When I was in high school, I had a few friends. I really considered myself a loner. I stayed at home a lot to help my mother because she was sick with a muscular disease. I was glad to assist her because this also helped me to occupy my time. I know too many girls who had a lot of spare time that they wasted fooling around with boys. There were a lot of girls that got into fights over boys. I'm working as teacher associate in an intermediate school now and I see this same thing happening all over again. I believe students are getting into more problems now than when I was in school. I think they are getting away with a lot more misbehavior.

I remember getting into fights over my boyfriends when I was in school. The girls today are getting into more fights than I did. I think it is real stupid to fight over a boy now. I was lucky because I did not get pregnant. Some of these girls are having sex with these guys and they think that they own them. If they get pregnant, the guy will drop them and move on to the next girl. I was smart and did not let that happen to me. These guys will make a baby and then they are gone. I'm not married and I don't have any children. I'm always talking to young girls now about being careful about sex and about fighting each other. Some of them probably should go on open enrollment. When I was on open enrollment, I didn't have many problems with fighting. When I came back to high school, I was around more Blacks. I got into a lot of problems until I got adjusted. Black girls like to start trouble and gossip. Some of them are very two-faced. They cause more trouble in school where there are a lot of Black students. Once I got adjusted and back into activities, things were better for me.

I think a lot of the problems are caused by the fact that the parents are not raising their children. Some parents are in the streets and they leave the children to raise themselves. Parents are letting their children grow up too fast and they are having sex and ruining their lives. Too many young girls are thinking about sex and not the future. It is the job of the parents to encourage them. My mother and father were separated, but my mother

gave me encouragement to think about the future. I was also a self-starter. My mother did not have to put pressure on me to study. I would study when I came home from my school activities. My mother insisted that we must finish the 12th grade and that was always on my mind. My father never really got involved because he did not stay with us. I attribute a lot of my self-starting abilities on open enrollment and seeing a lot more students who were self-starters.

I would encourage teachers to talk with students about getting involved. It would help with their self-esteem. It is also important for teachers to treat student with dignity. Some teachers make you feel bad when they say certain things to you. Some teachers make you feel dumb. They talk above your head. I would tell teachers to make sure they do not make kids feel dumb. I have heard them say things that hurt kids' feelings by talking to them about being on ADC. Some students can't help it if they are on ADC, and teachers need to know what words to use and what words not to use when dealing with students. This is important because it is easy to discourage kids if they think you don't care. At the same time, you have to take charge and let them know that you mean business. Students need to know who is the boss. Teachers should demand respect. They have to be fair, but they should demand respect. The school rules are not strict enough. Students are getting away with a lot of misbehavior. Students have to learn

how to follow the rules because when they get a job, they will have to follow the rules or lose their job.

If I had a chance to talk to young Black females, I would let them know that I care about them. I would tell them that it is important to get along with their parents. I know some parents that let their older children take care of their younger children while they are running in the streets. Some parents treat their kids like they are friends--they even date together. It is important to train kids early to obey their parents and give them the proper respect. It is important to have a good relationship with parents. I would also tell them to wait until later to get involved in sex. These guys will make a baby and they will be gone and you will have the baby to take care of.

I would tell the girls that I think it is important to take math and science classes. It helped me a lot when I attended junior college. I also think it is important to learn about contributions made by Blacks to make students feel they are important. Students need to feel that they are somebody."

Interviewee 10

When interviewee number 10 was asked about her school experience, she indicated she liked science and physics.

"I still like science because I always wanted to know what makes things tick. I'm also interested in how the mind works. I got interested in human relation-type activities later and that was one of the reasons I decided to major in sociology at the

University of Iowa. I'm leaning toward being a counselor or some director of student support services. Another subject of great interest to me is Black history. It was important because I really didn't know that much about Black history. The teachers would teach just a small section of Black history instead of interjecting history throughout the whole course. The only part that was really included was the slavery portion. I really did not learn about Black contributions until I was enrolled in a contemporary Black experience class, which was like a Black history class. I learned a lot from that class. I believe that Black history is so important that it should be required. If it is not required, history classes should be taught where there is a balance. Teachers should teach about everybody's contributions.

The Black experience class at the university had more White students enrolled than Blacks. White students were really getting into the course. The White students assumed that Black students already knew what was being taught. They didn't know that I was learning right along with them.

It is also extremely important for students to get involved in extra-curricular activities. I was involved in drama, Spanish Club, Human Relations Club, and the Teen Task Force. My involvement gave me a sense of pride. It also helped me to work and get along with others.

I'm also glad that I took college preparatory classes because it helped me to prepare for college. I did not like math as well

as I liked other subjects. I would still encourage students to take geometry, algebra, and Math IV, because it will definitely help in college. I would tell students to take a foreign language. It is easier to take these classes in high school than waiting to take them in college. Students should look at the classes they are taking in their freshman and sophomore years to make sure they are preparing themselves for college.

My experience in high school was great. I did a lot of homework and a lot of extra credit work. No one had to drive me or set aside a special time for me to study. We grew up playing teachers. My mother would bring homework sheets and we would do them. We did a lot of family things together. We went on vacations together. We went out to eat together a lot. My parents had high expectations for me and my sister to achieve. My mother always told us that we were great kids. We did not give our parents any trouble. My dad would tell me when I was little that I was going to college. I didn't know what a college was all about, but I knew I was going because my father said I was. It was almost like a religion, my father said I was going to college and he didn't care which one, but I was definitely going.

I studied really hard. I would do my homework and then do extra credit. I would read encyclopedias and do reports for extra credit. I also worked at Ben Franklin at the end of my sophomore year. I would get off at 9:00 p.m. and study until about 1:00 a.m. I was different from a lot of students.

I was a little different, but I had a lot of friends. I did not go out to a lot of places. I talked on the phone to my friends, mostly. There really weren't that many places to go. I did go to a school dance occasionally with my father. I really was not a social person who did a lot of partying. My friends and I would have sleepovers at each other's homes on occasion. The things we did kept us from getting in trouble. I never got into trouble with other girls. I knew some girls who liked to fight. They would fight mostly over males. I think they got into fights because they lacked self-confidence and self-esteem. Some guys would tell them anything and they would believe it. It was like a poem that the guys would make up and the girls would fall for it. It made them feel wanted and good about themselves. I had high self-esteem so it did not bother me to hear boys talk that junk. But, the other girls would suck it up like a vacuum cleaner. I guess they are probably missing something at home. They are not getting the love and attention they need. My parents were always behind us. I didn't need any outside love from anybody because my parents loved us.

I did not get into any fights in my school career because I did not want to get into trouble. Some girls would also get into fights if their friends were involved in a fight. They would choose sides to help their friends. They really need something positive to do. It seems that too many girls are getting pregnant and dropping out of school. It just seems so boring to waste time.

The young girls believe all that junk that the older guys tell them. They need a lot of parental guidance because it starts at home. The problem is that their parents are out there in the streets themselves. I have seen mothers and daughters together on dates. The mother had a younger date and the daughter had an older date. The daughter was acting like she was 40 years old and the mother was acting like she was a teenager. Black females need guidance from home. I don't think classes about sex education will do any good because parents should start early to teach kids at home. It is too late to teach them in high school. I always played with boys when I was little and until I got into high school. I did not look at them with any interest until toward the end of my high school career. Most of them thought I was stuck-up. I was not interested because they were not mature enough. Even at the college level, the maturity is not there. I'm looking for the kind of guy that I can have fun with and he is a friend. I have a hard time figuring out how some girls can be so gullible, stupid, and disrespectful of themselves the way they are. What is wrong with them? I know they think girls like me are stuck-up or prissy. It's not like that, because I speak to everybody. If you need help, I would help anybody. That is why I would like to work in some school system. It would help Black girls to have someone to talk to. I just don't know where I would be if it were not for my parents. I know some kids that came out of the projects in Chicago--I wonder how they found the University of Iowa. Some of

the girls from there said they had to get out of that situation and they are doing fine.

If I could talk to teachers, I would tell them that there is a need for more Black role models in the system. If students have problems, a person of their own race will know more about where they are coming from. I think it would be extremely important for Black females to have some classes that deal with self-esteem. Black girls should not worry so much about dancing and social activities. They should know more about sex education. I believe sex education should start in the home, but if it does not, the schools are going to have to do something. It would be nice if they can start early to get their education together. More Black role models can help this situation. I had good parents and grandparents to help. Students need to know what it is like if they are not successful. Nobody wants to be poor. I would encourage teachers to show students what type of life they would have if they get pregnant, have a bunch of babies and end up on welfare. I think that would be enough to scare some of them. In my sociology class, the teacher talked about how much less money females make. The teacher talked about how a male could be a dropout and still make more money than females that are college graduates. It made me mad to hear this. I would like to tell students about reality. It is not a pretty picture out there and people are not going to give you a fair shake. So far, I have not run into much

discrimination. I had some trouble once on the job and my mother talked to the manager and it was worked out.

I know students don't think about these things a lot because their parents are still paying the bills. They really need a touch of reality. They can't listen to these boys telling them they will be there for them because they won't be. I had one friend that got pregnant and the boy does not help. He does not call to see how the baby is doing. He does not have a job and he can't help if he wanted to. I would tell the girls that they better not get pregnant and they better get the best education they can. They better pay attention to their parents. It is a little scary even after you graduate because you really don't know what you are going to do."

Interviewee 11

When Interviewee number 11 was asked about her school experience, she talked about American Literature as being her worst and best class.

"I had to read a number of books and there was a lot of work involved in that class. It was my worst experience because I could not believe the amount of work involved. It was my best class because it was the one class that prepared me for college. I was in several advanced English classes which were also helpful. Math was not one of my favorite subjects--I would do it if I had to. I was not that crazy about the subject. My brother and sisters would help me with my math.

In high school, I did not have enough Black history. I know that history is important. Some students lose their identity because they do not know enough about their Black culture. I think it is really sad when you lose your identity. I have seen people at the university level who still don't know who they are. In college, I took Introduction to African American Society, Asian American Culture, and Literature of African People. They did not have enough about the African culture in high school. I did not know that the Black man invented the stop light. Just like my mother said, it is "his story" instead of history. I think Black history should be required. It would help some girls to have a stronger image. It is also important to get involved in extra-curricular activities to help improve their self-image. I was involved in basketball, track, CLASSI, gospel choir, swing show, office duties, and human relations. It would be important to go out and recruit students to get them involved. This would keep some girls off the streets if they had something constructive to do. They would be excited about getting involved again the next day. I was concerned about getting involved and making friends when I was a freshman. It helped quite a bit to have a brother and sister in high school when I was there. It was easier to talk to guys because the girls seemed to be jealous. I had a lot more friends that were boys.

I had a good working relationship with my family, but I did not have a lot of friends that were girls. Some of the girls considered me to be "stuck up." I would speak to the other girls,

but some of them thought I was acting as if I was too good for them. My sister said that it might have been the way I carried myself. A lot of friends are too much trouble, they are two-faced, and they gossip a lot. I can count my friends on one hand and still have two fingers left. It is a matter of trust and I don't trust a lot of people.

I remember the number of fights I got into. They were usually caused by hearsay. Girls do a lot of gossiping, but they fight more over their boyfriends. I have a cousin that is very possessive of her boyfriend. She does not want anybody looking at, talking to, or touching him. I'm not sure why girls are possessive of boys. They have a lot of growing up to do. CLASSI has helped some girls work out their problems. I have seen some girls go to their sessions mad and come out later talking to each other. I enjoyed CLASSI because it helped girls to get their problems worked out. Some of them have a lot of problems. Some of the Black girls want more intimate relationships, including sexual activities at an early age. They want things to be more like a marriage, whereas, the White couples that I know are more like friends. They have fun and go places together. Our relationships are much more serious which causes more problems. Girls think that having a baby will help them keep their boyfriend. They will fight in a minute about their boyfriend. I think fighting shows a lack of maturity now. I know now if someone calls you a name, you should walk away. I remember one fight I was involved in because the girl hit me first.

If someone hits you, then you have no choice but to fight. I really avoid a lot of trouble now because I don't have a lot of friends. There really aren't a lot of places to go or things to do. I ride around sometimes for entertainment. I consider myself lucky because I have my brother and sisters to do things with. I got a lot of encouragement from my family. At one time, I wanted to be a physical therapist because that is what my mother wanted me to be. I changed my mind and now I am considering education as a profession. I wish I had studied more in high school. My mother would check to see if I had some homework when I was in school. She did not require me to have a certain time set aside to study. My parents stopped all phone calls coming to the house at 8:30 p.m. She was always aware of what we were doing. Some parents do not know what their children are doing.

If I could talk to young Black females, I would tell them it is important to do their school work. I would tell them to set aside two or three hours every day to study. I would tell them to get involved in extra-curricular activities. This will help them fill up the day and be a part of something. This will also tell them to do volunteer work to keep themselves busy. I think they should do everything they possibly can to keep busy. I would recommend that Black girls take all the math, science, reading, and writing courses possible. I would like to see some girls get involved in the Upward Bound program during the summer.

I would tell teachers to be encouraging when they are dealing with Black students. They need teachers to talk to them and care. If teachers do not care and put a little pressure on students, they won't perform. That is the reason I'm majoring in elementary education. Students need to have someone to talk to them and to push them in a positive direction. I figure that at the elementary level, I can help and encourage students while they are young. If you get a good education, no one can take it away from you."

Interviewee 12

When interviewee number 12 was asked about her school experience, she remembered the human relations program as being important to her.

"I remember the counselor in charge of the human relations class. I enjoyed those classes more than anything I can remember. She let us work on the things that we wanted to. She did not interject her ideas on us. If there was any conflict with any of the girls, she would make us stay and work things out. There was no doubt in my mind that she cared. She really took care of business.

I was also out for track. We did a lot of things for Black History Month. I believe that Black History is very important. Parents are not teaching their children about their history or culture. I believe if the schools don't teach it, the Black students won't learn it. The schools do not talk about Black History enough. It should be integrated throughout the year, but it is not. They

don't even do a week on Black history. The main person they talk about now is Martin Luther King. I don't know whether the parents or the teachers are at fault. The teachers can't teach Black history if they don't know it themselves. I believe they should go back and take some classes on Black history so they can teach Black children about their history. I think school is different today. I don't think students are getting a good basic education. I think they should be doing a better job of teaching the basics.

When I was in high school, I thought that I fit in pretty good. I was involved in things and I ran for Homecoming Queen. I had a lot of friends when I was in school. I did not get into any fights. My friends and I used to go down to my brother's college to have fun on the weekend. We used to go bowling, have barbecues, and ride around for fun. Students are into drugs a lot more now than we were at their age. There are a lot of people who are losing their jobs, homes, and everything because of drugs. I know many people that are heavy into the drug scene. I think it is a matter of low self-esteem. We have a lot more competition for everything. I feel like I have been in heavy competition with other Black females. We have to worry about competition and pride. I do not believe other ethnic groups are into heavy competition with each other like we are. I feel that I have to be so much better. Other minority females from overseas can get a job quicker than we can. That really puts us into a category of struggling. I don't think they want to see us do better. We have to struggle twice as hard

as Black men. If a minority woman has children, she really has to struggle. This is particularly true if the man leaves her. I had a child after high school and I am not getting any support from the father. The father is in California and he has a good job and he still does not send any support. It is hard to raise a child by yourself. He does not deny that the child is his, he just does not support him. He does not send anything at Christmas or any other time. The way he has acted toward the child has helped to make me strong. My child has to grow up faster than the average child because I have to do everything for him by myself.

I would caution girls to be careful because some guys will play one girl against the other. Some girls set themselves up for trouble. This causes them to get into fights with each other. Some girls will even get pregnant on purpose to try to win the guy over. It almost never worked out the right way. I know a lot of girls who have tried to get pregnant, but it does not work. They end up on welfare and it is not enough. I was on welfare once and I got \$322 a month. It was not enough to make ends meet. Some people abuse the system because they continue to have kids so they can get more money. Welfare also causes some females to work part-time only, because they will get knocked off welfare. I think welfare kills their incentive to work. You might as well get an education so you can take care of yourself. I think some of the girls should realize they just can't count on some of those guys. They get involved and get real possessive because there is a shortage

of guys. You would be surprised at the number of guys I know who are in jail. I'm also bitter about the relationships some Black men have with White women. I think Black men down Black women. I don't think they believe we are strong enough to get out there and achieve. White women will take care of Black men and I believe they lose their self-esteem. When you start taking care of a Black man, he does not want to work or provide. He wants a Black woman to treat him the same way and there are not many Black women who will go that far. We are struggling to make ends meet. Why should we take care of some man? White women can come by the money easier and we have to struggle. They can get a loan at the bank a lot quicker than I can. I have to struggle for everything that I get. If White women need money, they can get it. Nobody is going to give us anything.

If a White woman has a child by a Black man, their children do not know if they are Black or White. I can see that on my job now, the children do not know where to be accepted. The minority children will accept them faster than the Whites will. I think there are a lot of Black females that are bitter about the relationships of Black males with White females. I believe we are good, but we are not going to take care of any man. I believe we are the most down graded thing on earth. We are not treated right. Black females need to work closer together to help each other; but there seems to be a lot of jealousy. If they think you are going to get ahead of them, they don't like it. If we could stop fighting

each other, we could really be strong. When we get together, there is a lot of hostility and frustration. Some of the girls that I went to school with don't even speak to me now. The people who speak to me are mainly the guys. Some of the people think they are so much better than others. I don't know why we are so hostile toward each other. Black people just don't seem to get along. We are so afraid that someone is going to get something that someone else does not have instead of being happy for that person. We should be happy because when you get something, you know you have had to struggle for it. There are some who achieve something and they forget where they came from. They try to act White and think they are better than others. This causes some problems, but we still need to help each other.

I have worked several jobs and the only people who have helped me are my parents. My mother helped to take care of my son while I worked. My mother has always been a big help. My father has helped too, because my mother is sick. My mother insisted that I study and she wanted me to go to college. My older brother did go to college and she wanted me to be just like him. They were harder on me because I was the only daughter. I could not take calls after 10:00 p.m. It is hard when you have to depend on your parents to help you when you should have the baby's father to help you. My parents have always been there to help. We were a pretty tight family and we went on vacation and did a lot of things together.

When I look at the future, I am scared for myself and for kids. I don't think there are any jobs for them. It is hard to get insurance and it is hard to get jobs. This is one reason that kids are involved in drugs. I'm really scared; I'm living one day at a time. I'm not sure what the future holds. I have thought about going back to school.

If I had a chance, I would like to tell Black females not to worry about boys because that will come later. They are too young to worry about a relationship. I think young girls are growing up too fast. I fault their mothers because they are not staying at home with their children. A lot of mothers are on drugs and the children are taking the place of the mother to help raise younger ones. Some of the girls are getting sexually abused by the mothers' boyfriends. There is no telling what is going on out there. So, they need to get an education. I would tell them to get involved in what is going on, go out for sports and get on some committees to help run things. When you get involved, it helps to develop your personality. It teaches you respect and you learn how to get along with others. Young girls need to forget about the boys if they want sex from you. They need to leave the boys alone. Don't be stupid--there is more to life than having children. The boys will make a baby and then will be gone. They should see that by looking at the pattern their mother is in. Girls seem to follow in their mothers' footsteps. If boys had any respect for you, they wouldn't be talking to you about sex. The school needs to

talk to girls about sex education. Their parents should do it, but some of them are on drugs and don't seem to care. So something should be done in the schools. The drug scene is bad. We have kids that come to school and talk about things their parents do at home. They are not trying to tell on their parents, they just need someone to talk to. There are a lot of parents in the streets with the kids. I know some mothers who run around with their daughters and they act like sisters. They are trying to be too much of a friend with their children. I have a friend that takes her daughter with her and she lets her daughter talk with her boyfriend. I think she is heading for big trouble.

I would also tell Black females to take human relations classes and Black history. I think Black history should be required. They should start at the elementary level and integrate our history throughout the school system. I think that would help to build a lot of pride.

If I had a chance to talk with teachers, I would tell them to be more concerned about students. If you are teaching just to get a paycheck, get out of teaching. I think there are some teachers who do not want to take the time to teach some kids whether they are Black or White. They need to find another job.

I remember my counselor, she was there for me. She was White, but she wasn't just there to make a paycheck. She really cared about helping people and there was no doubt in anybody's mind how

she felt about students. They also need to put the discipline back in the schools. The rules really are not tough enough."

Interviewee 13

When interviewee number 13 was asked about her school experience, she indicated she liked math.

"I did not like U.S. history because all they talked about was White people. In Black history, they talked about Black people. They need to talk about Black people in U.S. history. This would help to improve students' self-image.

I also think it is important for students to get involved in activities. I was involved in sports and other activities when I was in junior high school because it did not cost anything. I didn't go out for anything in high school because I did not have the money. I just lived with my mother only, while I was in school and we did not have a lot of money. My dad was married to another lady. She is White and I don't like her. I did not dislike her because she was White, but because she took my father from me. She wanted my father around for her kids, and not for his own kids.

My mother and I did a lot of things together. Some people thought we were sisters because she looked so young. We traveled together a lot and she tried to encourage me. My mother always told me not to let having babies stop me from getting what I wanted. I had one child in the eleventh grade and I was pregnant during my senior year with my second child. When I graduated and walked across the stage, I was pregnant, but I made it.

My mother was a lot of help to me; in addition, she helped me with the children. We were like friends in a sense. Sometimes parents helping you can be a mistake. When I had the first child, my mother, aunt, and uncle took care of it. I didn't feel like I was the mother. It was almost like I did not have a child. I didn't have the burden of taking care of him and getting up at night. I probably would not have had the second child if my mother had let me find out about all of the responsibilities of taking care of the first child. It is a lot of hard work to raise a child. My children's father has helped to support them some, but I'm on SSI and welfare. We were married, but then separated. I have been through a lot of difficulties in this relationship. I used to have good grades in school until I met my boyfriend. I thought I was in love and my grades really suffered. My mother tried to encourage me to study and I did study some, but my grades really dropped when I met my boyfriend. I wish I would have paid more attention to my mother when she was trying to tell me to get my education first. I later came to my senses and did a little better. There are a lot of girls that get themselves in trouble because of boys. I was at least 17 before I got into trouble. I know a girl now that is 12 years old and is going with men. It is almost too late to help somebody like that because she thinks she is grown. I tried to talk to her, but I believe it is too late. I have another friend who is pregnant now. I told her not to quit school and that she will have to be strong and finish.

When I was in school, I did not have a lot of friends that were girls. I did not go many places, just home and school. I just recently started going out. I spend a lot of time going to bingo games. They have bingo every night and I have spent so much time playing that my own kids are getting out of control. I spent too much time away from them. I don't do that any more because you have to raise your children when they are young.

Most of my friends are boys. I was kind of a tomboy and I grew up with the dudes. Girls are harder to get along with. They are supposed to be your friends and they are the main ones that you have to watch. They will tell on you if you do something. They will agitate and start a fight. When they break you and your boyfriend up, you will find later that they tried to go with him. I really didn't have a problem with the girls who were stuck-up. I tried to be cool with everybody. I got into five or six fights when I was in school. My mother would whip me and tell me to fight when kids used to pick on me and beat me up. I grew up fighting. I had to because I was an only child. I was angry and hateful. My father left us and that changed my attitude. I would fight, swear, and disrespect adults. A lot of other fights would start because of people being two-faced and sticking their nose in other people's business. Most of the fights now are because of boyfriends. The boys, most of the time, don't want either one of the girls.

If I could do it all over again, I would have listened to my mother. She was trying to tell me to get my education and wait to

have children later. You don't have to rush to have children. I was a pretty good singer and student, and my folks thought the world of me. I wish I would have listened to my mother because my boyfriend dogged me. I don't love him any more. I'm tired of him and how he acts like he loves me. I can't stand him now because all we do is argue. I'm not going to trust him any more. He was trying to make a play on another woman. Later, he came back and gave me some respect. A lot of guys don't give women respect. They will drive the other women around in your car. They will do things with the other women right in your face. My man would not do things in my face, but I would hear about it from somebody else. People would tell on him.

His mother has interfered with our relationship. She knew about him messing around with other girls and she did not want him to give me any money to help take care of his children. She hated me, and all three of my children are his. I tell you now I have been through a lot of crap.

If I could talk to young Black females now, I would tell them to make something of themselves. They need to listen to their parents. I realize that all parents are not right. Some of them smoke more dope than their kids. I'm talking about cocaine. One reason kids are bad is that their parents don't spend any time with them. It is too late when the kids are in junior high school, you need to talk to them when they first start talking. I know my own kids were getting out of control because I was spending too

much time going to bingo games--I went every day. I finally woke up and started to spend more time with my kids. At first I was trying to buy them. I would tell my kids if they stayed home I would buy them this or that. Parents need to take care of their children. I stopped buying things for myself. I spent money on my children.

I would also tell girls that they better take care of themselves. If they don't, they will be hurting in the future. They are trying to grow up too fast. I used to think that I would be glad when I was grown. I wish now that I was still a child. I would do more in school. I had to find out things the hard way. I know some girls now whose boyfriends have gotten them pregnant and won't claim the baby. They will just leave the girl by herself. It is too late for some of them. If you have babies, it is very hard on you. You miss out on a lot of sleep. You have to get up at night to take care of your baby. It is really hard if you don't have help.

I would tell teachers that they need to give kids information straight up. Tell them the straight up honest truth about the consequences of not getting a good education. Teachers need to let students know what is going to happen if they get involved with sex at an early age. Students need to know the truth about how things really are. They need to be taught about sex education. They need to know something about their history to build pride in themselves. Everyone should know about White and Black people's

contributions. I think the rules are all right. I skipped some of the classes I did not like and attended the ones I did like. I think teachers should make classes interesting for all students. I think there are a lot of teachers who do not care. They should give students incentive to do something positive so that they will have a future when they leave school. When I got out of school, I thought it was going to be a lot of fun. It is very boring and scary unless you have something to do."

Interviewee 14

When interviewee number 14 was asked about her school experience, she indicated that she liked human relations and rap sessions.

"I had a good counselor and I could talk to her anytime I wanted to. She made a big difference in my life. She was the human relations leader. I also liked my business law and accounting teacher. He was interesting and he explained things more. He had a joking side and he had a serious side. He was very understanding. I only had one teacher I did not like. This was because I could not comprehend what she was doing. The work was fine, but it was her style of teaching. I picked up most of the information for this class from the other kids.

I liked Black history. It is good if you want to know about your own culture. To me, I think it should be required. We have a lot of White history. If Whites know about our history, they will know what he had to go through and it would be easier to get

along. They would know more than what their parents are telling them about Blacks. Some students have an attitude because they don't know what we go through. We had a lot of hassles and we are just trying to get to where they are.

In the future, I want to move into my own house. My boyfriend can keep working at IBP and I am going to go back to school and take accounting. Right now, we share the bills. If he pays his share and I pay mine, whatever he does with the rest of the money is his business. I don't worry about what anybody thinks because you don't have a bunch of true friends anyway.

I had just a few friends in high school. Sometimes we would go out each week and eat. We would take turns paying for the meals. We also did a lot of riding around. We went to house parties. Sometimes we would just go to each other's homes and talk. Sometimes we would park and talk. We did not get involved in drugs the way the young students are getting involved now. The drug scene is way worse than it was when I was a student. There are too many young people selling drugs. They don't go to school. They think selling drugs is the easy way out. It is a quick way of making money. Instead of going to school, they sell drugs. They should go to school because there is no one out there to sell drugs to during the school day anyway. They might as well be in school.

I got into a few fights in school. I guess I was just being evil. The other girl was being evil and so was I. We did not have a conflict before that, we just didn't like each other. I

got into it with my boyfriend a few times. I did not fight over my boyfriend. I would never fight over no dude. If anything, I would go to him and fight him before I would fight some girl. Some girls will fight over boys to show who the baddest is. They try to make themselves look good in front of others, so they will front each other off. The girl should go to the guy and straighten things out. If you beat the girl up, you still have the problem and the guy does not really care. They will go and get somebody else anyway.

These girls are moving too fast--they better slow down. I know they are moving too fast. I'm trying to tell my cousin that she better slow down. I have been there, I know. Girls don't think about diseases. They don't watch the news. I never used to watch the news, but I watch it now.

I had a baby in my 9th grade year. My mother, aunt, and grandmother helped me with my baby. I lived between my mother and grandmother. When the baby was old enough, I put it in day care. I was determined to make it through school. I always thought about what would happen if I did not make it, how it would look to my child. Just because you get pregnant, you don't have to drop out of school. There are too many places now that will help you. Most people look at a young person, especially young Black ladies, and think if they get pregnant, they will drop out of school. I never thought about dropping out of school. I saw Oprah's show one time and she was interviewing a girl who was 15 and had dropped

out of school to be with her boyfriend. He graduated and she is following him around. I wish I could have been on that show to talk to her. A lot of the young girls won't listen, they think they know everything. We thought we knew everything, but these young girls are worse. These girls are getting in trouble all over, in school, out of school, over here, and over there.

I don't believe in anybody having to take care of me. I worked a whole year at IBP. I always had a goal in school to go to college. If I didn't go to college, I wanted to make sure I got off welfare. I was on welfare when I was in school. I lived with my grandmother and was on welfare for over three years, then I got off. I did not have any other financial help. I didn't have a father to help me. My father and mother never did get married. Every time my mother would file for child support, my dad would quit his job. He even does it right now. I have done more for my dad in the twenty years that I have been born than he has ever done for me. He lives with my grandmother. I got my own apartment and I work. My boyfriend also works. Whatever I want for the kids, I can get. My dad does not have a job, he does not have a house, and he does not have a car. He lives off my grandmother. He gets money from me and it should be the other way around. He should be helping me.

If I could go back and talk to young Black girls, I would explain to them what I went through, being pregnant and in school. It knocks you out of all the involvement and students need more things to do after school. They need to get involved in more things

like the drill team. I was not involved in anything at the high school level because I had to come home and take care of my baby. I used to be involved at the intermediate school. I used to run track and play basketball. I had my baby when I was in 9th grade and being involved in activities after school was history after that.

I would also tell Black girls to put school before their boyfriends. If he is truly your boyfriend, he will wait. Most girls at the intermediate level go with high school dudes. When I was in high school, we had guys that were out of school that worked. Instead of thinking about guys, girls need to think about the future. Think about your grade point average and think about the activities you want to be involved in. Girls should think about doing lots of studying. I did not study enough. I only studied in a couple of subjects--the ones I had the most trouble in.

I would also tell Black girls not to worry about what their friends say because they are not going to be there when you get in trouble. You better listen to what your mama is saying. When you are in trouble, your friends will tell you they will see you later.

The father of my first child did not help a whole lot. He would offer to pay child support when he worked. His mother helped some, but I just learned how to be independent like my mother. My mother couldn't depend on my dad and I'm not depending on my child's dad. My mother made it and she had me when she was in 10th grade. It cuts down on your free time, but my mother and grandmother did

help me. I probably had more free time than other girls who got pregnant because they helped me. I went to a lot of games and school dances. I was going to graduate because I wanted my mother to be able to say that I made it after I had a baby and I wanted my daughter to know that I made it.

I think some girls think it is cute when they have babies. They may be glad to have something they can say is theirs, but how are they going to take care of that baby? When I was on welfare, I got \$322 a month. You can't make ends meet on that unless you are staying with your parents. I'm paying \$225 a month for my apartment now. I couldn't make ends meet if I was on welfare. Girls had better put the books first. Some places want you to have a high school diploma. IBP asked about my diploma. I don't know if you need it or not, but they asked if you had one.

I would like to tell teachers to have two sides. I enjoyed teachers that were easy going and that were understanding. Sometimes things do happen that may sound weird and teachers need to be understanding. The rules are all right, but they need to get stricter on the number of days that students miss. Students need to get involved and teachers should encourage them. Teachers need to give students advice even though it does not pertain to the subject matter. When my counselor saw some girl going in the wrong direction, she would talk to her. Teachers should talk to kids and give them advice even if they get mad. They might get mad, but they are going to think about what was said. It might change their

mind once they think about it. The girls need to think about getting an education. They are going to be with these boys for a minute and then they will find somebody else, but if they get an education, it will be with them for a lifetime."