



PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY

A Member of the Texas A&M University System

WHITLOWE R. GREEN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Dissertation Defense Announcement

ABSTRACT

THE PERCEPTIONS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES ON THEIR SCHOOL
EXPERIENCES AND RELATED CONTACT WITH THE JUSTICE SYSTEM:

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRINCIPALS

(July, 2014)

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Chair of Advisory Committee: Lucian Yates, III, Ph.D.

The United States has over two million inmates in prison, and almost half of them are African American males. Large numbers of African American males in this country are being put in the penal system as a result of dealing with their schools' zero tolerance policies. The School to Prison Pipeline manifests itself in students' lives through various ways. These methods include excessive suspensions, police presence on school campuses, or not having a solid relationship with an adult at their school who may have the ability to help some of these young

men avoid these situations. Because of these options, a large percentage of these students drop out of school and end up becoming involved in the School to Prison Pipeline.

Identifying the perspectives of African American males who have previously been subjugated to these types of facilities were paramount for this study. A potential reduction in the number of African American males that enter juvenile facilities would have the eventual impact of reducing the African American males who enter adult prison facilities.

The intent of this qualitative hermeneutical phenomenological study was to ascertain the perception of African American male high school students who have experienced the phenomenon of entering the School to Prison Pipeline. This study assessed the experiences of these young men to help identify what actions and experiences caused them to be sent them to juvenile justice facilities, and what school administrators can do to ameliorate such practices. The participants were asked a series of questions that was able to lead to the emergence of an actual phenomenon. The researcher amassed qualitative data from participants that provided valuable insight which can benefit this research discipline. The area of interest in this study was:

1. What can principals do to prevent African American males from entering the school to prison pipeline?

Principals have to emphasize the importance of all school staff to build relationships with as many students as possible. Every student should have at least one staff member they can talk to about any issue they may want to discuss. The participants wanted a staff member they could trust and they all had at least one person of this nature. Their achievement in school could be higher if they had several adults they could trust or go to in a time of need. The time is now for school administrators to use new models of success for African American male students, such as those of school leaders employing transformational leadership behaviors that have been

identified as strengthening the interest and academic achievement levels of their most at-risk students.

Date: July 28, 2014 **Department:** Educational Leadership and Counseling

Time: 11:30 am **Location/Room:** Delco 308

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