

ABSTRACT

Donnell Brown, HOW CAN PROJECT H.O.P.E. “HELPING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE EXCEL” IMPACT THE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES WHO ATTEND A RURAL ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL? (Under the direction of Dr. Marjorie Ringler). Department of Educational Leadership, September 2017.

Emotional intelligence (EI) has been defined as the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and harness emotions in self and others (Rivera & Lee, 2014). The EI of African American male public school students that is often referred to alternative schools is low. African American males perceive themselves negatively as does society too. This study evaluated the impact of Project H.O.P.E. (Helping Our Young People Excel) on the EI of African American males that are referred to alternative schools for disruptive behaviors. Project H.O.P.E.’s focused on strengthening weak areas identified by the Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) to provide all students with a quality education to sustain them in school and life.

This study compared differences in the EI levels of African American male students who participated in Project HOPE to the EI levels of typically developing African American males that function well in schools. This was assessed with the SSEIT given to high school African American male students and by soliciting teachers/administrators, and parents perceptions about the SSEIT subscales. The subscales of *Perception of Emotion*, *Managing Others Emotions*, and *Utilization of Emotions* displayed Project H.O.P.E.’s largest impact on African American males.

Recommendations included creating transitioning strategies for African American males back into mainstream inclusion from the alternative school, to prevent relapses into past negative behaviors. Recommendations were given for teachers and principals to help erase negative perceptions from the past as the student returns back to their home school looking for a fresh start. There was a recommendation for a triangular approach that involved all stakeholders-home,

school, community. It takes all stakeholders to help students make the positive turn. Mentoring was highlighted in this dissertation to show its importance in improving the lives of rural African American males.

While the recommendations were not silver bullets to solve all of the issues discussed in this dissertation, it is a beginning to combat an issue that is plaguing African American males in rural alternative schools. This information could lend support into fully implementing Project H.O.P.E. into the school to really concentrate on impacting the emotional intelligence of African American males.

HOW CAN PROJECT H.O.P.E “HELPING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE EXCEL” IMPACT THE
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES WHO ATTEND A
RURAL ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL?

A Dissertation

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by

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RURAL ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL?

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DEDICATION

I give all the honor and praise to God for giving me the strength to endure.

To my FAMILY- I love you.

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I would like to thank my wonderful friends for their many words of encouragement and support to press through the process. Thank you for continued support over the last several years with ideas and articles to support my research.

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Hopefully, you know this degree is as much yours as it is mine.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
TITLE.....	i
COPYRIGHT.....	ii
SIGNATURES.....	iii
DEDICATION.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	x
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Problem Statement.....	5
Purpose of the Study.....	7
Significance of the Study.....	9
Study Design.....	10
Definition of Terms.....	13
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	16
Historical Perspective of African American Education in the South.....	16
African American Male Students' Perceptions about Academic Success.....	20
Importance of Academic Success for African American Male Students.....	23
Rural African Americans.....	28
Emotional Intelligence.....	30
Self-Awareness.....	33
Self-Management.....	33

Social Awareness.....	34
Relationship Skills.....	34
Factors Contributing to African American Males Academic Success.....	44
Individual-Level Characteristics and African American Male Students’ Academic Success.....	47
School Structural Characteristics and African American Male Students’ Academic Success.....	49
Differential Treatment of African American Students.....	52
Programs Designed to Help African American Males Achieve Academic Success.....	57
Solutions Believed to be Necessary for Academic Success.....	60
Summary.....	61
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.....	63
Introduction.....	63
Purpose of the Study.....	64
Population of Interest.....	66
Study Context.....	67
Community Portrait.....	67
Comparing and Contrasting Student Subgroups.....	67
Study Site.....	67
Description of Principal.....	75
Study Sample.....	76
Sample Selection Criteria.....	79
Study Design.....	79
Emotional Intelligence Instrument.....	80

Stakeholder Questionnaire.....	81
Data Analysis.....	81
Comparison among Student Groups.....	81
Perceptions of Parents, Teachers, and Administrators.....	82
Summary.....	83
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS.....	84
Introduction.....	84
Data Analysis.....	89
Study Findings.....	94
Analysis of Research Question #1.....	94
Analysis of Research Question #2.....	98
Analysis of Research Question #3.....	102
Analysis of Research Question #4.....	102
Analysis of Research Question #5.....	104
Summary.....	108
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	110
Discussion of Research Findings.....	112
Importance of Mentoring.....	115
Why Prevention Rather than Reaction?.....	118
Recommendations for Building Principals about African American Males in Alternative Schools.....	119
Recommendation for Teachers about African American Males in Alternative Schools.....	122
Recommendations for Mainstream Inclusion.....	123

Recommendations for Further Study..... 123

REFERENCES..... 125

APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER..... 148

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF AGREEMENT..... 149

APPENDIX C: NEW PROGRAMS AT MILTON M. DANIELS..... 150

APPENDIX D: THE SCHUTTE SELF REPORT EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE
TEST (SSEIT)..... 151

APPENDIX E: STAKEHOLDER QUESTIONNAIRE..... 154

APPENDIX F: ADMINISTRATION TIME LINE..... 155

LIST OF TABLES

1. Percent of Middle and High School Students Taught by Out of Field Teachers, 1999-2000.....	46
2. Demographics of Project H.O.P.E. Participants.....	78
3. Demographics of Project H.O.P.E. Alumni Participants.....	92
4. Demographics of EI Assessment Control Group Participant.....	93
5. Means, Standard Deviations and Mean Differences for the Emotional Intelligence Assessment Instrument.....	96
6. Disaggregation of Research Question Number 1 of the Emotional Intelligence Assessment Instrument.....	97
7. Disaggregation of Research Question Number 2 of the Emotional Intelligence Assessment Instrument.....	100
8. Disaggregation of Research Question Number 3 of the Emotional Intelligence Assessment Instrument.....	103
9. Disaggregation of Research Question Number 4 of the Emotional Intelligence Assessment Instrument	105
10. Stakeholder Questionnaire Responses.....	106

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Wilson County Schools cohort graduation rate subgroups (2010-2014).....	68
2. Wilson County Schools testing data compared to the state average.....	69
3. School enrollment size (2010-2014).....	70
4. Milton M. Daniels Learning Center snapshot 2012-2013.....	71
5. Milton M. Daniels school snapshot 2013-2014.....	72
6. African American males breakdown by Wilson County high schools.....	73
7. Conceptual framework.....	74

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Alternative school settings for students who are identified as “disruptive or dangerous” have played an increasingly prominent role in the world of public education. Though the rapid expansion and reliance on alternative schools has been evident, the body of research has been far from parallel to their growth. Alternative schools exist to advocate and provide optional learning environments for students struggling in the traditional school environments. For students deemed failures or at risk of failure, two basic subsets of alternative schools have emerged: One for students experiencing academic difficulty and at risk of dropping out, and the other for students described as dangerous or disruptive. Beginning in the early 1980s, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention began promoting alternative schools for delinquent students based on the premise that schools could play a significant role in reducing youth crime (Barber, 1980; Cox, 1999). Alternative schools continue to be promoted by education leaders and advocates as a promising strategy to reduce school expulsion, provide alternative learning environments for students that are not having success in regular schools, ensure safety at mainstream schools, and reduce juvenile delinquency.

National data reflected an expansion of alternative schools for at-risk students that can be defined as skyrocketing, not steady (Lehr, Soon Tan, & Ysseldyke, 2009). In 1998, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) indicated there were 3,850 alternative schools. By 2002, NCES identified 10,900 public alternative schools for at-risk students which represented a conservative estimate in the growth as researchers looking at national data estimated the existence of over 20,000 alternative schools and programs for at risk students (Lange & Sletten, 2002). Reflecting suspension and expulsion practices nationwide, some researchers forecasted that the use of alternative schools would continue to rise (Lehr, Lanners & Lange, 2003;

Morrison, Anthony, Storino, Cheng, Furlong, & Morrison, 2001). The increase in alternative schools was correlated with the mounting population of disenfranchised students (Kim & Taylor, 2008), particularly minority students and students that live in poverty (Verdugo & Glenn, 2006).

The demand for more alternative schools serving disruptive students has grown across the country (Aaron & Zweig, 2003; Dunbar, 2001; Loflin, 2000; Verdugo & Glenn, 2006). At the local, state and national levels, the demand for alternative schools for “disruptive or dangerous” students outweighed the supply, particularly in urban districts, and continued to serve younger students in disciplinary alternative schools (NCES, 2010). Urban school districts have relied on alternative schools at far greater rates than rural and suburban districts to purportedly decrease school crime, yet national trends put this proposition in question. In the 2003 national school questionnaire on crime and school safety 70% of urban public schools reported lack of alternative placements for disruptive students as the most limiting factor impeding efforts to reduce or prevent crime at school (NCES, 2007). Paradoxically, a 2003 report on indicators of school crime and safety showed a decrease in violent victimization in schools, from 10% to 6% between 1995 and 2001 (NCES, 2003).

Some research (Quinn & Poirier, 2006) highlighting best practices at alternative school sites indicated the promise alternative schools held for supporting excluded students, yet the wide variation in implementation and lack of regulation and accountability at state and district levels was cause for great concern. The literature revealed in general alternative school characteristics associated with both positive and negative student outcomes. Small school size, low student teacher ratio, flexible and understanding teachers, individualized instruction, student involvement in decision-making and family/parent participation result in more positive school climate and student outcomes. The characteristics that were deemed deleterious to student

outcomes included racial isolation, punitive focus, intensified social control, inadequate resources, lack of accountability, and an unchallenging curriculum (Quinn & Poirier, 2006).

Researchers who examined issues related to alternative schools and school discipline agreed that the placement of disruptive students into alternative schools has grown as a popular strategy to deal with students who were considered behavior problems (Banicky, 2000; Lehr et al., 2003; Loflin, 2000). Research suggested that this strategy exacerbated inequities rooted in race, poverty, and special education status. Research also suggested that disciplinary alternative schools were increasingly being used as an act of punishment, exclusion, and containment of African-American students (Dunbar, 2001; Lehr et al., 2003; Morrison et al., 2001). Several decades of research documented that exclusionary discipline was consistently disproportionately applied to African American students (Arnove & Strout, 1980; Cox, Davidson, & Bynum, 1995; Losen & Gillespie, 2012; Wald & Losen, 2003) and alternative school placement is no exception.

Students inevitably entered into the public schooling system with large variations in the advantages and disadvantages, yet individual trajectories were impacted by their schooling experiences. Young children were particularly vulnerable to the beginning process of a 'domino effect' regarding misbehavior and discipline. Elementary students with school records documented ongoing misconduct were 12 times as likely to be suspended in middle school. Looking even earlier, Garland (2001) found that Pre-Kindergarten students were expelled at three times the rate of K-12 students, disproportionately impacting African American children.

Expanded school exclusion endorsed the prevailing rationale of contemporary criminal justice practice-deterrence and incapacitation (Garland, 2001). Exclusion remained the intervention of choice due to the dominant worldview in the education policy realm that reflected

the general orientation of the U.S. criminal justice and legal system opposed to a worldview that recognized interactions and student misbehavior and school discipline practices as a result of longstanding inequalities rooted in social, economic, and historical forces (Morrison et al., 2001). Educational policies that rendered individual students or particular student groups as the “problem” and exclusion as the “fix” minimized the contributions of policies and practices in the schooling system as a whole (i.e., ability tracking, concentrated school poverty, teaching quality, curriculum, school climate, high-stakes testing, zero-tolerance policies) while sustaining the “logic” of school exclusion.

Hirschfield (2008) supported a thesis of an overarching criminalization of school discipline, especially within urban schools. At nearly every stage of the school disciplinary process, criminal justice tools and personnel played an increasingly prominent role. In fact, school policing is the fastest growing law enforcement field (Pascopella, 2005). While many alternative schools provided a variety of services, there appeared to be more emphasis placed on collaboration with the juvenile justice and police than those agencies that could help with life after school (Dunbar, 2001; Verdugo & Glenn, 2006).

Kliner, Porch, and Ferris (2002) found that for large districts and districts with high minority enrollment and poverty concentration of 84% the alternative schools collaborated with the juvenile justice system, 75% with mental health agencies, and 70% collaborated with police departments. The punitive nature of placement into disciplinary alternative schools coupled with the strong law enforcement presence may have constructed one possible route through the “school-to-prison” pipeline.

Problem Statement

Succeeding at their home base school has not been easy once African American students return from an alternative school. A variety of individual, school, and systemic factors were in need to be addressed if those young people were to successfully return to schools. Individual factors included poor academic and social–emotional skills, credit deficits, special education needs, and the failure to develop an identity as a learner. School factors consisted of poor conditions for learning in the schools to which transitioning youth returned, likely contributed to the educational deficits that these students exhibited prior to adjudication; limited opportunities for students to learn when schools were focused almost exclusively on test taking and the need to maintain order; a lack of appropriate supplemental educational and social services; a failure to explicitly teach non-cognitive skills (e.g., persistence, self-discipline, dependability); and educator attitudes and biases, which often pushed students out.

Systemic factors included the failure of agencies and institutions to share records quickly, the absence of alignment and articulation between sending and receiving schools at both ends of the transition process, the dearth of accountability for mobile student outcomes, and inadequate systemic capacity to collaborate with families. While systemic reforms were necessary, judges, court staff, agency staff, and educators could readily act to improve school integration and academic success. They could accomplish this by seeing transition as a process and not an event and that it may start when a student is removed from his or her community school. Viewed this way, “transition” refers to a youth’s movement within and between one of four stages: (1) entry into alternative school placement), (2) enrollment in an alternative school setting (3) reentry or exit from an alternative setting), and (4) aftercare (or progress monitoring of a youth upon enrollment in his or her home-base school).

Services provided during this timeframe were essential for keeping youth engaged in their home communities, ensured their development as productive citizens, and prevented them from returning to alternative school placements. EI refers to “a constellation of behavioral dispositions and self-perceptions concerning one's ability to recognize, process, and utilize emotion-laden information” (Petrides et al., 2004, p. 278) and has sometimes been referred to as emotional self-efficacy (Petrides & Furnham, 2001), or what one believes about his or her ability to perceive and make use of emotions.

When compared to their White peers, many more African American students professed a strong belief in the power of education to improve their lives, when in actuality, their effort and achievement at school oftentimes did not match these beliefs (Mickelson, 1990; Ogbu, 1987). Mickelson (1990) referred to this conundrum as the attitude-achievement paradox; students professed positive attitudes towards school, but their achievement simply did not match it. According to Mickelson, this is because African American students (and by association, Latina/o students, as according to Ogbu these two ethnic groups occupied the same social caste in U.S. society) have two types of beliefs about the value of education: abstract beliefs, which are characterized by typical American egalitarianism (i.e., “education is the key to success in the future”) and concrete beliefs, which are grounded in actual life experience (i.e., “people in my family haven’t been treated fairly at work no matter how much education they have”).

What happened to students when they left alternative education at the end of the school year? Jay McGee (2001), an alternative school administrator, asserted there is a demand for alternative education schools that addressed the needs of students not succeeding. Based on the questionnaire, “Questionnaire and Analysis of Alternative Education Programs”, the questionnaire asked for an unduplicated number of students who: returned to the regular

classroom or home school; returned to the home school but were readmitted to the alternative education program during the same year or did not return to the home school and left the program and remained in the program. This snapshot report for the year 2000-2001 demonstrated that 44% of students served returned to the regular classroom or home school. A significant number (37%) remained in alternative education placement for the following year. Eight percent of students returned to the home school but were readmitted to the alternative program during the same year.

Finally, given the concern with repeated re-admittance to alternative schools, focus should be placed on working with students. Increased focus at the alternative school on students understanding what is meant by to work with culturally different administrators at their home campus helped them more successfully matriculate at their home campus upon returning. Such instruction included understanding school expectations and what internal and external factors were likely to place them at increased risk for disciplinary placement.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to learn how Project Helping Our Young People Excel (H.O.P.E.) may impact the Emotional Intelligence (EI) of African American males who attended rural alternative schools. Mentoring has been shown through research and evaluation studies to be an effective approach to reducing the complex problems that face our youth, such as alcohol and drug use, academic failure, teenage pregnancy, and gang violence. Mentoring has broad appeal as a prevention strategy because of its strong link with the core of resiliency efforts. Resiliency research examined the fact that youth in potentially harmful and destructive environments emerged as positive and productive adults due to various factors that served to negate or reverse the impact it had on youth in risky situations (Tierney & Grossman, 1994). In

the case of mentoring, the resilient factor present was primarily the development and sustenance of a caring relationship between an adult and young person. Mentoring programs have helped to keep kids in school and improve their academic performance. Below is an evidence of how mentoring can be successful.

The Commonwealth Fund's questionnaire of 360 young African American males showed a correlation between participation in mentoring and counseling programs and the completion of school. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of young men who remained in school participated in mentoring or counseling programs, as compared to the 18% of young men who dropped out of school. Youth who were mentored have fewer problems with gang violence and less recidivism. This research supported the notion that if students are in a productive, structured mentoring program, they fared much better than their counterparts who are not. The students who learned emotional, social, academic skills were likely to be successful. These skills aided students when they encountered triggers for previous negative behaviors that caused their transition from their home-school to an alternative school. Those learned skills determined the best course of action and created a positive outcome so that they will not resort back to their negative behavior.

Project H.O.P.E. incorporated mentoring that research and evaluation studies determined to be effective approaches to reducing the complex problems that face our youth today, such as alcohol and drug use, academic failure, and gang violence (Grossman & Garry, 1998). Project H.O.P.E. was used as a strategy to equip African American males to understand their EI and utilized this understanding to address complex problems they face in high school. In the case of Project H.O.P.E., addressing EI attempted to help keep African American males in school, out of trouble, and focusing on their academic performance. Emotional Intelligence as defined by Schutte, Malouff, Hall, Haggerty, Cooper, and Golden (1998) utilizing four subscales.

Subscale (1) *Managing Others Emotions* is defined as the ability to perceive emotions in oneself.

Subscale (2) *Managing self and others* is defined as the ability to understand emotional information, to understand how emotions combine and progress through relationships. Subscale

(3) *Emotional Perception* is defined as the ability to be open to feelings, and to modulate them in oneself and others so as to promote personal understanding and growth. Subscale

(4) *Understanding Facilitating Thoughts of Emotions* is defined as the ability to generate, use, and feel emotion as necessary to communicate feelings.

The research questions addressed in this study were:

1. How does Project H.O.P.E. help African American male students manage their overall *Managing Others Emotions*?
2. How does Project H.O.P.E. help African American male students manage their *Managing self and others*?
3. How has Project H.O.P.E. help African American male students manage their *Emotional Perception*?
4. How has Project H.O.P.E. help African American male students manage their *Understanding Facilitating Thoughts of Emotions*?
5. How do principals, teachers, and parents perceive the emotional intelligence of African American male students that participated in Project H.O.P.E.?

Significance of the Study

This research is significant to the profession of education, because it may help stakeholders identify and address the emotional intelligence conditions that may help youth be successful when returning to their base school. Alternative and home base schools may learn from this study youth-guided and family driven approaches, to create conditions in which young

people may be on track to thrive; however, these external conditions are difficult to change. A mentoring program may help African American students understand their emotional intelligence and provide them with tools to manage external conditions beyond their control. This research is vital to administrators because of the importance of conditions for transition and critical program elements that exist or are non-existent between alternative and home based schools. Such conditions may be developed and modified to reduce recidivism among African American male students.

Study Design

At the time of this study, Milton M. Daniels was the only alternative school in the rural county of Wilson, NC. The ratio of students to teachers at Milton M. Daniels Learning Center was 4:1. They provided similar services and/or curriculum for students, but differed in available course offerings as their traditional school counterparts. They provided services for potential dropouts, chronic truant students and those with behavioral problems. Milton M. Daniels Learning Center was a historical landmark in Wilson, NC. The school's original name was Elvie Elementary when it opened in 1952. The school name changed in 1975, to Milton M. Daniels Learning Center.

The researcher solicited the assistance of the counselor and principal in selecting the participants for this study. The counselor and principal served as key informants who had knowledge of African American male students at this study site. These key informants provided additional insight and understanding (McMillan, 2004) about African American males that were relevant to understand their emotional intelligence. The counselor and principal recommended ninety-nine (99) African American male students as possible participants for this study. Thirty-three (33) participants successfully completed Project H.O.P.E., thirty-three (33) participants

were first time participants of Project H.O.P.E. and the final thirty-three (33) non participants in the program. This study was a program evaluation to the impact of Project H.O.P.E. on the emotional intelligence of African American males referred to this alternative school.

At the time of the study, Project H.O.P.E. was a nonprofit organization founded in September of 2007. It was founded with the single purpose of improving and redirecting the negative behavior of at-risk males. The Project H.O.P.E. centered its work on three pillars: 1- Social Growth, 2-Academic Growth, and 3- Perception. This project excelled in improving the overall attitude of the young men who are members of this organization. Past members have matriculated to college, professional sports, becoming outstanding members of society through working everyday jobs.

The Social growth pillar consisted of service projects, such as trash and campus pick-ups, mandatory etiquette training, cultural trips (college tours). The Academic growth was based on tutoring, learning goal setting, attending financial seminars, ACT/SAT test prep, job fairs, and parent academy courses for parents to have total buy-in and improving the parent/child relationship. Completers of Project H.O.P.E. members return to share their experiences. The Perception growth was built upon Dress for Success Days once a week (shirts, ties, slacks, khakis, etc.), taught young men how to tie ties, iron clothes, self-grooming.

African American males that participated in Project H.O.P.E. completed an application; received a letter of recommendation from their teacher, administrator, and parent explaining why they felt this program will benefit them. Upon selection into the organization, all members had academic and behavior contracts that they had signed by their teachers. These contracts were monitored after three weeks of starting the project. Members with any grade below a C, were placed on academic probation and participated in educational meetings involved the parents,

student, administrator, teacher, and mentor. The same applied for any member who received an unsatisfactory on their behavior contract. Behavior and grades were reviewed every three weeks to assess or address any major concerns, and implement strategies that lead to improvement and overall academic achievement.

To address this study, the Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) an Assessing Emotions Scale a 33-item self-report inventory focused on typical emotional intelligence was used. The most widely used subscales derived from the 33-item survey are those based on factors identified by Petrides and Furnham (2000), Ciarrochi et al. (2001), and Saklofske et al. (2003). These factor analytic studies suggested a four-factor solution for the 33 items. The four factors were described as follows: perception of emotions, managing emotions in the self, social skills or managing others “emotions”, and utilizing emotions. The items comprising the subscales based on these factors (Ciarrochi et al., 2001) are as follows: Perception of Emotion (items 5, 9, 15, 18, 19, 22, 25, 29, 32, 33), Managing Own Emotions (items 2, 3, 10, 12, 14, 21, 23, 28, 31), Managing Others Emotions (items 1, 4, 11, 13, 16, 24, 26, 30), and Utilization of Emotion (items 6, 7, 8, 17, 20, 27). All 33 items are included in one of these four subscales.

Thirty-three (33) students took a SSEIT pre-test upon beginning Project H.O.P.E. and then a post-test at the conclusion Project H.O.P.E. The remaining sixty-six (66) students were those who have already participated and completed the program (n=33) and those who didn't participate in Project HOPE because they are successfully completing their schooling without major discipline problems (n=33) took the SSEIT once. These three groups' scores were analyzed and utilized for comparisons among groups to determine similarities and differences of

EI scores. Study findings helped compare and contrast any significant changes to EI by participating in Project H.O.P.E.

Additional data was collected from a sample population that consisted of teachers, parents, counselor, and administrators that worked with African American male students in this study. The research data collected from this sample population was transcribed, organized and coded to find common themes and patterns in the questionnaires and questionnaires. The goal of this data analysis was to understand the differences among the adults that work with African American males in this study.

Definition of Terms

Alternative schools-An alternative school is an educational setting designed to accommodate educational, behavioral, and/or medical needs of children and adolescents that cannot be adequately addressed in a traditional school environment (Retrieved from <http://www.healthofchildren.com/A/Alternative-School.html>).

At-risk students-The term at-risk is often used to describe students or groups of students who are considered to have a higher probability of failing academically or dropping out of school. The term may be applied to students who face circumstances that could jeopardize their ability to complete school, such as homelessness, incarceration, teenage pregnancy, serious health issues, domestic violence, transiency (as in the case of migrant-worker families), or other conditions, or it may refer to learning disabilities, low test scores, disciplinary problems, grade retentions, or other learning-related factors that could adversely affect the educational performance and attainment of some students (Retrieved from <http://edglossary.org/at-risk/>).

Criminalization-To impose a criminal penalty on or for; outlaw (Retrieved from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/criminalization>).

Delinquent students-A tendency to be negligent and uncaring (Retrieved from <http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/juvenile+delinquent>).

Disability-A person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity (Retrieved from <https://adata.org/faq/what-definition-disability-under-ada>).

Disproportionately-Having or showing a difference that is not fair, reasonable, or expected (Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/disportionate>).

Exclusion-The act of not allowing someone or something to take part in an activity or to enter a place (Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/exclusion>).

Logic-Reasoning conducted or assessed according to strict principles of validity (Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/minority>).

Mentoring-An experienced and trusted person who gives another person advice and help (Retrieved from <http://www.businessdictionary.com>).

Minority-The smaller number or part (Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/minority>).

Recidivism-A tendency to relapse into a previous condition or mode of behavior (Retrieved from <http://www.nij.gov/topics/corrections/recidivism>).

School to prison pipeline-Refers to the policies and practices that push our nation's schoolchildren, especially our most at-risk children, out of classrooms and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems (Retrieved from <https://www.aclu.org/fact-sheet/what-school-prison-pipeline>).

Segregation-The action or state of setting someone or something apart from other people or things or being set apart (Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com>).

Stakeholders-A stakeholder is anybody who can affect or is affected by an organization, strategy or project (Retrieved from <http://www.businessdictionary.com>).

Transitioning-Passage from one state, stage, subject, or place to another (Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com>).

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the review of literature, historical events affecting African American male student's education in the southeastern region of the United States are first examined. Next, the definition of what rural and poverty is and the impact it has on African American males in the Southeastern United States is examined. There will be a focus on emotional intelligence, the importance of academic success for African American males and factors (poor education experiences, home-life, lack of positive role models, etc.) contributed to the challenge of African American males' academic success in rural schools. Finally, the researcher investigated the literature to discuss differential pedagogical treatment of African American males, African American male students' perceptions about the quality of instruction they receive, solutions believed

Historical Perspective of African American Education in the South

In the south, following the Civil War, the educational plight for African Americans was one of long suffering and agony as they struggled for freedom, social equality, and the right to an equal education. Education for slaves was forbidden because of fear of slavery uprisings and desertions of field workers. Between 1800 and 1835, most southern states made it illegal to teach African American slave children to read or write (Anderson, 1988). Southerners rejected universal schooling for rural African Americans because it might raise the aspirations of African Americans and ruin them as plantation laborers (Anderson, 1988). Most southern plantation owners strongly believed that if African Americans became educated, the institution of slavery would become nonexistent (Wright, 1977).

The American Civil War (Ratteray, 1992) resulted in over 3 million enslaved African Americans gaining their independence. This was the beginning of a new phase for the freed

people; however, “they were, for the most part, illiterate and without the basic skills needed to support themselves” (Ratteray, 1992, pp. 138-139). The African Americans sought to improve their social status by deciding first and foremost their people needed an education. Many African Americans took great interest in learning and sought ways to educate themselves (Anderson, 1988; Patton, 1980). African American southerners entered emancipation with an alternative culture, a history that they could draw upon, one that contained enduring beliefs in learning and self-improvement. They convinced their compatriots that a perceived common interest in literacy and schooling did not depend for its existence upon dominate-class culture (Anderson, 1988, p. 281). The ex-slaves took immediate interest in expressing their desire for an education. The dominant group who once looked upon African Americans in a negative way was forced to recognize the deep commitment to education of African Americans (Anderson, 1988). In the reality of the aftermath of slavery, many African Americans gained physical freedom but realized that they had not gained civil, political, and economic freedom to truly be considered American human beings. Having their rights denied allowed for mental bondage. African Americans were caught in a web of “vagrancy laws to hold African American labor to the land, and an apartheid public policy to assure White dominance and a persistent shaming of the under-race” (Wyatt-Brown, 2006, p. 26). Robinson (2000) noted this systematic demoralization of African Americans:

“No nation can enslave a race of people for hundreds of years, set them free bedraggled and penniless, pit them, without assistance in a hostile environment, against privileged victimizers, and then reasonable expect the gap between the heirs of the two groups to narrow.” Lines, begun parallel and left alone, can never touch. (p. 74)

Kunjufu (1988) noted, “Mental slavery is more sophisticated, because when the chains are removed from the ankles and wrists and placed around the mind, it becomes more difficult for the oppressed to recognize the source of their plight” (p. 12). It is no coincidence that African Americans were made to feel inferior in mental ability and economic development long after being emancipated. The freedmen status had the obligation and appearance of citizenship but without the privileges of citizenship. They could not vote nor serve on juries, but they were obligated to pay taxes (Bell, 2004).

From an economic standpoint, the freedmen were relegated to domestic work, and to maximize their value, performed every form of labor, including that of skilled craftsmen. Prejudice was strong and free African Americans not only were excluded from jobs considered appropriate for White workmen, but were often the victims of insult and physical attack. Bell (2004) said, "Blacks were segregated in the worst areas of the towns where they lived, their children were often barred from the public schools, and on certain occasions they were even forbidden to appear in public places” (p. 52). According to Wynes (1971), the superior White race because of its deep roots in law and government, had the responsibility of teaching and preparing the inferior African Americans with its “history of four thousand years of barbarism, the precious knowledge of citizenship” (p. 104).

On the other hand, the African American race “had corresponding obligations: implicit obedient, deference, loyalty, and hard work” (Wynes, 1971, p. 105). It was by design that freed African Americans were led to believe that segregation protected them, that segregation was in their best interest and believed it was their obligation to obey the rules. African Americans were indoctrinated to believe that government was meant for the intelligent, educated and the wealthy and that the uneducated, laboring class was best at performing menial tasks and should be

excluded from political participation or matters pertaining to his own welfare (Anderson, 1988; Wynes, 1971). Therefore, numerous laws were passed to keep the freed man as near the conditions of slavery as possible for fear of an uprising (Dabbs, 1958). Black people were not brought to this country to be given an education, citizenship, or democracy. They were brought to this country to serve, to labor, and to obey...When servants are educated at all they are educated to serve, but never to share in power, thus planting the seeds of our present day educational crisis (Clarke, 1973, p. 17). Dubois (1977) dispelled the design which had been imposed on the Negro race without permission. Dubois (1977) noted, "The very feelings of inferiority that slavery forced upon them fathered an intense desire to rise out of their condition by means of education" (p. 638). Dubois believed that this very treatment of the freed Negro race led them to establish and sustain their own institutions for framing moral, educational and religious guidelines for its people.

Anderson (1988) expressed, "Black education developed within this context of political and economic oppression" (p. 2). Gates and Oliver (1999) quoted W. E. B. Dubois' acknowledgment that the American Negro has had to live a life of "two-ness,--an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (p. 11). The purpose of this statement was to inform the reader that African Americans had an internal within ourselves, because they didn't want to lose the identity of who we are, but realized that in order to survive in the foreign world in which they were supplanted in, they must assimilate or perish.

The freed African Americans, in order to protect their emancipation, saw the need to develop their own unique educational system in order to advance themselves and rise above oppression. This attitude gave rise to the beginnings for the early African American schools. The

foundation for the freedmen's educational system was a burning desire and self-determination to create a plan for educating themselves and their children. Following emancipation, the freedmen's schools came into existence (Anderson, 1988; Ladson-Billings, 2006). The early African American schools in the south were organized by abolitionists, emancipationists, and antislavery ministers and businessmen. Many teachers from the north came south to open schools, often in unusual circumstances (Butchart, 1975). No doubt, this movement helped define America's race relations and helped define African Americans' position in what was known as the New South (Anderson, 1988; Butchart, 1975).

Prior to the end of the Civil War, it was illegal to educate African-Americans. It was a crime punishable by death. Many blacks, if they were allowed to read, were only permitted to read the Bible. In 1837, the Institute for Colored Youth, now known as Cheyney University, was founded in Pennsylvania, becoming America's first black college. Schools, particularly in the South, were considered "separate but equal"--schools were all white or all black.

African American Male Students' Perceptions about Academic Success

Several state courts ruled that segregation was both fair and legal. It wasn't until May 17, 1954 when the Supreme Court ruled in the case of Brown vs. The Board of Education that segregation was illegal (The History of African American Education Aisha Nicole Anderson, eHow Contributor), thus ending the African American schools. Brown vs. Board proved challenging to implement, particularly since the justices could not have predicted the voluminous migration of African Americans to cities during the 20 years immediately following the decision. By the mid-1970s, most urban school districts were predominantly black — so despite the illegality of de jure school segregation, de facto segregation was widespread.

Today's solutions are much less focused on the social and cultural benefits of integration. They are concentrated more on how to build the kinds of learning opportunities necessary to close existing achievement gaps and ensure that all students have the opportunity to become proficient, based on our national standards. In looking ahead, the challenge was how to achieve greater balance between aiming for excellence — by applying a generic set of strategies, high standards and richer assessments to all students — and differentiating those approaches with supports that serve specific populations' efforts. There needed to be a balance between equity and excellence if we, as a nation, are committed to achieving the educational goals envisioned 60 years ago in *Brown vs. Board* (Retrieved from <https://www.nps.gov/brvb/index.htm>).

While some have called for a consistent definition of rural (e.g., Helge, 1992), this probably is unrealistic. As Farmer (1997) confessed, there is no singular or multifaceted definition that will suffice to satisfy the research, programmatic, and policy communities that employ the concept. . . . [T]he diversity of purposes for which the measures have been and will be used will likely assure that no universally applicable definition or measurement will be developed. (pp. 623, 625). Students in these areas are more transient than their counterparts in affluent rural and urban areas. There are two extremes in rural areas: escaping or becoming a product of your environment. Those who make it out, leave and never return, as living in the rural environment serves as a painful reminder of their past. Those students who aren't as fortunate, become stagnate, resentful, and assume the role of distracters to those counterparts who are successful products of their community. Students in relatively isolated communities are placed at higher risk because of various direct effects of the isolation (fewer human services, fewer cultural amenities, lack of cultural diversity, lack of exposure to career and opportunities). (Anderson, 1988; Fitzgerald, 2006; Howard, 2003; Jordan & Cooper, 2003; Rowley, 2000).

As a child living in poor rural conditions, there is a cloud of lower student aspirations stigma associated with the student, than in any other setting. Life in rural families normally consists of a single parent household, identified as low socioeconomically (Ogbu, 1991). Walk into any rural impoverished classroom; you can immediately notice the inadequacies with the quality of education that students receive. Curricula in many rural schools often consisted of the courses mandated by the state, plus on or two additional offerings, such as vocational agriculture, home economics, or industrial education, designed to cater to student interests. The curricula in schools located in many rural areas appear to have been developed under the assumption that the majority of the graduating students will ultimately be able to find work in the local community. (Somers, Owens, & Piliawsky, 2008).

However, in most rural communities, this is not reality, nor is it an accurate assessment of what the future could hold for rural America. In many instances, secondary curricula in rural schools need to be revised to reflect the fact that most of the graduates will eventually leave to find employment away from the local community (Ladson-Billings, 2000).

The World Health Organization has described poverty as the greatest cause of suffering on earth. In *Bridging the Gaps*, the World Health Report states, 'The world's most ruthless killer and the greatest cause of suffering on earth is extreme poverty' (Retrieved from http://www.who.int/whr/1995/en/whr95_en.pdf?ua=1). This statement emphasizes the importance of poverty as a variable adversely influencing health. Poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon, encompassing inability to satisfy basic needs, lack of control over resources, lack of education and poor health. Poverty can be intrinsically alienating and distressing, and of particular concern are the direct and indirect effects of poverty on the development and maintenance of emotional, behavioral and psychiatric problems.

Importance of Academic Success for African American Male Students

The measurement of poverty is based on incomes or consumption levels, and people are considered poor if their consumption or income levels fall below the 'poverty line', which is the minimum level necessary to meet basic needs. It should be emphasized that for the analysis of poverty in a particular country, the World Bank bases the poverty line on the norms for that society.

It is a well-recognized fact that poverty has important implications for both physical and mental health. It is vital to distinguish between absolute and relative poverty; even in countries where families generally have access to sufficient resources to maintain life, many are living in disadvantageous circumstances with poor housing, diet and amenities that do not live up to the expectations of society in general (Townsend, 1979). However you define it, poverty is complex; it does not mean the same thing for all people. Six identified types of poverty: situational, generational, absolute, relative, urban, and rural (Jensen, 2009).

Situational poverty is generally caused by a sudden crisis or loss and is often temporary. Events causing situational poverty include environmental disasters, divorce, or severe health problems. Someone experiencing situational poverty is often of a higher level of education than people who experience entrenched poverty. He or she is also typically familiar with the complex hidden rules and social codes of the middle classes, and this knowledge can be helpful when that person attempts to cope with the situation. People in this situation are also more likely to have assistance to fall back on, in the form of family members and supportive people in the community, and this can make a huge difference.

Poverty can be grueling, especially without a support network. For people who have worked hard all their lives, it can also be extremely depressing, as it may seem like everything is

being taken away for no apparent reason. Many people who work with individuals in poverty point out that such circumstance are a sobering lesson, as they can potentially strike anyone; many people in the middle classes, for example, are only a catastrophic accident away from losing everything.

Getting out of short-term poverty usually requires identifying and addressing the cause and seeking out employment that will help to alleviate the situation.

Generational poverty occurs in families where at least two generations have been born into poverty. Families living in this type of poverty are not equipped with the tools to move out of their situations. Generational poverty has its own culture, hidden rules and belief system. The role of the "momma" is central to the family structure. She is the powerful one and the ultimate caregiver and rescuer. Punishment in her mind is about forgiveness – not about change – and hers is the love and relationship that ties to the soul.

The key issue for African American males is to be the "man". Rules are rigid: hard worker, good fighter and lover. Physical attributes are important, favoritism is desirable, and discussions center around people and relationships while communication may be mostly nonverbal.

Absolute poverty, which is rare in the United States, involves a scarcity of such necessities as shelter, running water, and food. Families who live in absolute poverty tend to focus on day-to-day survival. For monetary measures, these absolute poverty lines are often based on estimates of the cost of basic food needs (i.e., the cost a nutritional basket considered minimal for the healthy survival of a typical family), to which a provision is added for non-food needs. For developing countries, considering the fact that large shares of the population survive

with the bare minimum or less, it is often more relevant to rely on an absolute rather than a relative poverty line.

Relative poverty refers to the economic status of a family whose income is insufficient to meet its society's average standard of living. Urban poverty occurs in metropolitan areas with populations of at least 50,000 people. The urban poor deal with a complex aggregate of chronic and acute stressors (including crowding, violence, and noise) and are dependent on often-inadequate large-city services. Relative poverty measures the difference between a person's resources and the average cost of living requirements in an area. While absolute poverty usually does not change much, relative poverty changes in relation to the standard of living in an area. A person who lives in relative poverty in the United States is likely to be wealthy compared to a person with an average lifestyle in a third-world country. While a country can conceivably raise nearly all of its population out of absolute poverty, it cannot do so with relative poverty because relative poverty is measured as a bottom percentage of a population.

Measurement of a society's poverty levels is of necessity very arbitrary. Some governments consider the bottom 20% or 15% of a society to be the poverty level; others measure the minimum income level necessary for survival and base poverty level determinations on that. In most cases, poverty alleviation program resources are not counted as part of an individual's resources, which serves to make a person receiving government assistance seem more impoverished than they really are. Because it is so difficult to properly determine poverty and the variables are so easily abused, the measurement of poverty tends to be a volatile political tool in most nations. Rural poverty occurs in nonmetropolitan areas with populations below 50,000. In rural areas, there are more single-guardian households, and families often have less access to services, support for disabilities, and quality education opportunities. Programs to

encourage transition from welfare to work are problematic in remote rural areas, where job opportunities are few (Whitener, Gibbs, & Kusmin, 2003). The rural poverty rate is growing and has exceeded the urban rate every year since data collection began in the 1960s. Poverty involves a complex array of risk factors that adversely affect the population in a multitude of ways. Graber and Brooks-Gunn (1995) identified the four primary risk factors afflicting families living in poverty as:

- Emotional and social challenges
- Acute and chronic stressors
- Cognitive lags
- Health and safety issues

Graber and Brooks-Gunn (1995) estimated that in 1995, 35% of poor families experienced six or more risk factors (such as divorce, sickness, or eviction); only 2% experienced no risk factors. In contrast, only 5% of well-off families experienced six or more risk factors, and 19% experienced none.

The aggregate of risk factors makes everyday living a struggle; they are multifaceted and interwoven, building on and playing off one another with a devastatingly synergistic effect (Atzaba-Poria, Pike, & Deater-Deckard, 2004). In other words, one problem created by poverty begets another, which in turn contributes to another, leading to a seemingly endless cascade of deleterious consequences. A head injury, for example, is a potentially dire event for a child living in poverty. With limited access to adequate medical care, the child may experience cognitive or emotional damage, mental illness, or depression, possibly attended with denial or shame that further prevents the child from getting necessary help; impairments in vision or hearing that go

untested, undiagnosed, and untreated; or undiagnosed behavior disorders, such as AD/HD or oppositional personality disorder. It's safe to say that poverty and its attendant risk factors are damaging to the physical, socio-emotional, and cognitive well-being of children and their families (Klebanov & Brooks-Gunn, 2006; Sapolsky, 2005). Data from the Infant Health and Development Program show that 40% of children living in chronic poverty had deficiencies in at least two areas of functioning (such as language and emotional responsiveness) at age 3 (Bradley & Lang, 1994).

The following two sections examined how inferior provisions both at home and at school place poor children at risk for low academic performance and failure to complete school. Compared with affluent children, poor children are disproportionately exposed to adverse social and physical environments. Low-income neighborhoods are likely to have lower-quality social, municipal, and local services. Because of greater traffic volume, higher crime rates, and less playground safety—to name but a few factors—poor neighborhoods are more hazardous and less likely to contain green space than affluent neighborhoods are. Poor children often breathe contaminated air and drink impure water. Their households are more crowded, noisy, and physically deteriorated, and they contain a greater number of safety hazards (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future [NCTAF], 2004, Retrieved from https://nctaf.org/wp-content/uploads/Brown_Full_Report_Final.pdf).

Childhood is generally considered to be a time of joyful, carefree exploration. Children living in poverty tend to spend less time finding out about the world around them and more time struggling to survive within it. Poor children have fewer and less-supportive networks than their more affluent counterparts do; live in neighborhoods that are lower in social capital; and, as adolescents, are more likely to rely on peers than on adults for social and emotional support.

Low-SES children also have fewer cognitive-enrichment opportunities. They have fewer books at home, visit the library less often, and spend considerably more time watching TV than their middle-income counterparts do (Kumanyika & Grier, 2006). The success of children in poverty depends on the resources they are afforded, as well as how they see themselves academically when measured against their affluent counterparts or counterparts in equal circumstances.

Rural poverty affects both individuals and communities. The proportion of poor persons is higher among minority populations, and total community economic resources are more constrained in communities where minority groups represent over half of the population. The lack of community resources implied that it would be difficult for rural minorities to improve their economic status.

Rural African Americans

One third (34%) of the non-metro African American population is poor versus 13% of the non-metro white population. In non-metro counties where the majority of the population is African American: Average total county income is 67% of the national value: \$259 million versus \$387 million per county. Bank deposits average \$144 million, 56% of the value for majority white counties, \$257 million (Probst, 2002).

To address the needs of non-metro minority populations requires recognition of the simultaneous presence of low-income individuals in low-income regions. Rural, minority poverty affects both individuals and communities. At the individual level, about one third of non-metro African Americans and Native Americans, and about one quarter of non-metro Hispanics, are poor. Total community economic resources are more constrained in counties where minority groups represent over half of the population. Typically, counties with high concentrations of minorities have income and assets that are two thirds or less of the national average. In counties

where Native Americans constitute the largest population group, incomes are less than half and county bank assets about a quarter of the national average.

The lack of community resources implied that it will be more difficult for non-metro minority persons to improve their economic status unless they leave their present communities. Federal funding for community development tends to bypass many impoverished non-metro counties. A group of researchers at the U.S. Department of Agriculture have examined the flow of Federal funds to metropolitan and non-metropolitan counties. Non-metro counties tend to exceed metro counties in funds received for income security, such as Social Security, public assistance, and medical benefits. However, funding for community resource development—business assistance, community and regional development—flows principally to metropolitan counties. This trend will have to change if rural communities and rural health infrastructures are to survive.

Most poor, non-metro African Americans are located in the South, including South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana as well as in western West Virginia and eastern Kentucky. Across the United States, including both non-metro and urban counties, 16.6% of persons lived below the poverty level in 1990. For metropolitan counties, the proportion of residents living in poverty was 12.8%. Non-metro counties had 18.3% of their residents living below the poverty level. Just under a third (31.8%) of African Americans across all county types live in poverty. In urban counties, however, 27.1% of African Americans lived in poverty, versus 34.1% of African American residents of non-metro counties.

About one third (33.8 %) of the non-metro African American population lives below the poverty line, versus 12.9% of the white population. The number of non-metro African American persons living below the poverty line is highest in Mississippi, Georgia, North Carolina,

Louisiana, Alabama, and South Carolina. Just over two thirds (69.9%) of all poor, non-metro African Americans live in these six states.

Emotional Intelligence

The use of intelligence testing with African Americans is a subject riddled with controversy because such testing has been used to bolster claims that African Americans are intellectually and racially inferior to those of European descent, orchestrate within school segregation along racial lines, and perpetuate the overrepresentation of African American students in special education programs (Graves & Mitchell, 2011; Guthrie, 2004; Newell, 2010; Shealey, McHatton, & Wilson, 2011). In the “doll test,” psychologists Kenneth and Mamie Clark used four plastic, diaper-clad dolls, identical except for color. They showed the dolls to black children between the ages of three and seven and asked them questions to determine racial perception and preference. Almost all of the children readily identified the race of the dolls. However, when asked which they preferred, the majority selected the white doll and attributed positive characteristics to it. The Clarks also gave the children outline drawings of a boy and girl and asked them to color the figures the same color as themselves. Many of the children with dark complexions colored the figures with a white or yellow crayon. The Clarks concluded that “prejudice, discrimination, and segregation” caused black children to develop a sense of inferiority and self-hatred. Oliver Brown claimed that Topeka's racial segregation violated the Constitution's Equal Protection Clause because the city's black and white schools were not equal to each other and never could be. The federal district court dismissed his claim, ruling that the segregated public schools were "substantially" equal enough to be constitutional under the Plessy doctrine. Immediately following the *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (1954) decision, for example, intelligence testing often resulted in the tracking of students of color into

general education classes designated for 'slow' learners or even more restrictive placements into special education classes (Skiba, Poloni-Stradinger, Simmons, Feggins-Azziz, & Chung, 2005). This created schools characterized by de facto segregation; that is, schools wherein many African American students were instructed in special education classes, while their European American peers were educated in the general education setting (Losen & Weiner, 2002 as cited in Smith & Kozleski, 2005; Skiba, 2008).

John D. Mayer is one of the authors of the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT), and has developed a new integrated framework psychology known as the Systems Framework for Personality Psychology. Peter Salovey another pioneer and leading researcher in emotional intelligence with John D. Mayer significantly expanded the scope of the concept and authored several of the field's seminal papers, arguing that people have widely ranging abilities pertaining to emotional control, reasoning, and perceptivity. Against earlier theories of intelligence that concentrated on emotion could motivate productive outcomes when properly directed. Salovey and Mayer (1990) defined emotional intelligence as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions".

Salovey and Mayers (1990) created the original emotional intelligence scale model. This model proposed that emotional intelligence appraisal consisted of emotion in the self and others, expression of emotion, regulation of emotion in the self and others and utilization of emotion in solving problems. The Assessing Emotions Scale (Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/216626162_The_Assessing_Emotions_Scale) attempts to assess characteristics or traits, and emotional intelligence. More recently, Mayer and Salovey (2004) have argued for a pure ability conceptualization of emotional intelligence. Such an ability

conceptualization is associated on latent abilities assessed through performance tasks. Other theorists and researchers (Neubauer & Freudenthaler, 2005; Petrides & Furnham, 2001, 2003) have argued that emotional intelligence can be usefully conceptualized as typical (or trait) functioning. A trait approach to assessing emotional intelligence draws on self-emotional intelligence characteristics in daily life.

A factor analysis of these items (well-being, self-control, emotionality, sociability) by Neubauer and Freudenthaler (2005) was conducted in a sample of 277 participant's yielding the extraction of two factors, which could be clearly identified as intrapersonal and interpersonal emotional management ability (EMA) dimensions, referring to individual differences in managing emotions in one's self (intrapersonal) and in others (interpersonal). The two generated TP-EMA scale of the so-called "Typical Performance Emotional Management Test (TEMT)" were moderately intercorrelated and had satisfactory internal reliabilities (intrapersonal: 18 items, $\alpha = .72$; interpersonal: 24 items, $\alpha = .70$), considering the diversity of emotions or emotional situations that are addressed by these two scales.

In addition, the two scales also displayed solid test-retest reliabilities over a period of six weeks (intrapersonal: $r = .72$; interpersonal: $r = .70$) in a further study. In summary, the findings demonstrated that affect-related behaviors can be assessed not only as personality traits, in the traditional self-report, but also by conceptually related, but sufficiently distinct TP-measures of EMA. Most importantly, the different relations of the TP-measures the EMA to cognitive intelligence and personality (compared to those obtained for related MP-measures of the MSCEIT) suggests that the individuals' emotional capacity cannot be equated with the effectiveness of their behavior typically shown in emotional situations.

Almost all present emotional intelligence scales assess emotional intelligence as either ability (Mayer et al., 2004) or a trait (Bar-On, 2000). There may be additional important dimensions of emotional intelligence. Such dimensions may include: (1) Self Awareness-know your own strengths and weaknesses, (2) Handling emotions- know how to calm yourself, (3) Motivation-able to set your own goals, (4) Empathy-able to understand other people's feelings, and (5) Social skills-able to solve conflicts and problems with peers.

One concept that many African American people are not familiar with is emotional intelligence. This is the ability to understand and manage your own emotions and those of the people around you. This is how people develop into "high achievers" or, achieve what famous psychologist Abraham Maslow would call self-actualization. Once trauma is introduced into someone's life (especially during childhood) it distorts the emotional intelligence of that person. This is why it is essential to address the intergenerational trauma we experience in our community. The following are four building blocks of emotional intelligence: (1) Self-Awareness, (2) Self-Management, (3) Social Awareness, and (4) Relationship Skills.

Self-Awareness

Our children must be able to recognize and understand their moods, emotions and drives. You would be surprised how often young people answer, "I don't know" to simple questions about themselves. If you don't know yourself, you are lost in life.

Self-Management

Once one can understand oneself, one must have the ability to control and/or redirect impulses and moods. This is essential in not allowing manipulation and/or harm to be done to you. Proactive behaviors prepare you better than reactive behaviors.

Social Awareness

The key to this area is attention. Our children must know how other people are reacting and/or anticipating how they are likely to react to what you do and say. Once one has the ability to sense how others react, you can be more effective in choosing how to deliver a message.

Relationship Skills

As the technology brings the world closer, it is vital for our children to be proficient in managing relationships and building networks. Many other ethnic groups are preparing their children to be global citizens. We must follow suit and do the same. If we as parents, family members, teachers, mentors and community members began to implement these four functions of emotional intelligence, our children will be better equipped to succeed and compete in this ever-growing global society (Jones, 2015).

History has documented the struggle of African American males in the fight for a quality education as well as economic, political and civil equality in America (Haycock, 2005). The educational experiences of African American males were delayed because African American males had a distinctive cultural beginning, and their unequal education has continued for many years following their emancipation. Although their early purpose for existence was labor exploitation and subordination to the dominant race (Anderson, 1988; Ladson-Billings, 2000), education has long been viewed as African Americans' passage to enjoying all the rights of freedom America has to offer (Anderson, 1988; Bell, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2006). Therefore, academic success plays a major role in African American male students' educational growth and their gaining passage to social, economic, and upward mobility.

Academic success is the measurement used to associate positive outcomes assessed for students. To be successful in academics means to take charge of learning by working hard at

academic courses in middle school and high school while preparing for higher education (Rentner & Kober, 2001). Statistics show that adults with advanced levels of education are more likely to be employed and to earn higher wages (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2001). Workers 18 years of age and over with a bachelor's degree earned an average of \$51,206 a year, while those with only a high school diploma earned \$27,915 a year (NCES, 2007). The labor force and unemployment statistics are strong indicators of the difficulties African American males encounter in the job market. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010), first quarter median weekly earnings during 2010 for Black men stood at 73.1% of the median earnings for White men. The unemployment rate for Black men 20 years and over as of June 2010 was 17%. Western, Kleykamp, and Rosenfeld (2006) noted that the consequences of economic inequality for Black men are major limitations on socioeconomic mobility, ultimately leading to high rates of unemployment, crime, and incarceration for massive numbers of young African American men.

Western et al. (2006) stated, "Labor market trends might influence the scale of imprisonment in two main ways: Failing wages and unemployment could increase crime at the bottom of the economic ladder, generating more arrests, convictions and prison admissions" (p. 2,291). Wray (2001) found that approximately one-fourth of all prime age African American males who have not graduated from high school were incarcerated or under the control of the correction system. At midyear, June 30, 2009, statistics showed that an estimated 841,000 Black males under the age of 18 were incarcerated in state, federal prison or local jails. For every 100,000 U.S. residents, Black males were incarcerated at a rate of 4,749 inmates, 6 times higher than White non-Hispanic males (West, 2010). In addition to unemployment, wages, and incarceration, academic success is important for the Black male students because of the advances

training needed to handle technological occupations of the 21st century for increased economic productivity (Gottlob, 2009).

Furthermore, the number of jobs requiring productive workers with higher levels of education is expected to grow considerable during the 21st century (Fleetwood & Shelley, 2000; Rentner & Kober, 2001; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). As noted by Ryan (2009), Fortune 500 companies require employees who are to succeed in the 21st century to have skills other than reading, writing, and arithmetic. The top 13 skills needed for success include: teamwork, problem solving, interpersonal skills, oral communication, listening, personal career development, creative thinking, leadership, goal setting/motivations, writing, organizational effectiveness, computation, and reading. Educators' conceptions of the successful student seemed to parallel those of the Fortune 500 companies. Scheuermann (2000) maintained that educators believe successful students are those who expect to succeed, are goal oriented, intrinsically motivated and are able to balance effectively the social and academic aspects of the school environment.

Haycock (2005) made this observation: "After more than two decades of effort, far too many young Americans exit school without the skills they need to secure a foothold in the knowledge economy" (p. 258). Consistently, African American males have lower educational attainment levels, are more chronically unemployed and are many times more likely to end up in jail or prison than males of other racial/ethnic groups (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009; Western et al., 2006). According to Kirkland (2006), this subgroup encounters exceptional barriers and gaps in educational achievement. Therefore, African American males require specific focus within the educational arena in order to success and improve their levels of academic development. The National Alliance of Business, Inc. (1998) research showed that

students who are academically successful are more stable in their employment, less dependent on public assistance, less likely to engage in criminal activity, more active as citizens and charitable volunteers and are more healthy.

It has been documented that the educational outlook for African American males has been systemically more devastating than the outcomes for other racial or ethnic groups or females; therefore, the work of education in a democracy should be to provide opportunities for this population of males to participate fully in the political, social and economic ideals of society. These ideals can never be realized fully if significant portions of society are excluded from high-quality education and the opportunity to factor African American male roles in the formula of success in society (Ladson-Billings, 2000). By researching and reporting on African American males' perceptions' of factors associated with their academic success, policymakers and educators may be better equipped to develop and implement solutions.

Therefore, it may be beneficial to educators to understand factors that African American males perceive to contribute to their academic performance and understand how the academic development of African American males will assist them in utilizing resources and people to achieve and maintain success. For African American males, a quality education may mean upward social and economic mobility (Anderson, 1988; Fitzgerald, 2006; Howard, 2003; Jordan & Cooper, 2003).

African American males' cultural identity has been shaped by stereotypes inherited through history (Bell, 2004). Some stereotypes associated with African American males include incompetence, laziness, and aggression. African American males' academic performance is often affected because of these stereotypes (Bell, 2004; Bogle, 1994; Cheng & Starks, 2002; Irving & Hudley, 2008; Mincey, 1994; NCES, 2009; Ogbu, 2004; The Staff of the Washington Post,

2007). The literature generally concluded that African American male students' educational aspirations, occupational expectations, cultural identity, and attitudes toward school are related to academic achievement (Cheng & Starks, 2002; Goldsmith, 2004; Irving & Hudley, 2008; Smerdon, 2002; Sullivan, Riccio, & Reynolds, 2008).

Do adolescent males who have negative community and school experiences use hypermasculine attitudes as a coping response? Do the effects of perceived negative school and community experiences persist, if they are present at all? A hypermasculine attitude or "cool pose" has often been noted in studies of identity development in males of color. Hypermasculine attitudes have been conceived in a number of ways, as bravado (Cunningham & Meunier, 2004; Spencer, 2001; Swanson, Cunningham, & Spencer, 2003), and as stoicism and then of women objectification (Pollack & Schuster, 2000). More recently, Corpew and Cunningham (2011) linked hypermasculinity to African American male's perceptions of negative neighborhood experiences and low reports of social support in an educational setting. The focus on human development as experiences from the individual's perspective affords an appreciation for examining the intersection of being male, African American, and an adolescent.

Spencer's (2001) research on African American adolescent males has often lacked attention to normative developmental processes and specific risks faced by African Americans. When describing the literature on experiences among youth of color, she indicates that research with African American adolescent males has too often conceptualized boys as "short adults" as opposed to considering the simultaneous contributions of unavoidable cognitive, psychosocial, and biological maturation processes associated with adolescence for all youth (Swanson et al., 2003). During adolescence, these developmental processes include identity formation that occurs in, and is significantly influenced by, proximal contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Many African American adolescent males however, are faced developing an identity that will also allow them to negotiate challenges associated with urban neighborhoods (Graham, 2009). More importantly, the hyper masculine attitudes exhibited by adolescent males are learned and associated with negative experiences in contexts where they engage a significant amount of their time, their schools and neighborhood communities (Cunningham, 1999; Swanson et al., 2003). Within schools, the importance of teacher expectations of African American makes academic potential important (Davis, 2003; Davis & Jordan, 1994; Garibaldi, 1991, 1992; Seyfried, 1998).

Understanding the dangers of negative teachers' expectations of male students in particular is needed, because researchers have noted that teachers, willingly or unwillingly, lower their expectations for African American students (Davis, 2003; Ford, 1998; Ford & Harris, 1992; Jordan, 1994). Corprew and Cunningham (2011) found that high reports of social support from teachers and school administrators assisted in lessening the negative relationship between negative youth experiences and hyper masculine attitudes. Hundley (2001) found that teacher expectations of students are linked to how the teachers perceived the students' communities.

Although it is true that the extent to which students will learn this new content is dependent on factors such as the skill of the teacher, the interest of the student and the complexity of the content, the research literature supports one compelling fact: what students already know about the content is one of the strongest indicators of how well they will learn new information relative to the content (Marzano, 2004).

Two students might have an equal amount of background knowledge. However one student's knowledge might relate to traditional school subjects such as mathematics, science, history, and the like. The other student's knowledge might be about nonacademic topics or such

as the best subway route to take to get downtown during rush hour, the place to stand in the subway car that provides the most ventilation on a hot summer day and so on. The importance of one topic type of background knowledge over another is strictly a function of context. The background knowledge of the second student is critical to successfully using public transportation in a specific metropolitan areas, but probably not very important for success in school. The first student's background knowledge is critical to success in a school, but not to successful public transit. If not addressed by schools, academic background can create great advantages for some students and great disadvantages for others.

We acquire background knowledge through the interaction of two factors: (1) our ability to process and store information, and (2) the number and frequency of our academically oriented experiences. The ability to process and store information is a component of what cognitive psychologists refer to as fluid intelligence. Fluid intelligence is innate. Our ability to process and store information dictates whether our expectations parlay into background knowledge. To illustrate, consider two students who visit a museum and see exactly the same exhibits. One student has a diminished capacity to process and store information or low fluid intelligence. The student with high-fluid intelligence will retain most of the museum experience as new knowledge in permanent memory. The student with low fluid intelligence will not. In effect, the student with the enhanced information, processing capacity has translated the museum information-process capacity has translated the museum into an academic background knowledge; the other has not.

As Sternberg (1985) explains, "What seems to be critical is not sheer amount of experience, but rather what one has been able to learn from and do with experience". The second factor that influences the development of academic background knowledge is our academically

oriented experiential base and the number of experiences that will directly add to our knowledge of content we encounter in school. It is the interaction of student's information processing abilities and their access to academically oriented experiences, then, that produces their academic background knowledge. Differences in these factors create differences in their academic achievement.

More recently, research has focused on African-American men. This is partly due to the growing realization that the status of African-American men is under severe attack in this society. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the school setting. For example, in a study of Chicago schools, Rowan (2008) found that African-American male students were significantly more likely to be retained or demoted than African-American female students at every grade level. Furthermore, Rowan argued, African- American male children began to exhibit negative attitudes and behaviors toward school as early as 4th grade. Rowan further suggested that African-American male students tended to avoid intellectual activities as a result of the racism they encountered, peer pressure, and because they were not well prepared for the school setting.

Another perspective that may help explain the behavior of male African Americans in school is provided by Ross and Jackson (1991) who studied teachers' perceptions of African-American elementary students. The teachers were given hypothetical descriptions of students and asked to rate their preferences for them as well as predict their expected achievement. Male African Americans were viewed more negatively by the teachers than were female African Americans. These early school experiences have important ramifications because African-American men are increasingly less likely to enter and be retained in college than African-American women, White women, or White men (Dunn, 1988; Hacker, 1992).

Research has shown that young black students in American schools are expelled and suspended three times as often as white students. Now a disturbing new study from Stanford University reveals one factor behind such disproportionate punishment.

The study “When the Black Escalation Effect Manifests in the Classroom”, showed that teachers tend to view black students more harshly than white students even when their disruptive behavior is exactly the same -- possibly triggering a destructive cycle. "We have shown experimentally, for the first time, that teacher responses can contribute to racial disparities in discipline," the researchers wrote in a paper describing their research, which was published online April 8 in the journal *Psychological Science*. "In fact, teacher responses may even help to drive racial differences in student behavior -- differential treatment by teachers, to some extent, may inspire repeated misbehavior by black students."

What's in a name? For the study, a racially diverse group of more than 250 elementary and secondary teachers across the country were shown records that described two minor infractions committed by a student. Half of the records were labeled with stereotypically black names (such as Deshawn or Darnell), and half with stereotypically white names (such as Greg or Jake).

After reading about each infraction, the teachers were asked how bothered they were by the student's misbehavior, how severely they thought the student should be disciplined, and how likely they were to consider the student a "troublemaker."

How did the teachers respond? When it came to a student's first infraction, there was no difference in the teachers' attitudes toward the white and black students. After reading about a second infraction, however, the teachers were more likely to feel troubled by the black students' behavior, to want to mete out severe punishment, and to label the student a troublemaker.

The "black-escalation effect." The researchers argue in their paper that when a student has multiple infractions, negative racial stereotypes are more likely to kick in. Teachers are more likely to see the infractions of black students as fitting into a larger pattern of bad behavior.

"It's not that these are racist people, it's just that we all are exposed to stereotypes in the world," Jason Okonofua, a graduate student at the university and the study's lead researcher, told Reuters. The researchers call this phenomenon the "black-escalation effect." And they say it's the same thing that happens outside the classroom.

"Most social relationships entail repeated encounters," Okonofua said in a written statement. "Interactions between police officers and civilians, between employers and employees, between prison guards and prisoners all may be subject to the sort of stereotype escalation effect we have identified in our research."

Reducing bias. The researchers said they hope their findings will encourage the development of new psychological interventions to mitigate the problem. Educators and advocates who were not involved in the study say it's a good first step.

"These findings must be brought into teacher training and professional development sessions," Dr. Christopher Emdin, science director of the Center for Health Equity and Urban Science Education at Columbia University's Teacher's College, told The Huffington Post in an email. "The next frontier in education is understanding that teachers have become complicit in maintaining racial inequities and must be given opportunities to confront and work through their biases in order to be effective."

In fact, previous research suggests that such interventions can work. A 2013 study showed that a 12-week intervention aimed at reducing racial biases was remarkably effective. During the intervention, participants learned about their own biases and employed five strategies

to combat them -- such as perspective-taking and pursuing opportunities for contact with members of other racial groups, but Dennis Parker, director of the ACLU's Racial Justice Program, said a single training program about racial bias is no magic bullet." This is not a one-step thing you can do and be inoculated against implicit bias," he told HuffPost Science. "It requires monitoring and retraining and careful observation. But the first step is that acknowledging that implicit bias is an issue" (Cooper-Wright, 2015).

Factors Contributing to African American Males Academic Success

Research studies have documented evidence that a variety of factors influence the likelihood that African American males could achieve in school (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004; Borman, Stringfield, & Rachuba, 2000; Lewis, James, Hancock, & Hill-Jackson, 2008; Schwartz, 2001; Stewart, 2008). Teacher preparedness, parental involvement, teacher expectations, student-teacher relationship, school climate, size, and school culture have been positively linked to academic achievement among African American male students (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004; Fleischman & Heppen, 2009; Wiggan, 2007).

Schools classified as high poverty have increased in the past decade. More than three quarters of students are eligible for free or reduced price lunches at high poverty schools. Between 1999-2000 and 2007-2009, the percent of high poverty schools increased from 12% to 17%. The poverty rate for children increased from 17% to 18% (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010). Research showed that the majority of teachers teaching in poverty stricken neighborhoods were ill-prepared to work in urban schools (Aud et al., 2010; Writ, Choy, Rooney, Provasnik, Sen, & Tobin, 2004). These teachers were often asked to teach out of their subject area (not highly qualified to teach that subject area) and had no prior educational training (Howard, 2003).

Out of field teachers are teachers who lack expertise and certification in the subject they teach (NCES, 2003).

In high-poverty and high-minority public high schools where more than 75% of the students are eligible for free-reduced lunches and 75% of students enrolled are African American students, statistics show students are more often taught core classes (English, science, and mathematics) by non-highly qualified teachers than their peers who are enrolled in low minority and low poverty public school. For example, during 1999-2000, 13.7% of high-poverty students were taught mathematics by teachers with neither major nor certification in field and 15.2% of students in high minority schools were taught mathematics by teachers with neither major nor certification in field compared to 6.6% low poverty students and 6.8% of students enrolled in low minority schools (Writ et al., 2004). Table 1 shows percentage of public school students taught by non- highly qualified subject area teachers in middle and high schools according to class subject (NCES, 2003).

Nationally, children considered poverty stricken and those of color are far more likely to be taught by inexperienced, underprepared, and unqualified teachers (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004; Haycock, 2001). Twenty-two percent of teachers working in high-poverty secondary schools had less than three years of teaching experience compared to 15% of teachers working in low poverty secondary schools (Aud et al., 2010).

Evidence suggested that African American students are assigned to the least effective teachers, as measured by teacher preparation and experience (Barton, 2003). In addition, in many cases, low-achieving high school students report a sense of alienation from their schools.

Believing that no one cares or that their teachers don't like them or talk down to them, students

Table 1

Percent of Middle and High School Students Taught by Out of Field Teachers, 1999-2000

Subject field	Middle grades		High school grades	
	1987-1988	1999-2000	1987-1988	1999-2000
English	19.5	17.4	13.0	5.6
Foreign language	--	13.8	--	11.1
Mathematics	17.2	21.9	11.1	8.6
Science	16.3	14.2	8.1	5.5
Biology/life science	32.9	28.8	9.3	9.7
Physical Science	43.0	40.5	30.9	15.5
Social science	12.7	13.3	7.5	5.9
Arts and music	2.0	2.5	3.3	5.0
Physical education	5.8	3.4	5.6	4.5

Note. No major, minor, or certification for either middle or high school grades.

will often give up on academics (Mouton, Hawkins, McPherson, & Copley, 1996). Kids raised in poverty are more likely to lack—and need—a caring, dependable adult in their lives, and often its teachers to whom children look for that support.

It's crucial for educators to keep in mind the many factors, some of them invisible, that play a role in students' classroom actions. Many nonminority or middle-class teachers cannot understand why children from poor backgrounds act the way they do at school. Teachers don't need to come from their students' cultures to be able to teach them, but empathy and cultural knowledge are essential. Therefore, an introduction to how students are affected by poverty is highly useful.

Individual-Level Characteristics and African American Male Students' Academic Success

The certification of teachers is closely related to students' achievement, parental involvement, and caring and concerned teachers also influence student outcomes (Wiggan, 2007). Parental involvement may be key to the academic success of students. Stewart (2008) stated, "The family is the basic institution through which children learn who they are, where they fit into society, and what kinds of futures they are likely to experience" (p. 20). Parental involvement in a child's education impacts academic achievement through higher grades, higher test scores, course credits earned, attendance, school readiness, and behavior (Simon, 2001). Students with involved parents, regardless of background, are more likely to earn higher grades and test scores, take advanced courses, be promoted, have better attendance rates, be better behaved, graduate and go on to college. Parental academic involvement that includes frequent school contacts, high expectations for postsecondary education, firm and supportive parenting skills leads to high educational outcomes for the African American male child (Maton, Grief, & Hraboski, 1998).

In addition, parents' collaborating with teachers was rewarding and beneficial for the academic outcome of the student (Wilson-Jones & Caston, 2004). Six face-to-face interviews with 16 African American males in Grades 3-6 in a rural school over a 3-month period revealed positive results (Wilson-Jones & Caston, 2004). The purpose of Wilson-Jones' study was to investigate factors that promoted and inhibited academic success of elementary African American male students and interview questions centered on parents' involvement with homework and study strategies.

Wilson-Jones reported that the majority of students indicated that having an adult show interest in their school work, paying attention in class, and completing their homework helped them to make better grades. Students further indicated that they were excited when their teachers and parents worked together on their behalf for academic success. The students who indicated that their parents visited the school regularly to check on them or have lunch, had fewer behavior referrals, better test scores, and made better grades in their class work than those students whose parents did not visit the school. In addition, Wilson-Jones' study revealed that for those students who had not repeated a grade, parents were more active in their education than the ones who had repeated a grade. Her investigation provided evidence of the importance of parental involvement in the academic achievement of elementary African American males.

Successful African American males attributed their high achievement to self-discipline, positive school experiences, motivation, excellent teachers, and supportive parents (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004; Trotter, 1981; Williams, 2002). Sullivan (2002) conducted a historical qualitative case study of academically successful African American males who were graduates of a high school in Gary, Indiana. The focus of Sullivan's research was to explore factors contributing to the academic success of African American males graduating from an urban high

school in Gary, Indiana. In addition, Sullivan's research sought to determine from African American administrators, teachers, and the school community what they felt contributed to graduates' academic success. In addition, participants were asked to provide a clearer understanding of the important issues critical to African American males' academic success.

Significant findings from Sullivan's (2002) study revealed that African American males were successful because of their individual responsibility and supportive commitment of influential persons at home and school. Participants stated that supportive peers and role models, they were able to envision themselves as African American professionals. In addition, participants felt their teachers expected them to produce above average work, nurtured them, and were concerned and inspired to do their best. One participant expressed the most significant contribution to his success was "a combination between strong administrators and very strong and committed teacher" (Sullivan, 2002, p. 107). Students perceived that the school climate is an interconnected environment with student-teacher relationships and teacher expectations as important factors contributing to successful academic outcomes. These are strong indicators that school initiatives should incorporate academic individual-level and school structural factors to improve academic success among Black male students.

School Structural Characteristics and African American Male Students' Academic Success

Research suggested that school-level concepts of school climate, size, school poverty, school location, school social problems, as well as, school cohesion and a feeling of belonging as felt by students and teachers alike may contribute to successful student outcomes (Goldsmith, 2004; Johnson, Crosnoe, & Elder, 2001). Among the goals specified in the NCLB act for schools was the goal to increase the high school graduation rate to 90% by the year 2000. Unfortunately, after 2000, educators in schools are continuing to seek ways to meet this goal and to address the

academic performance of students. One such intervention is smaller learning communities. Smaller learning communities (SLCs) are schools' redesigned initiatives with the intent of creating smaller theme-based units of organization, including schools with schools, academics within buildings. These communities include structures such as freshman academies organized around career interests or other themes. A group of core-subject teachers teaches small groups of students, keeping students and teachers together throughout the student high school experience. This effort is designed to address or remedy the low graduation and high dropout rates. Schools creating smaller learning communities help students create a sense of connectedness to faculty and school, sense of identity, self-esteem, as well as improve academic success.

Jordan and Cooper (2003) noted that school reform initiatives such as smaller learning communities and class size reduction are structural reforms aimed at changing the social and or physical organization of the school. Studies have shown that smaller learning communities (SLC) might provide personal learning environments that provide a sense of belonging for students, increase school safety, and foster greater student engagement in learning (Cotton, 2001; Fleischman & Heppen, 2009; Januzik & Wolvin, 2007; Metzger, 2006; Shear, Means, Mitchell, House, Gorges, Joshi, & Shkolnik, 2008; Tasker, 2007). When schools are restricted into self-contained, small learning communities, it becomes easier for teachers and administrators to facilitate a school climate that leads to a closer connection with students and a warm and caring environment for students (Cotton, 2001; Sergiovanni, 1995). School climate is an area educators might concentrate on for implementing strategies to help student achievement. School climate consisted of the attitudes, beliefs, values that underlie students' academic success. School climate helped to shape the communication between and among students, teachers, administrators, parents, and the community. The continued promotion of the expectation that

diverse groups of students can be successful and the maintenance of a school climate conducive to academic productivity are important initiatives toward improving student achievement.

According to Schwartz (2001), the recognition of the many unique cultures within a school and incorporating the characteristics of these cultures into the learning environment contribute positively to the success of students as well as develop the skills for students of these cultures to be social successes in adulthood. A safe, orderly and healthy school climate also promotes mutual respect between students, teachers and administrators and emphasizes a well-publicized, fair, and uniform code of conduct.

Sergiovanni (1995) introduced the expression “school as a community” to suggest that schools be thought of as a group of individuals who are bonded together by a common goal will and a set of shared ideas and values. Sergiovanni proposed a climate where students and teachers can connect to the school and feel responsible for themselves and others. Schools must become caring and learning communities. It is important to impress a caring attitude upon students early before they become unreachable. Hoy and Miskel (2005) noted the general school climate not only impacts students, but teachers and administrators. Stewart (2008) analyzed data collected from 1,238 African American students found within 546 high schools. Forty-eight percent of the sample was male. Data from school officials (administrators and teachers) and students provided information about school social problems and school cohesion. The results indicated that school climate is extremely important to student academic success. African American students who attend schools that are supportive and caring have significantly higher achievement, as perceived by their teachers, and school administrators. Furthermore, the study concluded that poverty in school, social problems, as well as location and size of school do not have a significant bearing on achievement. The schools’ characteristics that correlated with higher levels of achievement,

as reported by the researcher, were cooperation among teachers, administrators, and support for students, and clear expectations about the mission of the school. Goddard, Sweetland, and Hoy (2000) conducted a study with population of 60% African American students and concluded that poor and minority students are more likely to excel when there is a school climate promoting academic excellence.

A study conducted by Toldson (2008) included 5,779 school-aged African American males who completed the Health Behavior in School-age Children, National Crime Victimization Questionnaire, School Crime Supplement, National Questionnaire of America's Families and National Questionnaire on Drug Use and Health. The purpose of this study was to analyze academic success indicators from data obtained from questionnaires to determine factors that may improve educational outcomes for African American males. Findings revealed that high-achieving African American males perform best when they have a positive perception of school, have a friendly relationship with their teachers, and when they perceive the school environment as safe.

Mayer (1987) conducted a research about the achievement of high achieving African American males. As he stated, "with respect to academic achievement and consistent with data from samples of White students", data analyses showed that high achievers had higher self-concepts of ability; reported experiencing more support from teachers, parents, and others; and demonstrated more active problem-solving strategies. These characteristics also have been identified in resilient children (Werner, 1984).

Differential Treatment of African American Students

Differential treatment and instruction in school can impact the African American student's perceptions of school as well as his or her expectations from society (Haycock, 2001;

Wiggan, 2007). It has been documented that African American students are lagging behind peers in academic achievement (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004; Ferguson, 2002). Similarly, the issue of differential treatment of African American students by schools and teachers seems particularly important as such practice might hinder African American students from gaining access to academic success (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002).

Wiggan (2007) stated “It is evident that all students do not receive the same treatment with regard to their education, but they are all expected, nevertheless, to produce similar outcomes” (p. 322). To maximize the growth of African American students, including those from low-income, culturally diverse backgrounds, differentiation must address students’ learning styles, interests, and readiness for learning. Administrators must identify the academic needs of African American students and ensure that these needs are met by encouraging teachers to master and use appropriate instructional tasks to accomplish the academic objectives (Ferguson, 2002). School leaders will fail in their responsibility and students will continue to be at high risk of failure unless educators in schools and decision makers realize they must enhance the development of the academic potential of African American students (Borman et al., 2000). The responsibility of building principals is to focus attention on the success of all students.

Research indicated that school leadership and effective administration play a significant role in the effective operation of successful schools (Dimmitt, 2003; Fleischman & Heppen, 2009; Grove, 2004; Jordan & Cooper, 2003; Toldson, 2008). High expectations of students and teachers, higher-quality principal leadership, frequent monitoring of student progress, and positive students and faculty attitudes lead to higher than expected student achievement gains (Heck, 2000). Much of the research on attaining academic success highlights the importance of strong principal leadership, a caring and supportive school staff, and a school culture of high

expectations. In addition, values and respect as well as the culture and learning style of the African American student were highlighted as necessary means of making possible a high rate of academic success for African American students (Maryland State Department of Education, 2006; Ragland, Clubine, Constable, & Smith, 2002; Wilson-Jones & Caston, 2004).

However, educators in schools often perpetuate the difficult challenges African American students face in their educational development. In 2007, the national percentage of public school students in grades 6 through 12 who had been suspended, expelled, or repeated a grade was higher for African American males than for White males. African American male students were suspended at a rate of 43% while only 16% White peers were suspended. Equally as alarming, 13% of African American students had been expelled from school while only 1% of White peers were expelled. In addition, the percentage of African American male students repeating a grade and more than doubled that of White students. Almost 21% of African American students versus 9% of White students repeated a grade (NCES, 2010).

In addition, the districts with predominately African American students tended to operate racially segregated schools, achieved poorly on the National Assessment of Education Progress, and a higher number of African American males were suspended and expelled. More African American boys than White boys are assigned to special education programs and prevented from receiving a high school diploma with their peers. African American children are labeled “mentally retarded” nearly 300% more than White children and only 8.4% of African American males are identified and enrolled in gifted and talented classes (Holzman, 2006). In many states, poor, underachieving students have been removed from regular classrooms and placed in pseudo-alternative schools and programs where the goal is behavior modification rather than

academic acceleration. The majority of students segregated in these flawed interventions have been poor, male, and minority.

A report published by the National Center for Education Statistics (2007) provided data showing disparity in achievement levels by racial subgroups. This data is significant because although African Americans represented only 17% of the total population, they accounted for 32% of the suspensions and 30% of the expulsions in U.S. schools (Skiba et al., 2002). In addition, the percentage of African American male students repeating a grade more than doubled that of White students. Almost 23% of African American males versus 10.0% of White male students repeated a grade. In a 2005 report, the U.S. Department of Education reported the percentage of African Americans (11.6%) who were status dropouts were higher than the 7.2% of whites (NCES, 2007).

Expulsions and suspensions resulting in absenteeism from the learning process. Absenteeism has a negative impact on academic success and graduation rates (Skiba et al., 2002). Thus, these practices aid in African American males' academic failure. Therefore, paying closer attention to African American students being suspended or expelled, repeating grades, and dropping out of school before graduation and the relationship of these factors to poor academic performance should be a major goal of America's public educators (NCES, 2007).

Skiba et al. (2002) reviewed disciplinary records of 11,001 students in 19 urban Midwestern middle schools for the 1994-1995 school years. Of the number of students in the study, 56% were African American and 42% were White, and males accounted for 51.8% of the students in the study. Data showed that 65.3% of students were from low socioeconomic level families based on their eligibility for reduced cost lunch.

Findings from the Skiba et al. (2002) study revealed that African American students and males were overrepresented in all three measures of school discipline consequences (referrals, suspensions, and expulsions). In the case of office referrals, the rank order was African American male, White male, African American female followed by White female. In the case of African American males, the reason for office referrals catered to the subjective judgment of the referring agent, such as loitering, excessive noise, or threat; whereas, the reasons given for White students' referrals to the office consisted of smoking and vandalism, which indicated an objective view by the referring agent.

In addition, results from the Skiba et al. (2002) study showed that the economic indicator appeared to be somewhat less important than gender or racial disparity. The researchers concluded that there was indeed a robust pattern of African American students being disproportionately disciplined based in a higher rate of office referrals. African American students perceived this racial disparity in discipline as a cause to have them removed from the classroom. For example, they identified a lack of interest on the part of the teachers, differences in communication style, and lack of respect from teachers as underlying causes of referrals. In addition, African American students contended that a purposeful plan existed to push them to the point of being disrespectful and hostile, thereby, leading to office referrals. Researchers suggest that school leadership develop alternative methods to suspensions and expulsions for dealing with disruptive behavior and to help educators learn how to focus on positive classroom management techniques to improve academic performance of students (Advancement Project/Civil Rights Project, 2000; Morgan, 1991).

Programs Designed to Help African American Males Achieve Academic Success

Principals and community leaders have acknowledged the problem of low academic performance among African American students (Campbell-Whatley & Algozzine, 1997; Wyatt, 2009). One of the challenges facing administrators is how to ensure a quality education and assure equitable distribution of education resources to all students. Therefore, various learning strategies and intervention programs that might potentially equip minority students, especially African American males, with the needed skills to be successful in school and society have been explored. Successful programs addressing the needs of youths while preparing them to be successful adults in society are connected with the school and the community. Role models and mentors not only have a positive effect on students' grades, but positively affect behavior, attendance and self-esteem (Campbell-Whatley & Algozzine, 1997; Wyatt, 2009).

The potential to put more African American males in the classroom, improve the African American community, and advance the nation as a whole exists in a program in the South Carolina educational system. The Call Me Mister (Men Instructing Students Toward Effective Role Models) Program was designed to help African American males become change agents, develop pride and dignity, and simultaneously create successful and effective educational experiences. The Call Me Mister Program focuses primarily on students in elementary grades. The goal is to train African American males to become school teachers and role models. The mission of the Mister program is to improve achievement among African American students by utilizing the leadership ability of African American male teachers. In conjunction with historically black Benedict College, Claflin, Morris College, and South Carolina State University, the program had about 150 black males in teacher training programs and 20 teachers on the job in 2007.

These black male teachers served as role models and male influences in the classroom. It is believed that this program over time will impact academic performance, especially in black males. The Mister program is supported financially by the federal government and organizations such as Bavarian Motor Works (BMW), Michelin and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation (Holsendolph, 2007; Richard, 2005; Smiles, 2002).

Studies have found that African American males' academic success, to some degree depends on the development of same-race peer relationships and same-race support on campus. These studies showed that not only does peer connection play an important role in African American males' collegiate success, but it also enhances the quality of college experience (Harper, 2006; McClure, 2006). Wyatt (2009) reported that the Brotherhood male mentoring program goal is to improve the graduation rate of African American males within Chicago Public Schools. The program is guided by a membership of 105 men, incorporating the American School Counselor Association standards, empowerment theory, and the seven principles of Kwanzaa Nguzo Saba. These principles incorporate unity, self-determination, collective work, responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith as taught through weekly student engagement. Weekly topics are developed based on issues affecting adolescent African American male development. Over 90% of males participating in the program were of African American race.

After the 30 week program, data was collected from Grade Point Average (GPA) and a questionnaire completed by 36 members and program alumni to collect perception data about the impact of the program. Results showed the Brotherhood members' grade point averages (GPA) was 60% higher in 2006 and 48% higher in 2007 other than non-Brotherhood males. Data from

the questionnaires suggested a need to provide continuous academic, personal/social, and career development support to males through the use of mentoring groups (Wyatt, 2009).

A review of the literature suggested that cultural identity, socioeconomic disadvantages, and oppression have an effect on the development of young African American males. In addition, two primary criteria are indicated as being significant for the socialization of African American men in America: education and job skills (Wyatt, 2009). The job of the high school principal, counselors and staff members is very difficult. However, a study conducted by Grove (2004) concluded that administrators did influence student outcomes through the facilitating of goal setting and communication of those goals as they relate to state standards. The need for quality school leadership remains to be an important factor in the education of all students (Grove, 2004).

Educational opportunities shape the lives of students for employment, and general well-being while lack of educational opportunities contributes to school failure, dropout and poverty. Theoretically, schools are designed to provide educational opportunities and prepare students for life after school. According to Sizer (1999), there is no phase of schooling of higher profile than the curriculum. Curriculum development, instructional strategies design, learning activities, and the assessment system must be aligned with intended learning outcomes. The responsibility of the building principal is to focus attention on the achievement of all students. Principals are in a unique position as school leaders to implement curriculum strategies that will empower African American males and all students to develop positive attitudes, behaviors and values necessary for educational accomplishments.

To summarize this section, the reality for many of these young men is that they are much more frequently listed on the suspension roll than the honor roll. "When Black boys are brought

together for any sort of special program, at least one will usually ask 'What did we do wrong this time?' because the only time when they think of themselves getting together collectively in school, other than in sports, is in some negative context" (Hrabowski, 1998, p. x). Even instances of resilience, success, and competence displayed by African American young men in spite of adverse living conditions often go unnoticed and unrecognized, thus denying them a sense of success and accomplishment (Spencer et al., 2003). Principal leaders can be the gatekeepers of success or failure for many of these young men (Spencer et al., 2003).

Solutions Believed to be Necessary for Academic Success

Based upon the data presented in the reviewed literature, a conclusion is that African American students' educational aspirations, occupational expectations, cultural identity, and attitudes toward school are related to students' achievement (Cheng & Starks, 2002; Goldsmith, 2004; Irving & Hudley, 2008; Smerdon, 2002; Sullivan et al., 2008). Research findings suggested that African American students maintained that schools, parents, community and the school environment play an important role in their educational development. Basden (2006) studied the impact of socialization upon African American high school males' academic achievement. Home, schooling practices, peer influence, self-esteem, contemporary music, socioeconomic status and role models were considered as influences with the school environment. The study consisted of 42 African American male participants: 21 high achievers with 3.00 GPA or higher and 21 low achievers with 2.00 GPA or lower. Participants were interviewed and given a 51-item questionnaire that included a Likert scale. High achieving students showed greater gain due to spending more time in the library with parents. African American students felt their grades were reflective of their attitudes and behavior and were less reflective of how nice their teachers were. Students were comfortable being African Americans,

listened to hip/hop music, and had few people in their household. These socialization skills were thought to be important influences in leading to academic success in African Americans.

African Americans, especially males, academic performance is often affected because of stereotypes (Bell, 2004; Bogle, 1994; Cheng & Starks, 2002; Irving & Hudley, 2008; Mincey, 1994; NCES, 2009; Obgu, 2004; The Staff of the Washington Post, 2007). Wright (2007) study examined the relationship between racial-ethnic identity and high academic achievement of five young African-American men in grades 11 and 12 in an urban pilot high school in the Northeast. The study revealed that positive youth development, identity theory, socio-cultural theory have a positive effect on the way adolescents interviewed used strategies of assertiveness to achieve school success.

In summary, individual determination, hard work, effort, and support are key ingredients high achieving African American males believe will assist them in overcoming obstacles to become successful (Conchas, 2006; Gayles, 2005; Wright, 1977). Not only do they survive their high school experiences, some excel academically to the point where they earn admission to the most selective colleges in the United States. It is critical that their lives as real human beings who experience successes, failures, disappointments, triumphs, and set-backs represent the full range of characteristics, attitudes, behaviors, values, and beliefs that comprise all individuals.

Summary

Shifting the thinking from viewing African American male students through a deficit lens to viewing these same students through a strength-based model has led researchers to investigate variables associated with students who are beating the odds of their predictive circumstances. A plethora of research abounds that seeks to explain the educational failure of African American males rather than exploring their successes (Gayles, 2005). Spencer et al. (2003) support this

claim by stating that, "The existing literature ignores the fact that many African American males are quite successful in spite of extreme reactive coping efforts required for life in high-risk environments" (p. 619). There are African American young men who truly beat the odds (Harrington, & Broadman, 1997; Hrabowski, 1998; Levine, 1996).

Conchas (2006) maintain that many African American males learn and succeed in school despite circumstances that include low socioeconomic status minimal teacher expectations, and inadequate representations of their successes. These young men overcome the barriers of economic disenfranchisement and social ostracism to flourish academically. They recognize the structural constraints in society, but they become determined not to allow these barriers to impede their social mobility (Conchas, 2006).

It is important for African American male students to be equipped with an adequate education so they will be able to contribute to the social, economic, and political development of society. In addition, it is important that educators equip themselves with knowledge concerning cultural differences among students, perceptions African American males have about schools that hinder their achievement, and programs that best serve African American male students. School leaders are increasingly more accountable for the achievement of students.

In Chapter 3 the Conceptual Framework will be implemented to determine the strengths and weaknesses that cause African American males to become repeat offenders of negative behaviors based on their emotional intelligence, social and academic challenges. A correlation matrix is a matrix diagram used for prioritizing, reflection, or analysis of a situation.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Alternative school settings for students who are identified as “disruptive or dangerous” have played an increasingly prominent role in the world of public education. Though the rapid expansion and reliance on alternative schools has increased, the body of research is not keeping up with their growth. In theory, alternative schools existed to advocate and provide optional learning environments for students struggling in the traditional school environments. For students deemed failures or at risk of failure, two basic subsets of alternative schools have emerged: One for students experiencing academic difficulty and at risk of dropping out, and the other for students described as dangerous or disruptive. Osher (2012) found that students that return from alternative schools for the most part, did not succeed at their home base school upon their return. There were a variety of individual, school, and systemic factors that needed to be addressed if those young people were to successfully returning to schools. Individual factors include poor academic and social–emotional skills, credit deficits, special education needs, and the failure to develop an identity as a learner” (Osher, 2012). School factors consisted of poor conditions for learning in the schools to which transitioning youth, likely contributed to the educational deficits that these students exhibited prior to adjudication; limited opportunities for students to learn when schools were focused almost exclusively on test taking and the need to maintain order; a lack of appropriate supplemental educational and social services; a failure to explicitly teach non-cognitive skills (e.g., persistence, self-discipline, dependability); and educator attitudes and biases, which often pushed students out (Osher, 2012).

While systemic reforms were necessary, judges, court staff, agency staff, and educators could act to improve school integration and academic success. They could accomplish this by

seeing transition as a process and not an event, and that it starts when a student is removed from his or her community school. Viewed this way, “transition” referred to a youth’s movement within and between one of four stages: (1) entry into alternative school placement, (2) enrollment in an alternative school setting, (3) reentry or exit from an alternative setting, and (4) aftercare or progress monitoring of a youth upon enrollment in his or her home-base school. Services provided during these four stages are essential for keeping youth engaged in their home communities, ensuring their development as productive citizens, and preventing them from returning to alternative school placements.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to learn how Project H.O.P.E. impacted the emotional intelligence of African American males who attend rural alternative schools. Mentoring has been shown through research and evaluation studies to be an effective approach to reducing the complex problems that face our youth today, such as alcohol and drug use, academic failure, teenage pregnancy, and gang violence (Grossman & Garry, 2004). Mentoring has broad appeal as a prevention strategy because of its strong link with the core of resiliency efforts. Resiliency research examined the fact that youth in potentially harmful and destructive environments can emerge as positive and productive adults due to various factors that serve to negate or reverse the impact it has on youth in risky situations (Grossman & Garry, 2004). In the case of mentoring, the resilient factor present is primarily the development and sustenance of a caring relationship between an adult and young person. Mentoring programs can help keep kids in school and improve their academic performance.

The Commonwealth Fund’s questionnaire of 360 young African American males showed a correlation between participation in mentoring and counseling programs and the completion of

school. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of young men who remained in school participated in mentoring or counseling programs, as compared to the 18% of young men who dropped out of school. Youth who are mentored have fewer problems with gang violence and less recidivism. To summarize, the research supported the notion that if students were in a productive, structured mentoring program, they would fare much better than their counterparts who were not. The students who learned emotional, social, academic skills were likely to be successful. These skills aided students when they encountered triggers for previous negative behaviors that caused their transition from their home-school to an alternative school. Those learned skills determined the best course of action and created a positive outcome so that they will not resort back to their negative behavior.

Project H.O.P.E. incorporated mentoring that research and evaluation studies determined to be effective approaches to reducing the complex problems that face our youth today, such as alcohol and drug use, academic failure, and gang violence (Grossman & Garry, 2004). Project H.O.P.E. was used as a strategy to equip African American males to understand their EI and utilized this understanding to address complex problems they face in high school. In the case of Project H.O.P.E., addressing EI attempted to help keep African American males in school, out of trouble, and focusing on their academic performance. Emotional Intelligence as defined by Schutte et al. (1998) utilizing four subscales. Subscale (1) *Managing Others Emotions* is defined as the ability to perceive emotions in oneself. Subscale (2) *Managing Self and Others* is defined as the ability to understand emotional information, to understand how emotions combine and progress through relationships. Subscale (3) *Emotional Perception* is defined as the ability to be open to feelings, and to modulate them in oneself and others so as to promote personal understanding and growth. Subscale (4) *Understanding Facilitating Thoughts*

of Emotions is defined as the ability to generate, use, and feel emotion as necessary to communicate feelings.

The research questions addressed in this study were:

1. How does Project H.O.P.E. help African American male students manage their overall *Managing Others Emotions*?
2. How does Project H.O.P.E. help African American male students manage their *Managing self and others*?
3. How has Project H.O.P.E. help African American male students manage their *Emotional Perception*?
4. How has Project H.O.P.E. help African American male students manage their *Understanding Facilitating Thoughts of Emotions*?
5. How do principals, teachers, and parents perceive the emotional intelligence of African American male students that participated in Project H.O.P.E.?

Population of Interest

Alternative placements at Milton M. Daniels School were intended for students who presented discipline problems, especially those at risk of suspension or expulsion. Placement at Milton M. Daniels school was punitive and often compulsory (for a period of time) as an alternative to out of school suspension. The population of interest for this study were African American male high school students that enrolled at the Milton M. Daniels Alternative School during school year 2015-2016. These students participated in Project H.O.P.E. to enhance their emotional intelligence with a purpose of breaking a cycle of recidivism.

Study Context

Community Portrait

At the time of the study, the Wilson community portrayed an opportunity to understand the student population at Milton M. Daniels Learning Center. Wilson County was located in eastern North Carolina. Spread across a total area of 373 sq. miles, the county had a population of more than 78,000. Wilson County attracted families from surrounding areas due to its quality of life and excellent education programs available to those wishing to relocate to a vibrant community. Parents, students, staff and community members had formed an alliance to ensure that every child will be successful in the 21st century. Wilson County Schools served approximately 12,000 students in twenty-five schools.

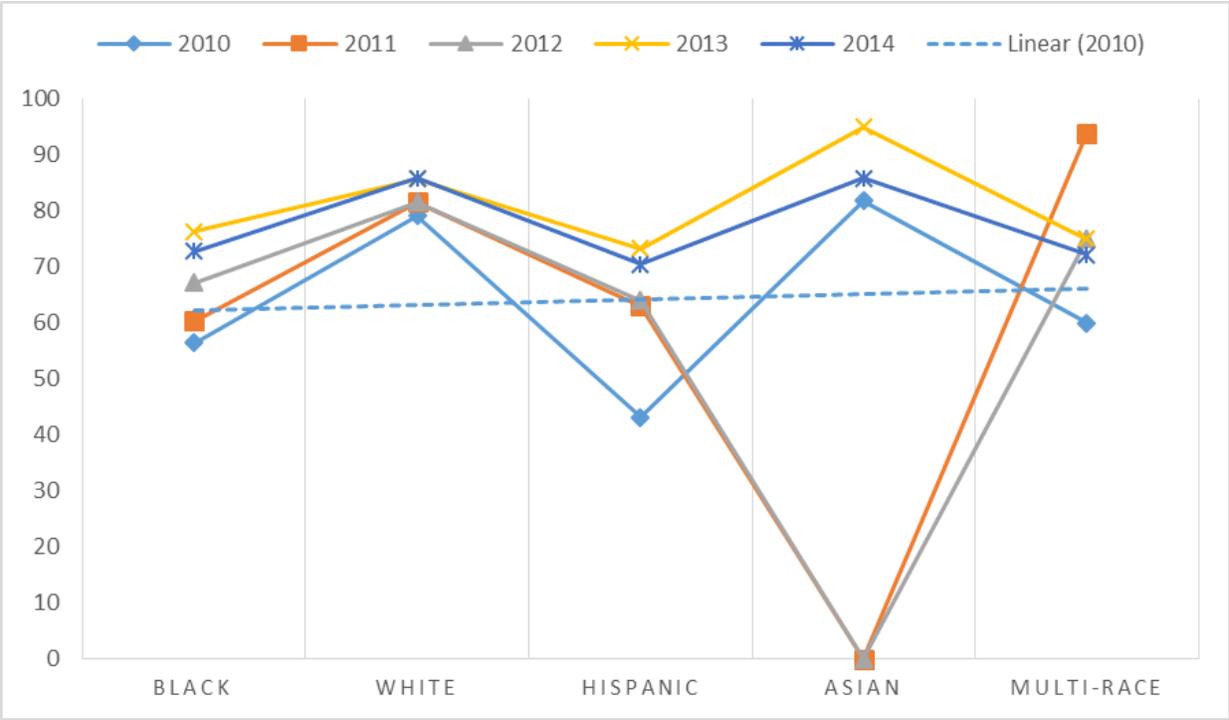
Comparing and Contrasting Student Subgroups

Figures 1, 2, and 3 highlight the subgroups within the Wilson county public schools and their poor academic performances in comparison to each other locally and statewide. Figures 4 and 5 highlights potential issues which contribute to the student's poor academic performances.

Figures 6 and 7 illustrate the number of African American males enrolled in Wilson County's five high schools. The figures provide details about classification (9-12) and showing the largest number of students attending Milton M. Daniels Alternative School.

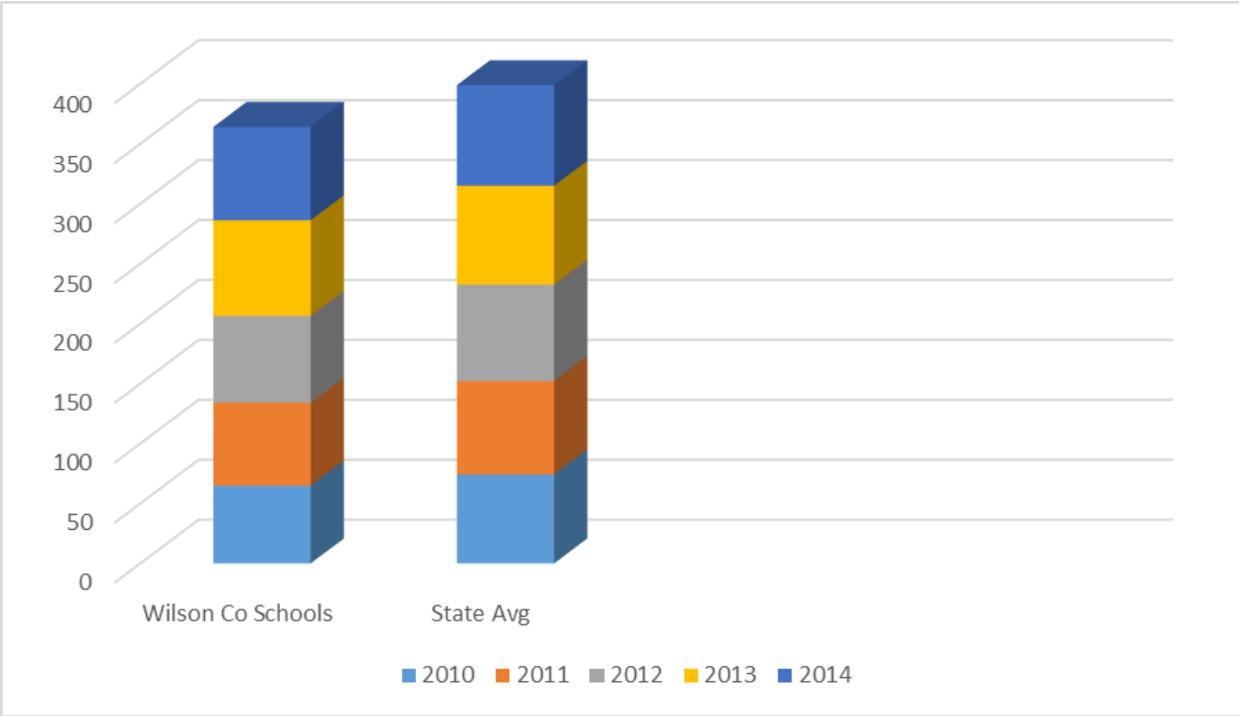
Study Site

Milton M. Daniels was the only alternative school in Wilson County. The ratio of students to teachers at Milton M Daniels Learning Center is 4:1. They provided educational services and/or curriculum for students, through Edgenutity, an online educational program that supplemented the K-12 curriculum due to the lack of instructional positions allotted for the school. The blended learning model is predominately utilized to instruct students. They provided



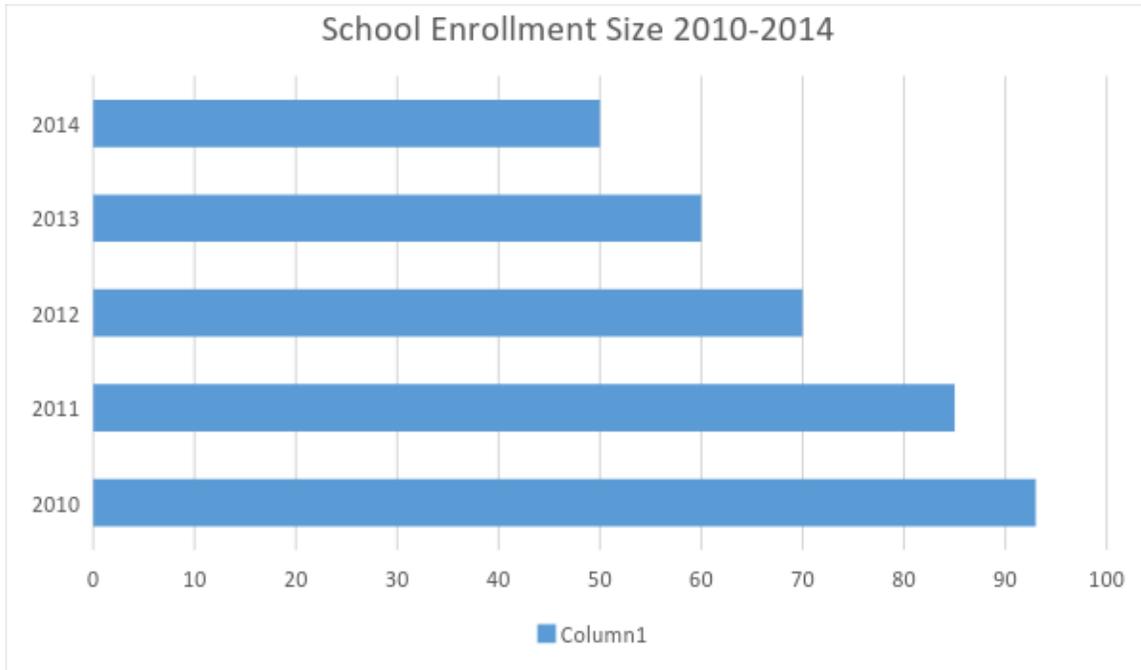
Note. (NC School Report Card, Retrieved from www.ncpublicschools.org/src).

Figure 1. Wilson County Schools cohort graduation rate subgroups (2010-2014).



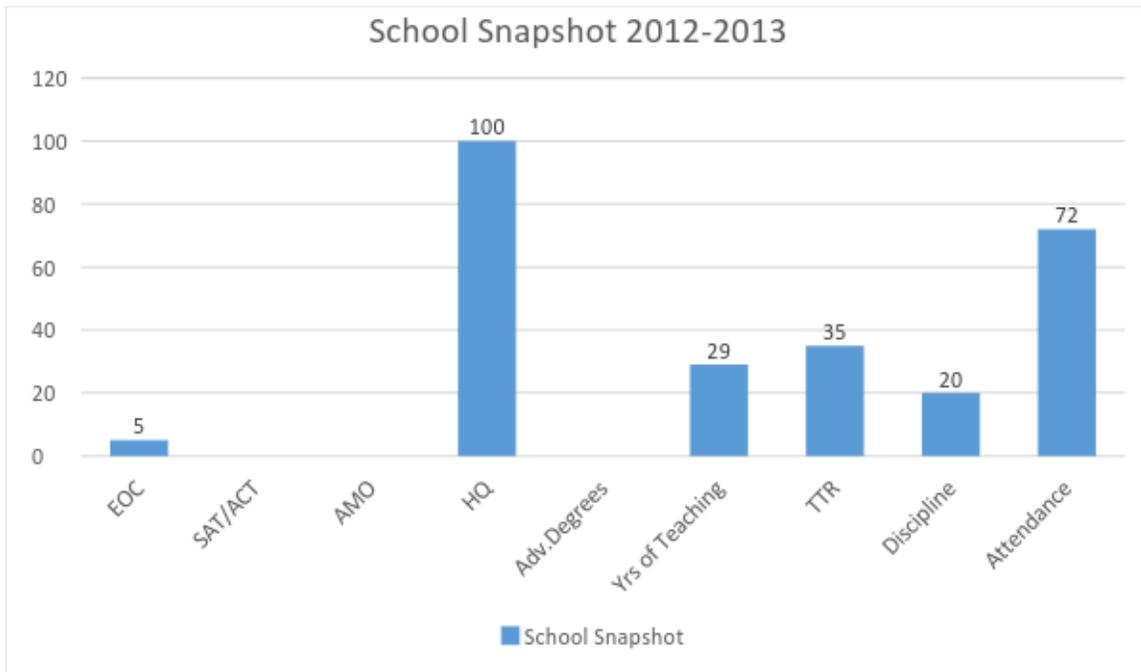
Note. (NC School Report Card, Retrieved from www.ncpublicschools.org/src).

Figure 2. Wilson County Schools testing data compared to the state average.



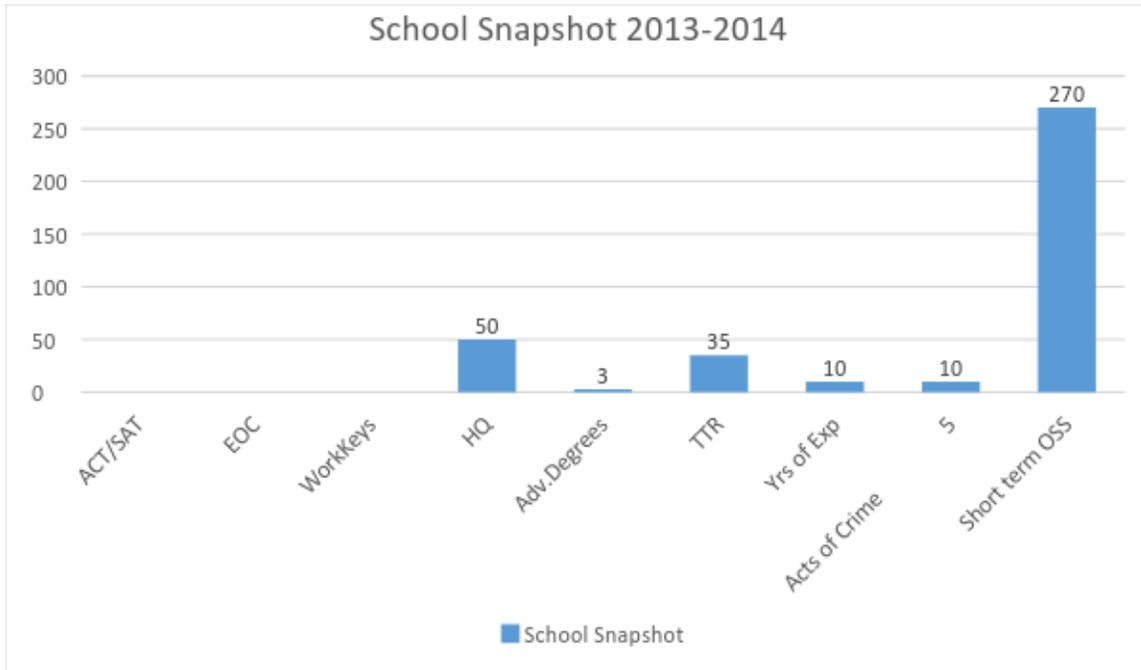
Note. The above information details the overall snapshot at Milton M. Daniels for 2012-2013 TTR-Teacher Turnover Rate, EOC-End of Course Tests, ACT/SAT-American College Test/Scholastic Assessment Test, HQ-Highly Qualified, AMO-Annual Measurable Objectives (NC School Report Card, Retrieved from www.ncpublicschools.org/src).

Figure 3. School enrollment size (2010-2014).



Note. The above information details the overall snapshot at Milton M. Daniels for 2012-2013 TTR-Teacher Turnover Rate, EOC-End of Course Tests, ACT/SAT-American College Test/Scholastic Assessment Test, HQ-Highly Qualified, AMO-Annual Measurable Objectives (NC School Report Card, Retrieved from www.ncpublicschools.org/src).

Figure 4. Milton M. Daniels Learning Center snapshot 2012-2013.



Note. The above information details the overall snapshot at Milton M. Daniels for 2012-2013 TTR-Teacher Turnover Rate, EOC-End of Course Tests, ACT/SAT-American College Test/Scholastic Assessment Test, HQ-Highly Qualified, AMO-Annual Measurable Objective (NC School Report Card, Retrieved from www.ncpublicschools.org/src).

Figure 5. Milton M. Daniels School snapshot 2013-2014.

African American Males Enrollment Breakdown by Wilson County High School

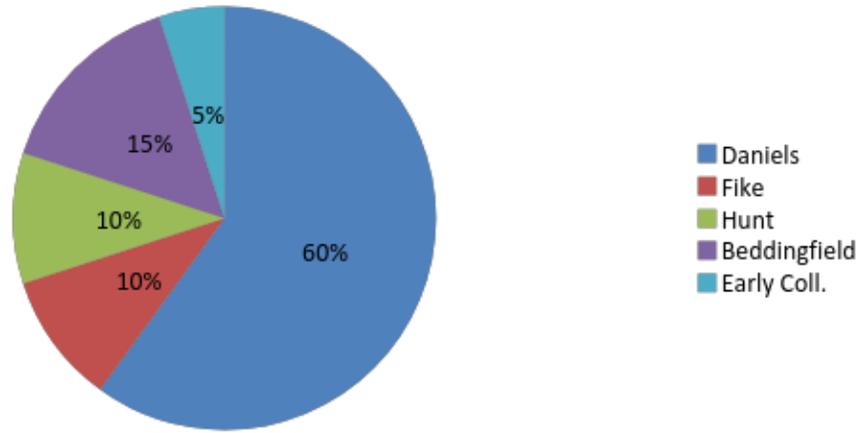


Figure 6. African American males breakdown by Wilson County high schools.

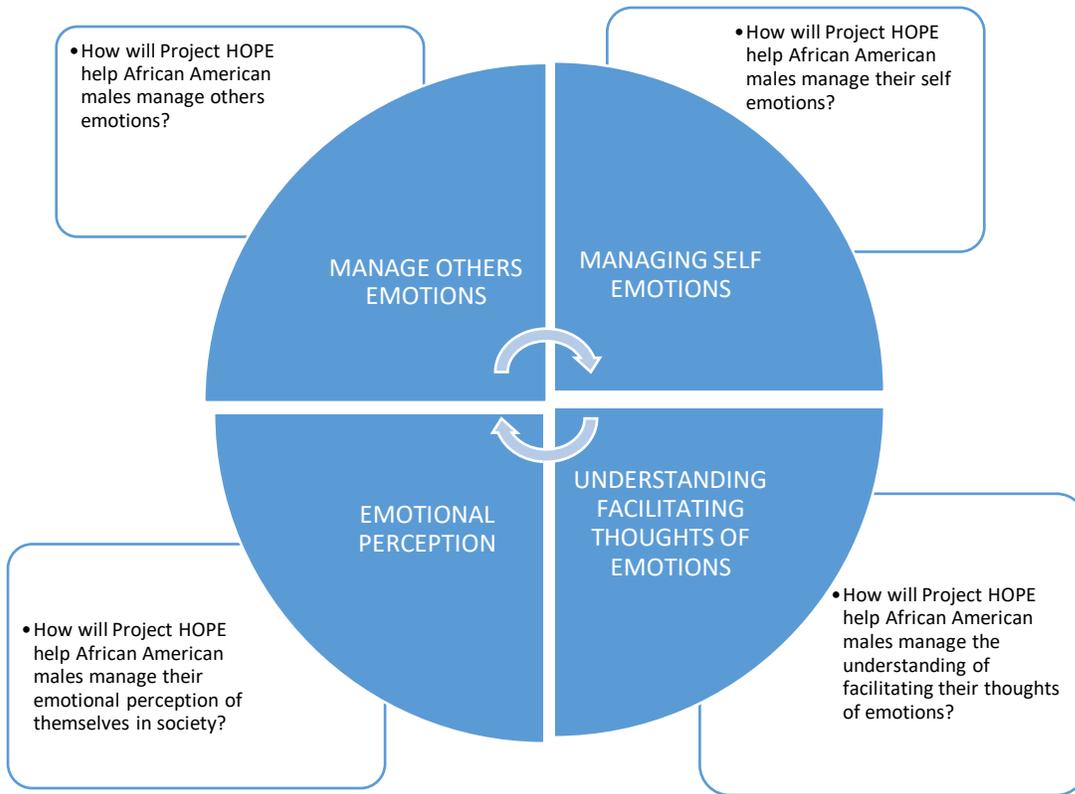


Figure 7. Conceptual framework.

services for potential dropouts, chronic truant students and those with behavioral problems. The Booster Program was implemented to assist students in being promoted to their correct grade or potentially position them to get back on track to graduate. The Evening Program was also in place to allow students who were suspended for long terms to receive instruction from the community college to assist students to obtain their GED or high school diploma.

Milton M. Daniels Learning Center is a historical landmark in Wilson, NC. The school's original name was Elvie Elementary when it opened in 1952. The school name change occurred in 1975, to Milton M. Daniels Learning Center. The learning center's namesake was a man who fought to give African-American children a chance and whose spirit is still influencing people today. Milton M. Daniels was instrumental in convincing the city school board to build two additional schools for African-American children. Milton M. Daniels was also a musician. It's one of the reasons why he wanted the school to have an auditorium. Milton M. Daniels was determined to get a decent school for poor, African-American children because he wanted them to have a better chance at life. Milton M. Daniels would "go to the mat for his children." Anita Wright served proudly as the school's principal from August 2006 until she retired in June of 2014 (Wilson Times, 2014). The school welcomed their second principal, John Paul in July 2014. The school received school of the year award for the 2014-2015 in Wilson County.

Description of Principal

At the time of the study it was Mr. Paul's first year as principal at this school. He served as assistant principal at Milton M. Daniels School in 2009. He began his career as a classroom teacher (ELA- C.B. Martin Middle School) in the Edgecombe County Public Schools District, before transitioning to a high school English teacher at Wilson Beddingfield in Wilson, NC. Mr. Paul served as assistant principal at Milton M. Daniels Learning Center, and Speight Middle

School before his first principalship. At the time of the study he was an African American male 36 years old. He initiated the process to begin revitalizing the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) at the school. Because of being identified as a Title I school, he was able to utilize the parent involvement committee and financial resources to kick start activities to spotlight the organizations efforts. He was also working with the community, utilizing the school's alumni due to it being a historical school to further communicate a clear vision, mission, and expectations for all. He increased safety measures around the school by adding a buzzer system to allow authorized personnel into the building. He worked with a school resource officer (SRO) and city police to patrol the school more frequently to ensure the safety of the school staff and students, he worked with school operations and management director to install a fence, deterring and preventing non-school employees from vandalizing school and staff property, and he changed the master schedule to group students in programs to best address their educational and behavioral needs. In addition, the principal added more programs to celebrate student success such as: student recognition programs, alumni of the school providing historical content of the school, and rededication of the school.

Study Sample

The researcher solicited the assistance of the counselor and principal in selecting the participants for this study. These key informants were useful in providing additional insight and understanding (McMillan, 2004) about African American males at this school, such as recidivism rate, ages, home base school, grade level, and their discipline record. The counselor and principal recommended ninety-nine (99), African American male students as possible participants for this study.

The data in the study was analyzed, to provide useful information to evaluate whether there were differences in the effectiveness of students who participated in Project H.O.P.E. during the time of the study, those who participated in Project H.O.P.E. prior to the study, and those who did not participate in Project H.O.P.E. and are performing satisfactorily in high school and have never attended an alternative school. Thirty-three (33) African American male students were first time participants in Project H.O.P.E. and this study assessed if their participation impacted their EI. These students completed the SSEIT survey prior to beginning Project H.O.P.E. and then again three weeks later at the end of the project. Table 2 provides demographic characteristics of the thirty-three (33) students admitted into Milton M. Daniels. Table 2 also contains the number of student discipline referrals, the percentage which led to student referrals to Milton M. Daniels, homeschool, age, and if students are recidivists.

The next thirty-three (33) African American students were those students who participated in Project H.O.P.E. prior to this study and were assessed to determine their EI. The final thirty-three (33) were African American male students who did not have exposure to Project H.O.P.E. and they were assessed to determine the EI of similar African American males that are performing satisfactory in school both in academics and behavior.

Consent letters were used to inform the participants and parents of the purpose, intent and importance of the study, and procedures and conditions of students' participation. The researcher obtained signed parental informed consent and signed informed minor assent. Consent was also obtained from parents, teachers, and administrators that responded to a questionnaire to determine their perceptions of the EI of these students.

Table 2

Demographics of Project H.O.P.E. Participants

Demographics	Number of Students
Base School	
Wilson Beddingfield	13
Wilson Hunt	9
Wilson Fike	11
Education	
Freshman	20
Sophomore	7
Junior	1
Senior	5
Discipline (Type) Referrals	
Insubordination	7
Disruptive Behavior	5
Inappropriate Language	1
Disrespect to Staff	3
Misuse of Tech	1
Avg GPA	1.7
Total Absences	239
Total Tardies	28

Note. (n=33).

Sample Selection Criteria

Outlined below was the criterion for student's participation in the study.

1. African American male high school students who have been enrolled at Milton M. Daniels two or more times and had completed Project H.O.P.E.
2. African American male high school students selected by administrators, teachers, and counselor who enrolled for the first time in Project H.O.P.E. and attended Milton M. Daniels alternative school.
3. African American male high school students who were performing well in their home base school both academically and behaviorally and had not attended Project H.O.P.E.

Study Design

This study was a program evaluation of Project H.O.P.E. focusing on the impact on EI of African American males. A program evaluation is defined as a systematic process of gathering evidence to inform judgments of whether a program, product, policy, or system is meeting its goals and how it can be improved to better do so (Scriven, 1967). The program evaluation collected quantitative data utilizing the Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) to address the first four questions in this study. The quantitative data included data from three groups of students and the parents, teachers and administrators that work with these students in an alternative school. The researcher based the inquiry on the assumption that collecting same type of data from diverse audiences would best provide a more complete understanding of the impact of an activity or treatment from various participants' perspectives (Creswell, 2014). The study began with SSEIT completed by three groups of students and then, in a second phase,

additional quantitative data was collected from parents, teachers, and administrators to obtain their perception of the impact of Project H.O.P.E. to the EI of African American males.

Emotional Intelligence Instrument

The Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence (SSEIT) (Schutte et al., 1998) provided an index of Emotional Intelligence (EI) and was analyzed to determine changes in EI. Permission was obtained from the author, Dr. Nicola Schutte to utilize the SSEIT for this study. The SSEIT is a method of measuring general EI, using four sub-scales: emotion perception, utilizing emotions, managing self- relevant emotions, and managing others' emotions. The SSEIT is based off of the EI model by Salovey and Mayer (1990). The SSEIT model is closely associated with the EQ-I model of Emotional Intelligence.

The SSEIT included a 33-item self-report uses a 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) scale for responses. Each sub-test score was graded and then added together to give the total score for the participant. The SSEIT scoring is based on Salovey and Mayer's (1990) original model of EI to address the first four research questions of this study. This model proposed that EI consists of appraisal of emotion in the self and others, expression of emotion, regulation of emotion in the self and others, and utilization of emotion in solving problems. Respondents rate themselves on the items using a five-point scale. Respondents require on average five minutes to complete the scale. Total scale scores are calculated by reverse coding items 5, 28 and 33, and then summing all items. Scores can range from 33 to 165, with higher scores indicating more characteristic emotional intelligence.

The most widely used subscales derived from the 33-item Assessing Emotions Scale are those based on factors identified by Petrides and Furnham (2000), Ciarrochi et al. (2001), and Saklofske et al. (2003). These factor analytic studies suggested a four-factor solution for the 33

items. The four factors were described as follows: perception of emotions, managing emotions in the self, social skills or managing others' emotions, and utilizing emotions. The items comprising the subscales based on these factors (Ciarrochi et al., 2001) are as follows: Perception of Emotion (items 5, 9, 15, 18, 19, 22, 25, 29, 32, 33), Managing Own Emotions (items 2, 3, 10, 12, 14, 21, 23, 28, 31), Managing Others' Emotions (items 1, 4, 11, 13, 16, 24, 26, 30), and Utilization of Emotion (items 6, 7, 8, 17, 20, 27). All 33 items are included in one of these four subscales.

Stakeholder Questionnaire

The stakeholder questionnaire was designed to capture responses on a Likert scale from parents, teachers, and administrators to effectively analyze the impact Project H.O.P.E. made on participants. The questions were developed from the SSEIT. The Likert scale was used to help determine a range that identified improvement areas needed to ensure Project H.O.P.E. a successful implementation in a school.

Data Analysis

Comparison among Student Groups

The SSEIT data in the study were analyzed, to provide useful information to evaluate whether there were differences in the EI of students who participated in Project H.O.P.E. during the time of the study, those who participated in Project H.O.P.E. prior to the study, and those who did not participate in Project H.O.P.E. and were performing satisfactorily in high school and have never attended an alternative school. For the participants of Project H.O.P.E. at the time of the study there will be a pre-SSEIT and a post-SSEIT score after completing the project in a three week time period. Descriptive statistics were utilized to determine average score, standard deviation, and increase or decrease difference between pre and post. This analysis helped

determine which SSEIT scales showed large increases or decreases of EI scores within the 33 student participants.

The average scores of Project H.O.P.E. participants were compared to Project H.O.P.E. completers prior to this study. The comparison of EI scale scores helped compare differences among the two groups to determine whether the project has a lasting effect on the EI of completers. The average scores of Project H.O.P.E. participants were also compared to the EI scores of students who were performing satisfactorily in high school and have never attended an alternative school. This comparison helped determine the gaps between the African American males that are performing well in school and the level of EI of Project H.O.P.E. and thus provided an indication of EI areas to continue to work on in the future. It is important to note that researcher read aloud the questions to address the low reading levels of some students.

This was assessed by the questionnaires that were given to student participants, teachers/administrators, and parents. The two administrators, three teachers, and parent's written response to five identified questions took place in a designated location at Milton M. Daniels Alternative School. Research data was transcribed, organized and coded to find common themes and patterns in the questionnaires. Printed transcripts were stored for security.

Perceptions of Parents, Teachers, and Administrators

Additional quantitative data was collected from a questionnaire to analyze the perception of teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, and parents about the EI of the African American males in this study. The questionnaire asked for perceptions of how Project H.O.P.E. impacted African American males EI in each subscale of the SSEIT (see Appendix E). The questionnaire was developed by the researcher by utilizing the exact wording found in the SSEIT and asking stakeholders to rate their perceptions of African American males using a

Likert scale of 1(None), 2(Somewhat Helpful), 3(Helpful), and 4(Very Helpful) with each of the four subscales. For this study, the research created the questions to word the subcales exactly as in the SSEIT (see Appendix E). The questionnaires were analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics to determine means and standard deviations.

The conceptual framework design (see Figure 7), allowed the researcher to explore factors African American males perceived contributes to their academic success, to identify challenges to their academic success and to develop a better understanding regarding solutions for improving African American male students' academic success.

Summary

The study consisted of (n=99) African American male students. Each set of participants was administered the EI questionnaire. African American male students (n=33) were first time participants in Project H.O.P.E. This SSEIT helped assess if their participation contributed to their recidivism in returning to an alternative school, or remain at their base school. The next (n=33) African American students were those students who participated in Project H.O.P.E. prior to this study.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

Alternative school settings for students who are identified as “disruptive or dangerous” have played an increasingly prominent role in the world of public education. Though the rapid expansion and reliance on alternative schools has increased, the body of research is not keeping up with their growth. In theory, alternative schools existed to advocate and provide optional learning environments for students struggling in the traditional school environments. For African American male students deemed failures or at risk of failure, two basic subsets of alternative schools have emerged: (1) African American male students experiencing academic difficulty and at risk of dropping out, and (2) African American male students described as dangerous or disruptive. Beginning in the early 1980s, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention began promoting alternative schools for delinquent African American male students based on the premise that schools could play a significant role in reducing youth crime (Barber, 1980; Cox, 1999). Alternative schools continued to be promoted by education leaders and advocates as a promising strategy to reduce school expulsion, provide alternative learning environments for African American male students that are not having success in regular schools, ensure safety at mainstream schools, and reduce juvenile delinquency.

National data reflected an expansion of alternative schools for at-risk African American male students that could be defined as skyrocketing, not steady (Lehr et al., 2009). In 1998, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) indicated there were 3,850 alternative schools. By 2002 NCES identified 10,900 public alternative schools for at-risk African American male students. This represented a conservative estimate in growth.

As researchers continue looking at national data, it is estimated that there are over 20,000 alternative schools and programs for at risk African American male students (Lange & Sletten, 2002). Reflecting on suspension and expulsion practices nationwide, some researchers forecasted that the use of alternative schools would continue to rise (Lehr et al., 2003; Morrison et al., 2001). The increase in alternative schools was correlated with the mounting population of disenfranchised African American male students (Kim & Taylor, 2008), particularly with minority African American male students that live in poverty (Verdugo & Glenn, 2006). The demand for more alternative schools serving disruptive African American male students is clearly growing across the country (Aaron & Zweig, 2003; Dunbar, 2001; Loflin, 2000; Verdugo & Glenn, 2006). Currently, at the local, state and national levels, the demand for alternative schools for “disruptive or dangerous” African American male students outweighs the supply, particularly in urban districts. Evidence continued to emerge that disciplinary alternative schools were increasingly serving younger African American male students (NCES, 2010). Urban school districts were relying on alternative schools at far greater rates than rural and suburban districts to purportedly decrease school crime. However, national trends were putting this proposition in question. In the 2003 national school questionnaire on crime and school safety, 70% of urban public schools reported lack of alternative placements for disruptive African American male students as the most limiting factor impeding efforts to reduce or prevent crime at school (NCES, 2007). Paradoxically, a 2003 report on indicators of school crime and safety showed a decrease in violent victimization in schools. The 2003 report indicated a drop from 10% to 6% between 1995 and 2001 (NCES, 2003).

Rural programs made referrals at significantly higher rates than urban programs for habitual truancy and court ordered placement. Disregard for school authority or a school policy

violation is the number one reason in rural districts, that rural African American African American male students would be placed in alternative setting (Quinn & Poirier, 2006). If rural districts continued to choose the use of alternative schools exclusively for chronically disruptive youth, critical questions should be addressed. Some research highlighting best practice alternative school sites indicates the promise alternative schools hold for supporting excluded African American male students, yet the wide variation in implementation and lack of regulation and accountability at state and district levels is cause for great concern (Quinn & Poirier, 2006). The literature has revealed that general alternative school characteristics associated with both positive and negative student outcomes. Small school size, low student teacher ratio, flexible and understanding teachers, individualized instruction, student involvement in decision-making and family/parent participation result in more positive school climate and student outcomes (Quinn & Poirier, 2006). The characteristics that are deemed deleterious to student outcomes include racial isolation, punitive focus, intensified social control, inadequate resources, lack of accountability, and an unchallenging curriculum (Quinn & Poirier, 2006). Alternative schools in rural settings provided an avenue for African American males to be successful if the program at the school focuses on positive interactions that may influence African American male students emotional intelligence.

At the time of this study, African American males were overrepresented in rural alternative schools. Their emotional intelligence when they enter these alternative schools was noted to be almost non-existent because of the negative behavioral experiences in school settings and in their communities. Emotional intelligence (EI) has been defined as the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and harness emotions in self and others (Rivera & Lee, 2014). African-American males that have almost non-existent EI lack empathy, compassion, self-control,

and self-esteem. Typically these African American male students received free/reduced lunch, live in poverty, struggle academically, and lack positive role models. The salience of race is undeniable while contributing to the “school to prison pipeline”. By developing African American males' EI, alternative schools may counter societal prejudices, grow empathy, and equip African American male students with self-monitoring strategies.

The purpose of this study was to learn how Project H.O.P.E. impacted the EI of African American males who attended a rural alternative school in eastern North Carolina. Project H.O.P.E. incorporates mentoring that research and evaluation studies determined to be effective approaches to reducing the complex problems that face our youth today, such as alcohol and drug use, academic failure, and gang violence (Grossman & Garry, 1998). Project H.O.P.E. was used as a strategy to equip African American males to understand their EI and utilized this understanding to address complex problems they face in high school. In the case of Project H.O.P.E., addressing EI attempted to help keep African American males in school, out of trouble, and focusing on their academic performance. Emotional Intelligence as defined by Schutte et al. (1998) utilizing four subscales. Subscale (1) *Managing Others Emotions* is defined as the ability to perceive emotions in oneself. Subscale (2) *Managing Self and Others* is defined as the ability to understand emotional information, to understand how emotions combine and progress through relationships. Subscale (3) *Emotional Perception* is defined as the ability to be open to feelings, and to modulate them in oneself and others so as to promote personal understanding and growth. Subscale (4) *Understanding Facilitating Thoughts of Emotions* is defined as the ability to generate, use, and feel emotion as necessary to communicate feelings. The research questions that guided this study were:

1. How does Project H.O.P.E. help African American male students manage their overall *Managing Others Emotions*?
2. How does Project H.O.P.E. help African American male students manage their *Managing self and others*?
3. How has Project H.O.P.E. help African American male students manage their *Emotional Perception*?
4. How has Project H.O.P.E. help African American male students manage their *Understanding Facilitating Thoughts of Emotions*?
5. How do principals, teachers, and parents perceive the emotional intelligence of African American male students that participated in Project H.O.P.E.?

This chapter provides the results of collected quantitative data utilizing the Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) (Schutte et al., 1998) comparing EI of the three groups of African American males in the study. The quantitative data was analyzed to determine whether there were differences in the EI of African American males who completed Project H.O.P.E. prior to this study, those who participated in Project H.O.P.E. during the study, and those who never participated in Project H.O.P.E. and were academically successful at the time of the study. Project H.O.P.E. provided a mentoring program for at-risk African Americans males helping them to correct negative behaviors.

Additional quantitative data was collected from a questionnaire to analyze the perception of teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, and parents about the EI of the African American males in this study. The questionnaire asked for perceptions of how Project H.O.P.E. impacted African American males EI in each subscale of the SSEIT (see Appendix E). The questionnaire was developed by the researcher by utilizing the exact wording found in the SSEIT

and asking stakeholders to rate their perceptions of African American males using a Likert scale of 1(None), 2(Somewhat Helpful), 3(Helpful), and 4(Very Helpful) with each of the four subscales. For this study, the research created the questions to word the subscales exactly as in the SSEIT (see Appendix E). The researcher tested the validity of the instrument by sending it to the SSEIT creator, an expert in research methodology, and educational leadership experts and asked them to read the survey and indicate whether the questions were a good measure of the SSEIT subscales. The researcher also elicited their opinion on whether the questions in this questionnaire could be used with parents, teachers, and administrators to understand their perceptions of EI among African American males that they work with. The experts asserted their agreement and offered to the researcher the need to explain the SSEIT subscales to the stakeholders to be sure they understood each subscale. The researcher verbally explained each subscale of the SSEIT mentioned in the questionnaire prior to administering the questionnaire to stakeholders. The data were analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics of the mean and standard deviation.

Data Analysis

For this study, the researcher solicited voluntary participation until a total of (n=99) African American male high school students were recruited. This sample size of (n=99) provides a large enough sample to make comparisons among three groups (n=33) of African American male high school students. The researcher solicited the assistance of the counselor and principal of Milton M. Daniels Alternative School in selecting the participants (n=33) from Project H.O.P.E. and the alumni (n=33). The researcher solicited the assistance of the Alternative Education Director in selecting African American male high school (n=33) students that were successfully completing high school without any discipline problems.

The SSEIT completed by each of the three groups of respondents were analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics to determine whether there were differences in the EI subscales of the African American male students who participated in Project H.O.P.E., those who were alumni of Project H.O.P.E., and compared to those African American high school male students that successfully completing high school without any discipline problems.

Data for participants that completed EI Questionnaire. One group of (n=33) was selected to participate in Project H.O.P.E. based on the criteria that they were African American male high school students who had enrolled at Milton M. Daniels Alternative School two or more times in the 2015-2016 school year (see Table 2). The alumni group (n=33) were selected from African American male students that completed Project H.O.P.E. in the past three years that lived in Wilson County at the time of the study and attended Wilson county high schools. The third group of African American male high school students (n=33) were successfully completing high school without any discipline problems were selected based on the following criteria:

- Minimum Cumulative Grade Point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 at the time of selection
- High School Enrollment (must be entering the 9th through 11th grade in the fall semester of the upcoming school year
- No discipline referrals or tardy issues

Table 2 indicates that African American male students completing Project H.O.P.E. at the time of the study were mainly freshman and had low grade point average (1.7) and high number of absences (total 239 days). Project H.O.P.E. focused their efforts on academic learning to help with grade point average and worked with social worker and school staff to communicate with parents about these absences.

Table 3 indicates that the alumni of Project HO.P.E. (n=3) who attended Milton M. Daniels Alternative school in the past three years improved their attendance to school. However, their discipline referrals increased. In analyzing discipline data, the researcher found that the technologies referrals decreased but the bus referrals increased. One reason for this is that these students have long morning commutes and bring problems from home and express their frustrations at the bus driver. Absences were also notably lower for the alumni. One reason for the decrease is that Project H.O.P.E. reiterated the school policy that 10 or more absences causes students to fail their courses. Therefore, awareness of rules and policies empowered these students to make better decisions.

Table 4 describes typically developing African American male students who have higher grade point averages, low total absences, and very low total tardies. These students were mostly in junior and senior levels and are able to drive themselves to school. Their discipline records are minimal.

The EI was completed by 33 African American male high school students prior to the beginning of Project H.O.P.E. and then again upon completion of Project H.O.P.E. Student identities remained anonymous from their other classmates to shield knowledge of them participating. At the traditional high schools, the questionnaire administration took place in a classroom. To address the low reading levels of some African American male students, the researcher read aloud the questions verbally with students to ensure the African American male students knew what was being asked of them.

Table 3

Demographics of Project H.O.P.E. Alumni Participants

Demographics	Number of Students
Base School	
Wilson Beddingfield	10
Wilson Hunt	11
Wilson Fike	12
Education	
Freshman	11
Sophomore	17
Junior	5
Senior	0
Discipline (Type) Referrals	
Insubordination	9
Disruptive Behavior	24
Inappropriate Language	10
Disrespect to Staff	3
Bus Suspensions	11
Average GPA	1.2
Total Absences	130
Total Tardies	30

Note. (n=33).

Table 4

Demographics of EI Assessment Control Group Participant

Demographics	Number of Students
Base School	
Wilson Beddingfield	5
Wilson Hunt	15
Wilson Fike	3
Education	
Freshman	0
Sophomore	6
Junior	15
Senior	12
Discipline (Type) Referrals	
Disruptive Behavior	10
Inappropriate Language	20
Tardies	15
Average GPA	2.9
Total Absences	60
Total Tardies	18

Note. (n=33).

Study Findings

Analysis of Research Question #1

How does Project H.O.P.E. help African American male students manage their overall *Managing Others Emotions*? African American males that completed Project H.O.P.E. during this study will be referred to as Daniels. Daniels participants completed the SSEIT twice, once prior to the beginning of the project and again upon completion of Project H.O.P.E. The purpose of administering the SSEIT before Project H.O.P.E. was to determine a baseline of the African American males' EI. The baseline data also assisted the researcher to design differentiated activities in Project H.O.P.E. to address this subscale among lower and higher scoring respondents. This particular subscale had a total of six questions used to address participant's responses. Question (1) *When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas*, (2) *I have control over my emotions*, (3) *I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them*, (4) *I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome to tasks I take on*, (5) *I compliment others when they have done something well*, and (6) *I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send*.

Upon completion of Project H.O.P.E. the SSEIT was administered again to determine whether there was an impact of the project on the participants' EI. This instrument is scored in ranges. The ranges are described as: under 70-Markedly Low (Atypically impaired emotional capacity), 70-79-Very Low (Extremely under developed emotional capacity), 80-89-Low (Under-developed emotional capacity), 90-109-Average (Adequate emotional capacity), 110-119-High (Well developed emotional capacity), 120-121-Very High (Extremely well developed emotional capacity), and 130-Markedly High (Atypically well developed). An analysis of the responses was conducted by analyzing student responses prior to beginning the study, and at

the completion of the study. The mean for all respondents in this study prior to participating in the study (Pre) reflects their average response to this question (see Table 5). During the administration of this questionnaire, explanation of the question was given to the respondents due to them not understanding the question and having to give an example to help them understand, and answer the question truthfully. The mean of Daniels respondents prior to the project on the *Managing Others Emotions* subscale was an average of 14.5. Daniels students pre-tested very low and increase sharply by an average of (46.1) as indicated in Table 6 to a post-test average of 60.6. The researcher spoke with Daniels participants to gain insight about their decrease. Participants stated that they didn't have a true understanding of the questions originally and admitted to just circling answers. Through assigned Project H.OP.E. activities, this was revealed as students struggled to fully comprehend the questions or reveal emotional incidents that occurred in their lives. The research concluded that more work is needed in this subscale.

The post-test for Daniels participants indicated a large decrease perhaps because Daniels students initially did not understand this subscale and inflated their perception in the pre-test. Upon completing the project, Daniels were more aware of this subscale and therefore indicated a more informed response at the post test. This indicated that Daniels participants perceived that they were more apt to *Managing Others Emotions* than in the past and were more self-aware of their need to improve in this area. Even though the figures decreased, this was considered a positive effect for African American males because Project H.O.P.E. showed that African American males can be successful when they self-reflect on *Managing Others Emotions*. *Managing Others Emotions* helped African American males understand situations through emotional intelligence.

Table 5

Means, Standard Deviations and Mean Differences for the Emotional Intelligence Assessment

Instrument

	Analysis of SSEIT Questionnaire			
	Pre	Post	Std. Deviation	Differences
Emotional Perception				
Daniels	32.6	48.9	4.0	16.3
Proj. Hope Alumni	19.2			
Control Group	23.53			
Managing Self and Others				
Daniels	63.1	33.4	4.9	-29.7
Proj. Hope Alumni	22.4			
Control Group	34.26			
Managing Others Emotions				
Daniels	14.5	60.6	23.1	46.1
Proj. Hope Alumni	37.0			
Control Group	38.0			
Understanding Facilitating Thoughts of Emotions				
Daniels	15.5	25.4	4.9	9.9
Proj. Hope Alumni	10.9			
Control Group	15.9			

Note. n=99.

Table 6

Disaggregation of Research Question Number 1 of the Emotional Intelligence Assessment

Instrument

EI Subscale Question 1	Control Group	Daniels Alumni	Project
<i>How does Project H.O.P.E. help African American students manage their overall Managing of Others Emotions?</i>	38.0 avg.	14.5avg./ 60.6avg. (+46.1)	37.0 avg.

African American males (n=33) that completed Project H.O.P.E. prior to this study will be referred to as Project H.O.P.E. alumni. Alumni completed the SSEIT one time during this study. This was done to determine the EI of the alumni and compare them to Daniels students and to African American male students that are performing satisfactorily (control group). The control group scores were utilized as baseline scores of EI of African American males that are performing satisfactorily and would not need to participate in Project H.O.P.E. The average score for *Managing Others Emotions* of the control sample was 38.0. Daniels students scored 60.6 on their post SSEIT. This indicates that Daniels students are more aware of strategies that help them *Managing Others Emotions*. Alumni average score was 37.0 this score is lower than the control group and this score may be less because Project Hope Alumni students possibly could have reverted back to negative behaviors, due to inactivity in Project H.O.P.E.

Analysis of Research Question #2

How has Project H.O.P.E. helped African American male students in *Managing Self and Others*? African American males that completed Project H.O.P.E. during this study will be referred to as Daniels. Daniels participants completed the SSEIT twice, once prior to the beginning of the project and again upon completion of Project H.O.P.E. The purpose of administering the SSEIT before Project H.O.P.E. was to determine a baseline of the African American males' EI. The baseline data also assisted the researcher to design differentiated activities in Project H.O.P.E. to address this subscale among lower and higher scoring respondents. Upon completion of Project H.O.P.E. the SSEIT was administered again to determine whether there was an impact of the project on the participants' EI. The ranges are described as: under 70-Markedly Low (Atypically impaired emotional capacity), 70-79-Very Low (Extremely under developed emotional capacity), 80-89-Low (Under-developed emotional

capacity), 90-109-Average (Adequate emotional capacity), 110-119-High (Well developed emotional capacity), 120-121-Very High (Extremely well developed emotional capacity), and 130-Markedly High (Atypically well developed). An analysis of the responses was conducted by analyzing student responses prior to beginning the study, and at the completion of the study. The mean for all respondents in this study prior to participating in the study (Pre) reflects their average response to this question (see Table 5). During the administration of this questionnaire, explanation of the question was given to the respondents due to them not understanding the question and having to give an example to help them understand, and answer the question truthfully.

Table 7 highlighted the disaggregation of research question two, illustrating the mean and standard deviation as well as differences of responses from the pre and post assessment. The mean of Daniels respondents prior to the project on the *Managing Self and Others* subscale was 63.1. Daniels students pre-tested very high, only to decrease sharply by (-29.7) as indicated in Table 7. The researcher spoke with Daniels participants to gain insight about their decrease. Participants stated that they didn't have a true understanding of the questions originally and admitted to just circling answers. Through assigned Project H.OP.E. activities, this was revealed as students struggled to fully comprehend the questions or reveal emotional incidents that occurred in their lives. The research concluded that more work is needed in this subscale.

There was a post-test average of 33.4 for Daniels participants indicated a large decrease perhaps because Daniels students initially did not understand this subscale and inflated their perception in the pre-test. Upon completing the project, Daniels were more aware of this subscale and therefore indicated a more informed response at the post test. This indicated that Daniels participants perceived that they were more apt to *Managing Self and Others* than in the

Table 7

Disaggregation of Research Question Number 2 of the Emotional Intelligence Assessment

Instrument

EI Subscale Question 2	Control Group	Hope Daniels	Project Alumni
<i>How does Project H.O.P.E. help African American male students manage their Managing of Self and Others?</i>	34.2 avg.	63.1avg./53.4avg. (-29.7)	22.4avg.

past and were more self-aware of their need to improve in this area. Even though the figures decreased, this was considered a positive effect for African American males because Project H.O.P.E. showed that African American males can be successful when they self-reflect on *Managing Self and Others*. *Managing Self and Others* helped African American males understand situations through emotional intelligence.

African American males (n=33) that completed Project H.O.P.E. prior to this study will be referred to as Project H.O.P.E. alumni. Alumni completed the SSEIT one time during this study. This was done to determine the EI of the alumni and compare them to Daniels students and to African American male students that are performing satisfactorily (control group). The control group scores were utilized as baseline scores of EI of African American males that are performing satisfactorily and would not need to participate in Project H.O.P.E. The average score for *Managing Self and Others* of the control sample was 34.26. Daniels students scored 33.4 on their post SSEIT. This indicates that Daniels students are more aware of strategies that help them *Managing Self and Others*. Alumni average score was 22.4 this score is lower than the control group and this score may be less because Project Hope Alumni students possibly could have reverted back to negative behaviors, due to inactivity in Project H.O.P.E.

After thoroughly participating in Project H.O.P.E. activities, students had a strong understanding of *Managing Self and Others* as they indicated by their previous pre-questionnaire self-rating of *Managing Self and Others*. Project H.O.P.E. participants were more self-aware they have developed a strong knowledge in the area of *Managing Self and Others*. This was considered a positive effect for African American males because Project H.O.P.E. showed that African American males could be successful when they self-reflected on

Managing Self and Others. Managing Self and Others helped African American males understand situations through emotional intelligence.

Analysis of Research Question #3

How has Project H.O.P.E. helped African American male African American male students manage their *Emotional Perception* of themselves in society? The SSEIT was conducted twice for Daniels students, once for Project H.O.P.E. Alumni, and the control group. The desired goal was to see if Project H.O.P.E. activities developed from the first administration, made a significant impact on the participants. Any positive or negative impact to Daniels students was identified in the second administration of the SSEIT.

Based on the results of the initial administering of the SSEIT, there was a significant difference in post-course scores for research question number one between Project H.O.P.E. alumni and Daniels students in regards to Perception of Emotion pre ($m=32.6$, $SD 4.0$), post ($m=48.9$) a significant decrease of 16.3 (see Table 8). The results indicated that students after thoroughly participating in Project H.O.P.E. activity, did not have a strong understanding in the area of *Emotional Perception* as they previously suggested. This is considered a positive effect for African American males because Project H.O.P.E. showed that African American males can be successful when they reflect on *Emotional Perception* through emotional intelligence.

Analysis of Research Question #4

How has Project H.O.P.E. helped African American males understand the emotional messages and the actions associated with them? The SSEIT was conducted twice for Daniels students, once for Project H.O.P.E. Alumni, and the control group. The desired goal was to see if Project H.O.P.E. activities developed from the first administration, made a significant impact on

Table 8

Disaggregation of Research Question Number 3 of the Emotional Intelligence Assessment

Instrument

EI Subscale Question 3	Control Group	Daniels	Project Hope Alumni
<i>How has Project H.O.P.E. help African American students manage their Emotional Perception?</i>	23.53 avg.	32.6avg./48.9 avg. (+16.3)	19.2 avg.

the participants. Any positive or negative impact to Daniels students was identified in the second administration of the SSEIT.

Table 9 illustrates the results of the initial administering of the SSEIT, there was a significant difference in post-course scores for research question number one for Daniels students in regards to Utilization of Emotion pre (m=15.5, SD 4.9), post (m=25.4) a significant increase of 25.4. Based on the study findings, the answer to research question four-*How has Project H.O.P.E. help African American male students manage their Understanding Facilitating Thoughts of Emotions* the post SSEIT scores showed an increase in self-rating of Understanding Facilitating Thoughts of Emotions indicated that students after thoroughly participating in Project H.O.P.E. activity, revealed students did not have a strong understanding in the area of Understanding Facilitating Thoughts of Emotions as they previously suggested. This is considered a positive effect for African American males because Project H.O.P.E. shows that African American males can be successful when they reflect on Understanding Thoughts of Emotions through emotional intelligence.

Analysis of Research Question #5

How do principals, teachers, and parents perceive the emotional intelligence of African American male students that participated in Project H.O.P.E.? The researcher analyzed (see Table 10) responses from the Stakeholder Questionnaire. The following were the questions found in the Stakeholder Questionnaire:

1. How has Project H.O.P.E. helped African American male students manage their overall emotion of others?
2. How has Project H.O.P.E. helped African American male African American male students manage their attitudes toward academic learning?

Table 9

Disaggregation of Research Question Number 4 of the Emotional Intelligence Assessment

Instrument

EI Subscale Question 4	Control Group	Hope Daniels	Project Alumni
<i>How has Project H.O.P.E. helped African American male students manage their Understanding of Facilitating Thoughts of Emotions?</i>	15.9 avg.	15.5avg./25.4avg. (+9.9)	16.5 avg.

Table 10

Stakeholder Questionnaire Responses

Content Area	Type	Total Number	Scoring Range
Manage Emotions of Others	Likert		
Administrators		18	11-19
Parents		11	11-19
Teachers		10	1-10
Counselor		4	1-10
Manage Others Emotions	Likert		
Administrators		9	1-10
Parents		5	1-10
Teachers		5	1-10
Counselor		4	1-10
Perception of Emotion	Likert		
Administrators		11	11-19
Parents		10	1-10
Teachers		11	11-19
Counselor		4	1-10
Utilization of Emotion	Likert		
Administrators		8	1-10
Parents		8	1-10
Teachers		8	1-10
Counselor		4	1-10
Implementation of Project Hope	Likert		
Administrators		16	11-19
Parents		11	11-19
Teachers		17	11-19
Counselor		4	1-10
Overall Rating of Project Hope	Likert	19	11-19

Note. *n=46 stakeholder participants. Legend: 1-10 Program was ineffective, 11-19 Program was somewhat effective, but with improvements it will be more effective; 20-24 Program was very effective.

3. How has Project H.O.P.E. helped African American male African American male students manage their emotional perception of themselves in society?
4. How has Project H.O.P.E. helped African American males understand the emotional messages and the actions associated with them?
5. How would the implementation of Project H.O.P.E. in a rural alternative school help reduce the recidivism of African American males?

The researcher administered in person at Milton M. Daniels Alternative School the questionnaire to stakeholders and analyzed their responses to determine whether or not the implementation of Project H.O.P.E. in a rural alternative school will help reduce the recidivism rate of African American males. Table 10 will display the findings of the stakeholder's responses. The stakeholders consisted of two administrators, one counselor, ten teachers, and thirty-three parents of the African American male students who participated in the study. Each stakeholder was assigned a number to protect their identity.

The subscales of Manage Emotions of Others, Perception of Emotion, and the Implementation of Project H.O.P.E. displayed the highest responses on the Likert by administrators, parents, and teachers. This showed a positive sign of potential collaboration from key stakeholders to create successful avenues for the transitioning of rural African American males back into their home school.

The subscales of Managing Others Emotions, Utilization of Emotion were low scoring areas by the stakeholders. The researcher reviewed the questionnaires to find common themes that would help address the last research question. A theme that the researcher discovered and assisted with coding was that Managing Others Emotions was an area that the participants struggled in. Another area the researcher noticed that even after Project H.O.P.E. activities,

participants need more working the area of Utilization of Emotion. Another theme that raised a red flag was that in each subscale the school counselor consistently scored low. Some background information about the school counselor was that she was a part of negative experiences from the previous administrators and students. The school counselor's perception of the students and school didn't change, regardless of the administrative change, and the administrative change and programs aimed at improving the students. According to Merriam and Simpson (2001), a researcher must adopt some system for coding and cataloging the questionnaire data, and it helps to start with basic descriptive categories early in the coding. A coding system was developed that rated keywords that described if the implementation of Project H.O.P.E. in a rural alternative school would help the emotional intelligence of African American males in four categories: 1-None, 2-Somewhat Helpful, 3-Helpful, and 4-Very Helpful. Based on the study findings the answer to research question five- *How do principals, teachers, and parents perceive the emotional intelligence of African American male students that participated in Project H.O.P.E.*, majority of stakeholders indicated that the program was somewhat effective, but need some improvements.

Summary

This chapter presented the results of a study the implementation of Project H.O.P.E. in a rural alternative school help reduce the recidivism rate of African American males? It provided the opportunity to evaluate African American male students and stakeholders to determine factors that would make the implementation successful. Upon completion of the study, respondents understood that they had to manage self and others to truly be successful. The scores decreased in some areas and stayed the same for others in the respondents. The study determined that if improvements are made, the implementation will be effective. From the

questionnaires in the study, the findings suggested that if more resources were allotted selected African American male students would take it seriously. Another recommendation was to help parents understand that it's not a silver bullet to solve all issues, but if parents are rehabilitated along with the African American male students, improvement will be made.

In chapter 5, the implications of the study are discussed, and recommendations are made for further research in this area. Additionally, the implications of the findings of this study are discussed in relation to Project H.O.P.E. which helped improve the emotional intelligence of African American males in a rural alternative school.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to learn how Project Helping Our Young People Excel (H.O.P.E.) may impact the Emotional Intelligence (EI) of African American males who attended rural alternative schools. Mentoring has been shown through research and evaluation studies to be an effective approach to reducing the complex problems that face our youth, such as alcohol and drug use, academic failure, teenage pregnancy, and gang violence. Mentoring has broad appeal as a prevention strategy because of its strong link with the core of resiliency efforts. Resiliency research examined the fact that youth in potentially harmful and destructive environments emerged as positive and productive adults due to various factors that served to negate or reverse the impact it had on youth in risky situations (Tierney & Grossman, 1994). In the case of mentoring, the resilient factor present was primarily the development and sustenance of a caring relationship between an adult and young person. Mentoring programs have helped to keep kids in school and improve their academic performance.

Project H.O.P.E. incorporated mentoring that research and evaluation studies determined to be effective approaches to reducing the complex problems that face our youth today, such as alcohol and drug use, academic failure, and gang violence (Grossman & Garry, 1998). Project H.O.P.E. was used as a strategy to equip African American males to understand their EI and utilized this understanding to address complex problems they face in high school. In the case of Project H.O.P.E., addressing EI attempted to help keep African American males in school, out of trouble, and focusing on their academic performance. Emotional Intelligence as defined by Schutte et al. (1998) utilizing four subscales. Subscale (1) *Managing Others Emotions* is defined as the ability to perceive emotions in oneself. Subscale (2) *Managing Self and Others* is defined as the ability to understand emotional information, to understand how emotions combine and

progress through relationships. Subscale (3) *Emotional Perception* is defined as the ability to be open to feelings, and to modulate them in oneself and others so as to promote personal understanding and growth. Subscale (4) *Understanding Facilitating Thoughts of Emotions* is defined as the ability to generate, use, and feel emotion as necessary to communicate feelings.

This study explored how Project H.O.P.E. impacted the EI of African American males at a rural alternative school. The supporting questions that assisted in the study were:

1. How has Project H.O.P.E. helped African American male students *manage the overall emotions of others?*
2. How has Project H.O.P.E. helped African American male students *manage their attitudes towards academic learning?*
3. How has Project H.O.P.E. helped African American male students *manage their emotional perception* of themselves in society?
4. How has Project H.O.P.E. helped African American males *understand the emotional messages and the actions associated with them?*
5. How would the implementation of Project H.O.P.E. in a rural alternative school help reduce the recidivism rate of African American males?

Thirty-three (33) students took a SSEIT pre-test upon beginning Project H.O.P.E. and then a post-test at the conclusion Project H.O.P.E. The remaining sixty-six (66) students were those who have already participated and completed the program (n=33) and those who didn't participate in Project HOPE because they are successfully completing their schooling without major discipline problems (n=33) took the SSEIT once. These three groups' scores were analyzed and utilized for comparisons among groups to determine similarities and differences of

EI scores. Study findings helped compare and contrast any significant changes to EI by participating in Project H.O.P.E. Additionally, parents, teachers, and administrators completed a questionnaire to evaluate the effectiveness of Project H.O.P.E. on improving African American males' EI.

Discussion of Research Findings

Through activities coordinated by Project H.O.P.E. the African American males showed excitement and focus when participating, but often would choose to participate in activities where others in the school would not see them. These types of behaviors indicated that their peers had a strong impact on their decision-making. It seemed that perceptions advice of peers, both positive or negative, had a greater impact than perceptions from family members or some teachers. A majority of the African American males perceived themselves in a positive peer environment. African American males perceived showing emotions toward others as weak, because in their community and with their family members they were often double-crossed and treated negatively. Project H.O.P.E. helped to show that African American males purposely do not show weakness. This has been drilled into them in their upbringing and it was hard to stray from that type of thinking with project activities. Overall, African American males in this study did not know how to exhibit compassion towards people and perceived that showing compassion was wrong. Instead African American males thought of survival a purpose of their life and therefore emotions were of no value because it would make them weak and threaten their survival.

Project H.O.P.E. activities were structured to show the value of getting an education involved activities to practice self-motivation, and setting goals. Project H.O.P.E. participants gained an understanding that their attitude toward learning must change, in order to achieve any

future academic success this understanding is consistent with research that early African Americans realized in order to reach a successful place in life, African Americans had to educate themselves (Anderson, 1988; Patton, 1980).

The researcher analyzed the participant's academic transcripts, which outlined for most a history of academic failures. Although participants ranged differently in their academic success or failure, each viewed completing high school as a first step to being successful in life. African American males considered education important because it was an avenue to advance out of their current environment. Some perceived an education would allow them the opportunity to abandon their negative environment, while others perceived academic success would allow them to accomplish the education their parents or grandparents did not attain.

Project H.O.P.E. had African American males engage in an activity entitled "Make It Stick", where the participants wore t-shirts covered in petroleum jelly. The object was to have another participant throw cotton balls at the shirt, symbolize negative things that people say or do towards them. The cotton balls that didn't stick exhibited how you must not allow negative things stick to you, or it will weigh you down. In debriefing this activity, participants felt that negative stereotypes posed a threat to African American males because it provoked self-doubt and created a negative view of themselves. Consistently hearing negativity, causes the belief that what is said is true. Irving and Hudley (2008) suggested that leaders design programs to meet the needs of African American male students who have been subjected negative cultural identity. Participants felt that some of their teachers were quick to label them as "slow" due to their inability to understand or quickly grasp the classroom material.

Participants recognized that praise and encouragement was a positive feeling in the school, and they desired more of it from other staff members. They felt that if they had strategies

to help them avoid negative attitudes, stereotypes, it would help their overall expectations and people viewing them in a positive view.

Project H.O.P.E. provided opportunities for African American males to reflect on their feelings and to describe their home life. A majority of the participants in this study were products of a single-parent home, in a household consisting of a mother and or grandparents, or were raised by their grandparents. The participants indicated that they always felt loved, but occasionally positive affection from a missing male parent bothered them. Participants also indicated that a missing male figure or father created for them issues when they wanted to express emotions, because they didn't know how to exhibit what they have never seen. Although participants grew up in a non-traditional household, African American males indicated that the parent or grandparent at home constantly stressed education was a path to success and encouraged them to succeed. African American males shared with the researcher that if they were consistently shown positive ways to express their emotions, it would help reduce the anger that they had penned up inside that makes them react in a negative manner. Throughout this study, the researcher viewed many instances where the participants with consistent activities that promote positive emotions, assisted them as they matriculate to adulthood.

Parents, teachers, and administrators discussed many challenges and positives of the implementation of Project H.O.P.E. in a rural alternative school in reducing the recidivism rate of African American males. One challenge was that the lack of resources to help students be successful. The biggest enemy to anything was consistency. These students were faced with inconsistency at home, so their guards were automatically up and waiting for someone else to leave their lives, once they had allowed them to show emotion. Some teachers and parents mentioned that some of the African American males that participated in Project H.O.P.E.

improved their behavior and overall image of themselves. Teachers and parents also shared that they noticed that participants felt that they wanted to continue to participate, because it made them feel a part of something that didn't involve them losing their lives.

The challenges confronting African American male students in the alternative school setting in this study suggested an urgent need for an intervention plan involving educators, parents, and the community. African American males in this study perceived these stakeholders to have a direct effect on them not becoming recidivists to Milton M. Daniels Alternative School and preventing the negative behaviors from affecting them in their adult years.

Future research may examine how African American male emotional intelligence toward society may affect their academic success and impact on societal wellbeing. A study of this nature could provide information on the power of mental attitude and self-motivation among African American male students. The researcher would also recommend a research study to examine how culturally sensitive educators meet the emotional intelligence needs of African American males. A study of this type could also provide insight to help educators understand the environment of African American males and to merge their instruction with their students backgrounds. This research provided insight into the need for all stakeholders to become more knowledgeable and sensitive to the emotional intelligence needs of African American male students. This information could lend support into fully implementing this program into the school to really concentrate on impacting the emotional intelligence of African American males.

Importance of Mentoring

Research shows that it is more important to consider both the racial identity of the youth and the cultural competency of the mentor (Sanchez, 2011). Racial identity is a reflection of how a person has internalized their socialization experiences surrounding race (Sanchez, 2011). For

African American males, experiences in school while they are growing up lead to the internalization of many negative messages about boys like them (Hall, 2006; Kunjufu, 2006) — negative expectations, such as: kids like them are not usually found in advanced placement and honors courses; people like them are not found to be the heroes in the textbooks that they read; and administrators and teachers are not tolerant of the behavior of kids like them. Schools are often seen as “sites of intolerance, oppression, and dehumanization”, as is true of other social institutions and settings (Hall, 2006).

Ethnic identity is a “sense of belonging” to a cultural group which typically involves the participation in the cultural practices of that group (Sanchez, 2011). Research shows that when minority youth have developed a healthy ethnic identity, they are more likely to achieve more positive academic, psychological, and social outcomes (Wakefield & Hudley, 2007). As these are the same outcomes that we hope mentoring will achieve, this finding suggested that a critical emphasis for the mentoring of African American youth should encourage or celebrate the development of a healthy ethnic identity. In fact, a stronger ethnic identity was found more often among minority youth when they could identify a person in their life that was a role model (Yancey, Siegel, & McDaniel, 2002).

Mentoring programs that have been shown to be particularly effective for African American boys were more likely to involve a structured curriculum that celebrates African American culture and effective roles for men within the context of such an ethnic culture African American boys growing up in the child welfare system tended to come predominantly from a larger population of young people growing up in poverty. These youth were likely to have been raised in neighborhoods and homes where violence was prevalent. When youth experience

trauma during childhood or have been exposed to serious forms of violence, there were consequences that delayed normal adolescent developmental milestones (Griffin et al., 2009).

As adolescents, many African American males such as those in this study have been exposed to violence, trauma, and victimization experience and were likely to manifest certain negative traits. They tended to have higher rates of learning disabilities. They had difficulties with problem solving and decision-making. They were more impulsive than normal adolescents and engaged in a range of problem behaviors at higher than average rates. These youth also tended to struggle with interpersonal relationships and their emotional intelligence appeared under-developed. Effective strengths-based mentoring programs could build the skills of youth in each of these areas. In fact, the research shows that it was more important to consider the racial identity of the youth and the cultural competency of the mentor (Sanchez, 2011). Racial identity is a reflection of how a person has internalized their socialization experiences surrounding race (Sanchez, 2011). For African American boys, experiences in school while they were growing up lead to the internalization of many negative messages about boys like them (Hall, 2006; Kunjufu, 2006). Negative expectations are found in blatant omissions, such as: kids like them are not usually found in advanced placement and honors courses; people like them are not found to be the heroes in the textbooks that they read; and administrators and teachers are not tolerant of the behavior of kids like them. Schools were often seen as “sites of intolerance, oppression, and dehumanization”, as was true of other social institutions and settings (Hall, 2006).

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were the same outcomes that Project H.O.P.E. aimed mentoring to achieve, this finding suggested that a critical emphasis for the mentoring of minority youth was to encourage or celebrate the development of a healthy ethnic identity. In fact, a stronger ethnic identity was found more often among minority youth when they could identify a person in their life that was a role model (Yancey et al., 2002).

Why Prevention Rather than Reaction?

When society leaves the work of cultivating the lives of our young African American males solely to classroom teachers and other school practitioners, these boys miss out on so much. They miss opportunities to experience the meaningful mentoring and exposure that come from interactions and experiences with adults that look like them succeeding in a more diverse array of fields. And given the current state of the statistical trajectories for many young African American males, it is essential to realize that the job to mold, cultivate, and stimulate alternate life outcomes for these boys cannot be left solely to the scattering of Black males working with them in schools.

Many times, these boys are pointed to examples of other black males, maybe from their neighborhood or community, who have made it. They are inundated with stories of athletes like Michael Jordan and hear the speeches and narratives of activists like Martin Luther King Jr. While sometimes the success of others resonates and inspires them to advance toward achievement, many times they do not. Why? Individuals, let alone young males, cannot learn solely from hearing about the successes of others.

Black boys need to watch, observe and fully engage in the process of how an individual, who might look like him (though I fully acknowledge that mentors of other races can be of significant value), maneuvered through failures, pitfalls and the other realities that come prior to

the eventual achievement. They need to be in consistent and direct contact with individuals working to better themselves professionally and personally. They need to learn from others how to handle the frustrations that come with the numerous setbacks that arise from doing new and exciting things, and learn how to turn obstacles into more productive outcomes for themselves. This happens optimally through direct and sustained mentoring.

The job to educate and support the optimal growth of these males cannot solely fall on educators broadly and reside on the shoulders of a few black male teachers, specifically. If you are a successful black male, or someone who cares about the fate of young males of color in particular, you have tremendous potential and capacity to mentor. Thus, I urge you, the reader, to deeply consider where and how mentoring fits into your life. I understand that professionally successful black men are oftentimes busy; yet, there is still time in your schedule to do this work. The only reason that I have found success both professionally and personally is because mentors have guided me along the way. Young males need help with life experiences that range from homework assistance, to relationship and dating advice, to mini career-related internships. They need game- or concert-watching partners, or even another person to call or text in times of need and in times of joy. The work is too big and too important to rest solely on our teachers.

Recommendations for Building Principals about

African American Males in Alternative Schools

The school principal is the leader within the school and is expected to guide and lead the other stakeholders within the school in running the school (Hsieh et al., 2011; Many & Sparks-Many, 2014). The school principal, as the leader, is expected to perform various roles within the school in order to ensure that every activity and process within the school runs as expected. In contemporary learning institutions, principals have been faced with the increasing diversity

among the students as various races and ethnic groups try to co-exist. In the US, for instance, the historical trends of ‘foreign races’ including the African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians among others have continued to increase in the U.S. learning institutions over the past decade (Bambrick-Santoyo, Lemov, & Peiser, 2012; Sharp & Walter, 2012). This trend places the principal on the verge of increasing responsibilities and roles in order to manage the increasing diversity in the contemporary schools and high learning institutions. What then are the roles of the principal in ethnically/racially diverse learning institutions with a predominant African American male population?

One of the key roles of the principal as suggested by Jonassen and Grabowski (2012) is to influence policies coming within and outside the school. The principal is expected to work closely with the superintendent and other officials from education ministry in order to come up with the best policies that enhance learning within the school (Nieto, 2009). Within the school, as well, the principal is expected to make policies and regulations on impartial grounds. As suggested by Noguera (2003), the principal should have the interests of each student within the school covered in every decision taken.

The principal should also act as the role model for not only the students, but also the teachers within the school to emulate (Obi & Obiakor, 2001; Whitehead, Boschee, & Decker, 2012). Being the leader in the school, it is expected the principal should possess the qualities and characteristics of a good leader by acting as the role model for all the values promoted within the school (Saenz et al., 2007). The school principal is therefore, expected to ensure that the school culture is safeguarded and upheld. In cases of oppressive school culture, Sebastian and Allensworth (2012) suggest that the principal has the ultimate responsibility of changing the culture to suit every stakeholder within the school. In this case, the principal should ensure that

all the values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors exercised within the school are accepted both on social and legal spheres. As such, the principal is expected to be a role model in upholding acceptable cultural values, which do not oppress some of the stakeholders. In the context of the African American students, the principal should uphold an institutional culture, which values diversity and supports the emotional intelligence of African American males.

Principals are expected to be impartial in all the decisions they make by acknowledging diversity with the institutions and work forward towards achieving a common goal for all; academic success. Since it is expected the principal gives all the students equal learning opportunities without favoring some, while oppressing others; when the students notice lack of impartiality in principal's decisions they tend to develop negative attitude towards learning (Supovitz, Sirinides, & May, 2010). This is reflected in the way many African American students tend to dropout from school as a result of mistreatment by the principals, teachers or their fellow students. By considering the diverse needs of the African American students, the principals will be able to foster the school completion rate of these students.

It is also important to note that, ensuring a culturally relevant pedagogy in the school is another key role of principals as suggested by (Dillard University, 2013; Fullan, 2014). Considering that the principals are responsible for the availability of the learning resources within the school (Schaps, 2005); Shapiro and Stefkovich (2010) suggested that it is important for the principals to ensure that the pedagogy adopted in the school is relevant to the students with regard to their culture. Though applying a culturally significant pedagogy for highly diverse pool of students may be difficulty (Saenz et al., 2007); Skiba and Horner (2011) suggested that adopting simple standards in the learning environment where fairness is exercised is an important factor that contributes towards effective learning despite the cultural diversity among

the learners. For African American students, Supovitz et al. (2010) suggests that it is important for school principals to identify their various social and academic needs in order to be able to foster a culturally relevant pedagogy in the school.

Also the principal should ensure a student-centered learning environment within the school. This was suggested by Saenz et al. (2007) when they argued that, since the school must be able to meet the specific learning needs of the students, it is the ultimate role of the principal to ensure that the diverse learning needs of the students are catered for within the school. This can be done by adopting effecting teaching strategies which meets all the needs of the students. As such, it is clearly evident that principals have a major role in facilitating the school completion rate of African American males based on the policies they adopt in managing the schools (DuFour & Marzano, 2011; Loneragan, Simmie, & Moles, 2012).

Recommendations for Teachers about African American Males in Alternative Schools

When African American males fail to respond in the desired way to methods educators are familiar with, some teachers respond by distancing themselves emotionally or developing negative ideas about a child's motivation and abilities. Let go of assumptions, such as African American boys who don't sit still or focus aren't interested in learning, and unfamiliar or culturally comfortable behaviors reflect a learning or behavioral disability. Avoid punishment that denies a child the teaching methods he most needs to be successful, for instance, isolation rather than cooperative learning and extra sitting rather than large-motor, physical activity.

Learn about the family's dreams, hopes, and expectations for their son and their expectations are adult-child relationships, management techniques, and cues. Ask what their son is like at home and about his relationship with his peers. Provide several opportunities during the

day for physical activity, follow high-energy activities with sitting activities, and create literacy activities suited to kinesthetic learners. Include community role models for African American boys in ongoing activities with children. Develop materials and activities to counter media-fostered negative images and messages about African American men. Regularly teach about the contributions men of color have made to our society, a lesson that benefits all children.

Recommendations for Mainstream Inclusion

Believe and make visible your belief in a child's potential to succeed. Know every child as he is and do not accept the mainstream cultural image of how a child should be. See being bicultural as a strength, rather than a difficulty. Know management cues children learn at home, and help them make a bridge to the cues you use. Work together in learning activities and maintenance tasks that promote community spirit.

Build community among the children—caring for each other and working together. Foster children's learning about, appreciating, and respecting their differences, commonalities, and contributions to the whole group. Foster critical thinking skills (e.g. use multicultural books that model or explore social justice). Immediately intervene in any hurtful behaviors related to identity. Help children learn ways to speak up when they experience or witness hurtful behavior. Be an advocate, speaking directly to any injustice you see in the learning environment.

Recommendations for Further Study

A recommendation that I feel is important for further study is to replicate Project H.O.P.E. but do so by involving everyone who comes into contact with the student. School, home, and the community. This is important, because if everyone is not consistent in ensuring that the strategies implemented in bettering the student, then it is a high probability that the student will revert back to their old ways. The process is no different than when a building

administrator seeks out to change the culture, the first thing you must do is get everyone on board and speaking the same language, but doing it with fidelity. A child wants to know that you have their best interest at heart. Mentors, classroom teachers, administrators, can create the change in a child, but the most important factor in the child truly being successful, is having that parent or parents involved in their metamorphous. Children are loyal to a fault. I say this because regardless of the wrongdoings of their parents, they are always wanting and waiting that approval from their parents. This is why I feel that this recommendation is the most important of them all. If you work with the student, you must work the school, and most importantly with the home. There must not be a gap in communication, or the work that has been put into place will go for naught. Schools with the greatest success invariably address a combination of interrelated factors in a child's life: academic, emotional, and social.

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APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER



EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board Office

4N-70 Brody Medical Sciences Building · Mail Stop 682

600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834

Office **252-744-2914** · Fax **252-744-2284** · www.ecu.edu/irb

Notification of Initial Approval: Expedited

From Social/Behavioral IRB

To: Henry Brown

CC: Marjorie Ringler

Date: 12/19/2016

UMCIRB 16-001590

Re: "HOW CAN PROJECT Helping Our Young People Excel (H.O.P.E.) IMPACT THE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES WHO ATTEND A RURAL ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL?"

I am pleased to inform you that your Expedited Application was approved. Approval of the study and any consent form(s) is for the period of 12/19/2016 to 12/18/2017. The research study is eligible for review under expedited category #7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this study no more than minimal risk.

Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a continuing review/closure application to the UMCIRB prior to the date of study expiration. The Investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

Approved consent documents with the IRB approval date stamped on the document should be used to consent participants (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents tab in the study workspace).

The approval includes the following items:

Name	Description
Assent Form	Consent Forms
Dissertation Chapters 1-3	Study Protocol or Grant Application
Parent Consent to Use Child's Data	Consent Forms
Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test	Surveys and Questionnaires
Stakeholder Questionnaire	Surveys and Questionnaires

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF AGREEMENT



117 N Tarboro St I PO Box 2048 Wilson, NC 27894
PH: 252-399-7700 FAX: 252-399-2776

Learn.Create.Inspire.

10-7-16

Attn: East Carolina IRB Review Board

I have reviewed Donnell Brown's approved IRB research protocol, including any letters of consent or assent, titled "How Can Project H.O.P.E. (Helping Our Young People Excel) Impact the Emotional Intelligence of African American Males in a Rural Alternative School." I understand what he is asking of the individuals and grant her permission to conduct her study at Wilson Fike, Wilson Hunt, Wilson Beddingfield, and Milton M. Daniels Learning Center. I have the authority to do so. If I have any further questions about this research study I understand that Donnell can be reached at (252) 314-7589 or via e-mail at brownh04@students.ecu.edu. I also understand that if I have any questions regarding this IRB approval or the rights of research participants I can contact Dr. Marjorie Ringler, Chair, East Carolina University at (252-328-4825) or via e-mail at ringlerm@ecu.edu.

Sincerely,

Dr. Steve Ellis-Executive Director of Alternative Education
Wilson County Schools
117 N. Tarboro St. Wilson, NC 27894

APPENDIX C: NEW PROGRAMS AT MILTON M. DANIELS

New Programs	Description of New Programs
Population 2-ASP-Alternative Suspension Program	This program is for students who receive multiple referrals and long-term recommendations during the semester may be sent to Daniels for alternative learning if agreed upon by the superintendent and base school.
Population 3- Drop-In Recovery Program	This program is for students 18 years or older that apply thorough the Central Office.
Population 4- Evening Education Program	This program is for students who are long-termed to receive instruction from the community college to assist students to obtain their GED or high school diploma
Booster Program	This program is for students who are 2 years behind in their academic progress who also have attendance issues, and mild behavior concerns. Students for the Booster program are selected prior to the beginning of each semester.

APPENDIX D: THE SCHUTTE SELF REPORT
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TEST (SSEIT)

Instructions: Indicate the extent to which each item applies to you using the following scale:

1-rarely 2-sometimes 3-never 4-often 5-always

0 1 2 3 4	I know when to speak about my personal problems to others
0 1 2 3 4	When I am faced with problems, I remember times I faced similar obstacles and overcame them
0 1 2 3 4	I expect that I will do well on most things I try
0 1 2 3 4	Other people find it easy to trust in me
0 1 2 3 4	I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people
0 1 2 3 4	Some of the major events of my life have led me to think about what is important and not important

Total: _____

0 1 2 3 4	When my mood changes, I see new possibilities
0 1 2 3 4	Emotions are one of the things that make my life worth living
0 1 2 3 4	I am aware of my emotions as I experience them
0 1 2 3 4	I expect good things to happen
0 1 2 3 4	I like to share my emotions with others
0 1 2 3 4	When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last
0 1 2 3 4	I plan events others enjoy

Total: _____

0 1 2 3 4	I seek out activities that make me happy
0 1 2 3 4	I am aware of the non-verbal messages I send to others
0 1 2 3 4	I present myself in a way that makes a good impression on others
0 1 2 3 4	When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for me
0 1 2 3 4	By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing
0 1 2 3 4	I know why my emotions change

Total: _____

0 1 2 3 4	When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas
0 1 2 3 4	I have control over my emotions
0 1 2 3 4	I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them
0 1 2 3 4	I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome to tasks I take on
0 1 2 3 4	I compliment others when they have done something well
0 1 2 3 4	I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send

Total: _____

0 1 2 3 4	When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I have experienced this event myself
0 1 2 3 4	When I feel a change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas
0 1 2 3 4	When I am faced with a challenge, I give up because I believe I will fail
0 1 2 3 4	I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them

Total: _____

0 1 2 3 4	I help other people feel better when they are down
0 1 2 3 4	I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of problems
0 1 2 3 4	I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice
0 1 2 3 4	It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do

Total: _____

Score
0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 33
Measure your effectiveness using the following key: 0-15= Requires attention and development 16-25= Considering strengthening 26-33= Develop weaker areas

APPENDIX E: STAKEHOLDER QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions: Please give your assessment of your child's participation in Project H.O.P.E. This survey is intended to provide feedback to improve the program.

Instructions: Indicate the extent to which each item applies to you using the following scale:
 1-None 2-Somewhat helpful 3-Helpful 4- Very Helpful

1 2 3 4	How has Project H.O.P.E. helped African American male students manage the overall emotions of others?
1 2 3 4	How has Project H.O.P.E. helped African American male students manage their attitudes towards academic learning?
1 2 3 4	How has Project H.O.P.E. helped African American male students manage their emotional perception of themselves in society?
1 2 3 4	How has Project H.O.P.E. helped African American males understand the emotional messages and the actions associated with them?
1 2 3 4	How would the implementation of Project H.O.P.E. in a rural alternative school help reduce the recidivism rate of African American males?

Total: _____

Score
1-10 Program was ineffective
11-19 Program was somewhat effective, but with improvements it will be more effective
20-24- Program was very effective

APPENDIX F: ADMINISTRATION TIME LINE

Date	Activities
10-11-2016	Administered SSEIT survey to Wilson Beddingfield Project H.O.P.E. alumni and non Project H.O.P.E. African American male students at Wilson Beddingfield High School
10-12-2016	Administered SSEIT survey to Wilson Hunt Project H.O.P.E. alumni and non Project H.O.P.E. African American male students at Wilson Hunt High School
10-13-2016	Administered SSEIT survey to Wilson Fike Project H.O.P.E. alumni and non Project H.O.P.E. African American male students at Wilson Fike High School
10-14/10-15 2016	Student surveys analyzed
10-15-2016	Project H.O.P.E. designed activities for African American male students according to their SSEIT scores
10-17-2016/11-4-2016	Project H.O.P.E. activities
11-4-2016	Project H.O.P.E. participants from Milton M. Daniel's Alternative School administered SSEIT post survey at Milton M. Daniel's Alternative School
11-7-2016	Stakeholders parent participants from Milton M. Daniels Alternative School and Wilson Beddingfield administered SSEIT surveys to evaluate study at Milton M. Daniel's Alternative School
11-8-2016	Stakeholders parent participants from Wilson Fike and Wilson Hunt administered SSEIT surveys to evaluate study at Milton M. Daniel's Alternative School

