“Building Skill and Capital For College and Career Success”

*Florida A&M University*

*Black Male Phenomenon*

Presented at

**The State of Black Florida Education Symposium:**

March 21, 2014
Augustus B. Turnbull III, Florida State Conferencing Center
Tallahassee, Florida
Dr. Edward Tolliver, Director
Black Male College Explorers Program
Over the last 25 years, the social, educational and economic outcomes for Black males have been more systemically devastating than the outcomes for any other racial or ethnic group or gender. Black males have consistently low educational attainment levels, are chronically unemployed and underemployed, have less access to fewer health care, are many times more likely to be sent to jail for periods longer than males of other racial/ethnic groups and die much younger (Schott, 2008, p.3).
What’s Working?

- The Black Male College Explorers Program (BMCEP) was created with the ultimate goal of reversing high dropout rates in Florida by providing prevention and intervention programs that focus on Black male youth.

- BMCEP is designed to encourage middle and high school Black male students to remain in school until graduation, facilitate their admission to college and significantly increase their chances of earning a college degree.
Black Male College Explorers Program

Florida A&M University
Black Male Phenomenon

Since 1990, the FAMU Black Male College Explorers Program (BMCEP) has achieved approximately an 85% graduation rate. BMCEP is a statewide program implemented at each of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in Florida, which are: Florida A&M University (FAMU), Bethune-Cookman University (BCU), Edward Waters College (EWC) and Florida Memorial University (FMU).
BMCEP Eligibility

- An African-American male enrolled in a Florida middle or high school.
- A child of a low income family.
- A depressed grade point average that does not adequately represent the potential of the student.
- A history of disciplinary problems or the propensity to display irregular behavior.
- Willingness to commit to the program through high school graduation.
- Willingness to consider post-secondary education after high school.
What’s Not?

Florida Hard Facts

• 320,000 African American males enrolled & 5,424 Black male teachers in Florida Public Schools (Florida Department of Education, Fall 2011).

• Florida’s Black-White high school completion gap remains larger than the national average (Schott, 2008).
The following measures represent evidence of societal disenfranchisement for Black males.

- low ability grouping
- special education programs
- grade retention
## Placement and Disciplinary Data for Florida 2004-2005 (Holzman, 2006, p.25)
(in percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Black Female</th>
<th>White Female</th>
<th>Black Male</th>
<th>White Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>11.97</td>
<td>25.16</td>
<td>12.30</td>
<td>26.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifted/Talented</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>31.15</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>34.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Retardation</td>
<td>19.62</td>
<td>15.52</td>
<td>28.15</td>
<td>20.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Disturbance</td>
<td>8.79</td>
<td>9.46</td>
<td>29.78</td>
<td>40.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Learning Disability</td>
<td>7.72</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>16.82</td>
<td>37.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspensions</td>
<td>15.47</td>
<td>10.50</td>
<td>29.23</td>
<td>28.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expulsions</td>
<td>10.09</td>
<td>12.30</td>
<td>29.01</td>
<td>37.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Worth noting……

The percentage of African American students admitted to Gifted/Talented programs is disproportionally **LOW**

The percentage of African Americans students enrolled in special education classes is disproportionally **HIGH**
There is no theoretical consensus regarding the causes of the Black-White school achievement gap or the plight of the Black male student; however, in this assembly we will examine competing theoretical perspectives on the subject. The three major foci are:

(1) Structural/Systemic

(2) Individual/Family

(3) Interpersonal Interaction/Cultural Discontinuity
Structural / Systemic

• The controlling assumption is that both between and within school racial disparities mirror the structure of socioeconomic stratification in American society at large.

• The differences between Black and White student outcomes reflect and perpetuate a capitalist system in which:

  ▪ Blacks are generally concentrated in the lower socioeconomic classes, are segregated from Whites by residence in low-income communities and are therefore over-represented within both “high poverty” and “high minority” schools.

• This category encompasses both individual/household and school/neighborhood socioeconomic status. Poor Black students attend schools with comparatively low resources and this, in turn, accounts for most, if not all, of the Black-White achievement gap.
For students of all backgrounds, family functioning exerts a strong influence upon their levels of academic achievement.

African American students respond to perceived racial bias in school in one of three ways: (1) they persevere; (2) they act out, or (3) they give up.
Interpersonal Interaction/ Cultural Discontinuity

• As part of the process of distinguishing their oppositional culture from the dominant White culture of public schools:

  ▪ Black youths “define certain symbols, activities, and ways of speaking as appropriate for whites but not blacks” (Downey, 2008, p.109).

  ▪ Black students who display these “symbols, activities, and ways” are vulnerable to the accusation of “acting White.”
Demystify the phenomenon: From failure to successful, proven programs……

The Black Male College Explorers Program
Economically $peaking..

School failure = a calculable depressive impact upon the individual lifetime earnings of African American males.

*Educational inequality* for Black males leads “to large social costs in the form of lower societal income and economic growth, lower tax revenues, and higher costs of such public services as health, criminal justice, and public assistance.”

*The lifetime public benefits* of an African American male graduating from high school amount to **$256,700 per new graduate**;

*The net public savings* would be roughly **3.98 billion each year** (Levin p.2).
Is our educational system creating a “school-to-prison” pipeline for Black Males? (Fenning & Rose, 2007)

At what cost are willing to sacrifice educational opportunities for Black males? Denying these young men the chance to pursue a meaningful and productive life through a quality education is unwarranted. (Tolliver, 2010)
Advancing Awareness and Prompting Positive Action

*SMART Academies ®
*Black Papers ®
*Billions for Blacks ®
What’s Next?
Collaborations-Partnerships

• Positive Working Relationships In Communities
• Whole Family Wellness Programs
• Accessing School District’s Mental Health Resources
• Alliances With School Athletic Programs
• 100 Black Men, Churches & Fraternal Group Efforts
• Business Training Programs for Local Graduates
• Instruction & Research By Universities That Allow Operational Initiative By Community Organizations.
What’s Next Is Up To You!

“In a global economy where the most valuable skill you can sell is your knowledge, a good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity --- it is a prerequisite.”

U.S. President Barack Obama