

Black Male Achievement

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Analyzing Black Male Achievement

Ohio Governor, Ted Strickland's statewide initiative to increase the Black male high school graduation rate is one of the few statewide, national, or district initiatives focusing specifically on Black male achievement.

- *Catalyst Cleveland*
- *Columbus Post*
- *The Enquirer*
- *Toledo Blade*

Peruse the agenda of many educational conferences and you will not find a single workshop session or keynote presentation focused on increasing Black male achievement. Review the school improvement plans of many elementary, middle, and high schools and you are unlikely to find a specific focus on increasing Black male achievement.

While staff development and educational conferences continue to discuss learning styles, Professional Learning Communities, reading programs, math integration, curriculum alignment, instructional pedagogy, etc., Black males continue to dwell at the bottom of the achievement gap and are the least likely of all student subgroups to graduate from high school, enroll in college, or graduate from college. Despite

a decades old post-integration plight, they are no longer at the forefront of the national education agenda. In fact, in many schools they are banished into special education, relegated to the back of classrooms, sat (with their desks) outside the classroom in the corridor, or repeatedly referred to the office, suspended from school, or expelled from the entire school district.

Why use such code words as, "Urban Youth," or "At-risk Students," when the data is clear? Black males represent a clearly identifiable gender and ethnic subgroup, They represent the lowest performing students, the largest achievement gap, and are the most-likely students to be retained, suspended, expelled, or placed into special education in virtually every school district and every school setting.

Someone must become their advocate. Having matriculated through the Chicago Public Schools as a child, and now, the parent of two Black boys, I unashamedly accept the role as a voice for their advocacy.

Each newsletter during the 2007/08 school year will be devoted to Black male achievement. Our goal is to expand our email distribution to 500,000 subscribers. If you share our passion and understand the accompanying sense of urgency, we ask that you forward each month's newsletter to friends, family, colleagues,

clergy, legislative representatives, the media (particularly, Oprah), and the teachers and administrators at schools within your district. The data is clear--this is the most pressing educational issue of the day.

The second edition of the book, *Empowering African-American Males: A Guide to Increasing Black Male Achievement*, has been updated to include a step-by-step analysis of Black male achievement. Each newsletter will provide excerpts and tables from the book. The September newsletter will provide a step-by-step guide to gathering Black male achievement data within your local school district.



The book, *Empowering African-American Males: A Guide to Increasing Black Male Achievement* may be purchased through our website at a 10% discount. While there, please sign up to receive our monthly newsletter (it's Free!).

High School Graduation Rates in the Ten Largest Public School Districts

District	Total Black Male Enrollment	Graduation Rate		Gap
		Black Male	White Male	
New York City	174,412	26%	50%	24%
Chicago	109,118	35%	57%	22%
Detroit	69,995	31%	29%	-2%
Dade County (FL)	54,406	31%	54%	23%
Prince Georges County (MD)	45,357	61%	57%	-4%
Broward County (FL)	51,114	36%	55%	19%
Los Angeles	44,072	45%	63%	18%
Baltimore City	41,811	31%	38%	7%
Dekalb County (GA)	39,429	49%	63%	14%
Orleans Parish (LA)	31,985	52%	58%	6%
Nationally		45%	70%	25%

Holzman, M. (2006). *Public Education and Black Male Students: The 2006 State Report Card*. Schott Educational Inequality Index (p. 8). Cambridge, MA: The Schott Foundation for Public Education.

mirrors the double-digit high school graduation rate gap. *Volume VIII August 2007 Page 2*

Black males are among the most-likely students to take the least-rigorous academic schedule, and least likely to take advanced math or advanced science--all predictors of college success.

Black males begin falling behind in reading, math, and science during the primary grades. Subsequently, they are disproportionately under represented in advanced math, science, and foreign language classes in middle school. Most Black males enter high school on the lowest academic track and never catch up to their peers. The lucky few, who are recruited athletes and meet the NCAA Clearinghouse guidelines are the least-likely students to graduate from college.

Analyzing Black Male Achievement

The availability of student achievement data for public schools is greater than it has ever been. Thanks in part to the state and school accountability requirements under the 'No Child Left Behind' legislation (www.ed.gov/nclb), increased state accountability standards, and organizations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (www.gatesfoundation.org), the Schott Foundation (www.schottfoundation.org), the Center on Education Policy (www.cep-dc.org), and the Education Trust (www2.edtrust.org/edtrust/), student achievement and school performance data is available through multiple sources.

The report, *Public Education and Black Male Students: The 2006 State Report Card* (p. 8), published by the Schott Foundation (www.schottfoundation.org), notes the Black male high school graduation rates in the ten largest public school districts (based on their Black male enrollment) in the United States (see table).

College-Readiness Rates

The report: *Public High School Graduation and College-Readiness Rates: 1991-2002* (p. 18), published by the Manhattan Institute (www.manhattan-institute.org), provides the college-readiness of those Black males who actually graduate from high school. The gap between the college-readiness of White males and Black males oftentimes

College Graduation Rates

The low college-readiness rates outlined in the 1991-2002 Manhattan Institute study is reinforced by the *2005 NAEP High School Transcript Study*, published by the National Center for Education Statistics (www.nces.ed.gov/). The study notes that only 6 percent of Black students take a rigorous high school curriculum. Subsequently, they have the lowest 6-year college graduation rates, with the college graduation rate of Black males (34.2 percent) being lower than that of Black females (44.7 percent).

The disparity between Black male and female college enrollment is the largest male-female disparity of all ethnic groups.

College-Readiness Rates

State	Hispanic Male	Black Male	White Male	Black-White Gap
New York	11%	21%	43%	22%
Illinois	12%	14%	36%	22%
Michigan	11%	15%	33%	18%
Florida	24%	21%	40%	19%
Maryland	21%	34%	43%	9%
California	22%	22%	39%	17%
Georgia	I	21%	38%	17%
Louisiana	35%	24%	41%	17%

I: Not enough data available.

Greene, J., Winters, M. (2005). *Public High School Graduation and College-Readiness Rates: 1991-2002*. New York, NY: The Manhattan Institute.

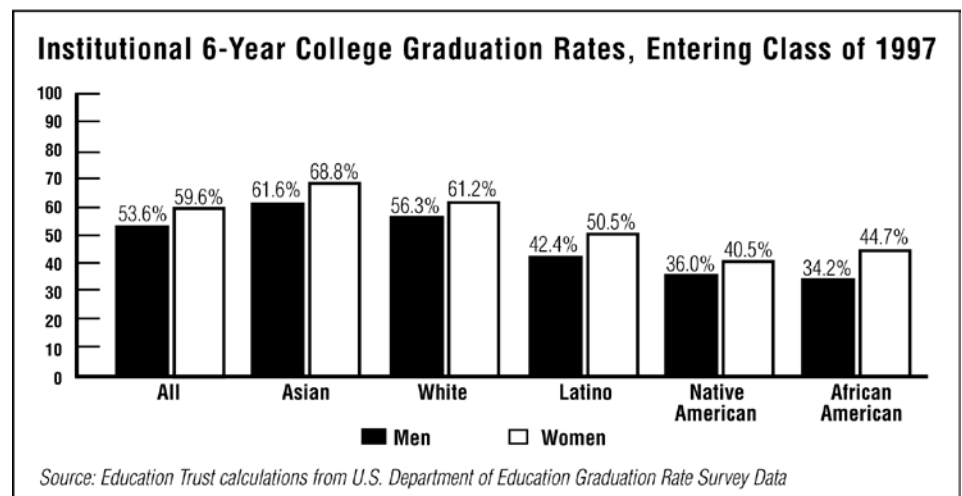
Extrapolating from the currently available data (i.e., high school graduation rates, college-readiness rates, and college graduation rates), for 100 Black males entering kindergarten during the 2007/08 school year, only 3 are projected to graduate from college! (See the table and complete calculation in next month's newsletter.)

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's report, *Educational Attainment in the United States (2003)*, Black males represent only 37 percent of Black student college enrollment and earn fewer college degrees than Black females in every category.

Black males earn:

- 50 percent fewer Associates' Degrees
- 50 percent fewer Bachelor's Degrees
- 60 percent fewer Master's Degrees
- 45 percent fewer Doctoral Degrees

There can be no *Covenant with Black America*, nor serious focus on, *No Child Left Behind* without a clear mission to increase Black male achievement. There is no one person, institution, or political party responsible for the tragic under achievement of Black males in k-12 and postsecondary education. However, any person, institution, or political party can accept a role in increasing Black male achievement. Beginning with a clear and focused mission, is a critical first step toward developing culturally-relevant and gender-specific strategies.



With respect to the 97 Black males, entering kindergarten this school year, who are projected not to graduate from college, we must focus on interventions that will assure that they do not become another generation of noncustodial fathers, incarcerated youth, gang members, and angry and embittered men who fill the unemployment rolls, never fully participate in the American democracy, and who will be a burden rather than an asset to our economy.



My father dropped out of school at the end of the eighth grade, but for as long as I can remember, told me, “Son, you are going to college.” (He also said this to anyone else who would listen, from the barber shop to the clerk at the A&P grocery store.) When I graduated from Northeastern University I was prepared to accept my role in this American democracy as a “first generation college graduate.” My older son is now in his second year at Amherst College and he will one

day represent the second generation of college graduates in our family. He, too, will have a role in participating in the American democracy and shaping public policy with the unique life experiences and perspective of a college educated Black man. His younger brother enters the eighth grade ... on his way to college!

As I—a first generation college graduate—broke the chains of generational poverty, so too, can this generation of Black males—if we make it our mission to:

1. Track the disaggregate data beginning in the primary grades
2. Create a schoolwide culture where it is “cool” for Black males to make the honor roll
3. Provide appropriate interventions during the primary grades
4. Ensure equitable enrollment in middle school gatekeeper courses (i.e., algebra I and foreign languages)
5. Create a buddy system of high performing Black males mentoring other Black males
6. Provide their parents, guardians, coaches, and mentors with rigorous k-12 academic plans
7. Begin the college discussion in kindergarten

A mission to provide an academically sound k-12 foundation, preparing them for college, pushing them into college, and supporting them through college is critical to their long-term success.

Next month ... *Volume VIII*
How to engage in a *August 2007*
step-by-step analysis *Page 4*
of your local school and school district.

Sincerely,

Mychal Wynn

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