ABSTRACT

MOORE, SHEKINA MICHELLE. Still Endangered: Perspectives of Black Male Teachers Answering the Call to Teach in NC Public Schools and a Glance at College and LEA Recruitment Strategies (Under the direction of Dr. Lance D. Fusarelli).

Based on the school to prison pipeline that has garnered a great amount of attention in the past decade, many studies have underscored the need for Black male teacher presence in schools. However, not much beyond rhetoric has taken place to change educational policy or practices. While the student body in American K-12 education has become gradually diverse in gender, race, and ethnicity over the past thirty years, the same cannot be said of its teaching force. Non-reflective of its student body, the teaching profession is predominantly comprised of White/Caucasian females (by more than 80%). This study explored the disproportionality of Black male teachers in North Carolina Public Schools, focusing on why they joined, why they remained and what recruitment practices looked like at the colleges, universities and local education agencies. To explore further, the researcher interviewed local education agency (LEA) and college/university recruiters to gain insight into their recruitment strategies. Some of the emergent themes from this study included a deep-seeded desire to help youth, an unspoken burden to experienced by Black male teachers to serve in disciplinarian roles, an awareness that recruiters are not actively recruiting or attracting Black males to teach and a distinction between hiring and recruiting. This study added to the literature on how to improve Black male teacher recruitment by contributing to a better understanding of what attracted the Black male teachers to education, what factors motivated them to join and how they were recruited to the teaching profession.

Keywords: Black male teachers, organizational commitment, education policy, faculty diversity, major choice, student engagement, college recruitment.
Still Endangered: Perspectives of Black Male Teachers Answering the Call to Teach in NC Public Schools and a Glance at College and LEA Recruitment Strategies

by
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DEDICATION

To every young woman who thinks she can’t. To every young man who thinks he won’t. You’re enough.
BIOGRAPHY

Shekina M. Moore, Ed.D. is an educator and gender and social justice advocate. She is the Founder and CEO of B2F Girls Worldwide, a gender empowerment incubator that produces advocacy initiatives, campaigns and events. She has spoken out against gender oppression and disempowerment since 1992, penning her first published article, Blocking Out the Gender Gap, while a high school student. This article garnered the attention of the National Press for Women. She is also the author of Beautiful, Big-boned and Brown and co-author of When Dark Chocolate is Bittersweet: Controversy Within A Culture.

She has since received many national and community awards for her work with social justice and gender advocacy, including the Volunteer Service Award signed by President Barack Obama and a standing ovation and read resolution by the GA House of Representatives. In 2015, she was named among Atlanta’s “Who’s Who” and was recognized as one of 52 Empowering Women Who Empower Girls in 2014. In 2016, the Huffington Post acknowledged that, “The need for gender advocacy in the marketplace is great” and went on to say that “Shekina is helping to aid that need by creating awareness and resources that focus on all genders, social justice and interpersonal prevention.”

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Jackson Blane came from a single-parent household. His mother worked long hours in order to keep the household afloat. Jackson was a high school student with marginal reading and writing skills. Jackson’s elementary and middle schools socially promoted him; and consequently, he paid the price as a freshman in high school. After failing and being suspended, Jackson was at a crossroads—until he took Mr. Xavier Coggins’ English II class. Mr. Coggins was a Black male teacher who mentored a handful of students at the high school each year. Mr. Coggins held his mentees accountable and took them under his wing. Mr. Coggins often spoke on the importance of education and on the state of the Black male in education. Not only did Mr. Coggins mentor his students, but he also was a great example to the student body in general.

Jackson trusted Mr. Coggins enough to ask him if he would be willing to take on one more mentee. Mr. Coggins acquiesced. By the end of Jackson’s sophomore year, he was reading at grade level and was on a college preparatory track. College had never been in Jackson’s plans until he was told by Mr. Coggins that, “College is for you. You can do this.” Sadly, this is not the outlook of many Black male students (Noguera, 2009). While a few variables may change, the outcome is too often the same: suspension, failure, and dropping out of school.

With a landscape of suspension and drop-out rates, diversity, inclusion and leadership are paramount for schools. Leadership and diversity are invariably connected as schools move from monocultural, non-diverse contexts to those that contain ethnically diverse,
multilingual, and economically-disadvantaged children (Lynn et al., 2010). Diversity is creating opportunity, value, and respect for all, while inclusion is ensuring they actually feel it. Leadership is the ability to empower and move people from one place to another. At its core is empowerment. Diversity is about empowering people. It makes an organization effective by capitalizing on all of the strengths of each member. Therefore, as we prepare leaders, there needs to be a commitment to valuing diversity by providing training to school leaders to respond to diversity challenges. Because ethnic differences between teachers and school leaders may result in either expectations or working styles that may influence their response to students of color, increasing diversity among teachers and students is one of the most critical adaptive challenges that schools face (Mendez, 2003). Some of the diversity challenges for school districts will require taking into consideration their student enrollment composition when recruiting teachers as different school districts may have very different needs.

To change the composition of diversity, or lack thereof, within a school district it may require polling the representatives from underrepresented groups on what exactly compelled them to enter the teaching profession. With this in mind, I will take a look at North Carolina’s largest school system and its ethnic composition.

The Ethnic Composition of the Wake County Public School System

Enrollment for the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) for the 2014-2015 school year was 155,184, which makes WCPSS the largest school system in North Carolina and the 16th largest in the nation. WCPSS had 104 elementary schools, 33 middle schools, 25 high schools, 3 academies, and 4 special/optional schools for a total of 169 schools. 2,821
more students enrolled on the 20th day of school in 2012-2013 than in 2011-2012. Nearly one-third of its students were on free/reduced lunch. Enrollment of white students was declining slightly. Meanwhile, a percentage of total students and Asian, Hispanic, and Multi-Racial student enrollment was increasing as North Carolina itself became more diverse. Of the 155,184 students that were enrolled in the 2014-2015 school year, 36,480 were Black students, 24.4% of the total student population. (Wake County Public School System, Student Due Process: Annual Report of Student Suspensions 2010-2011. (2011)).

In looking at the breakdown of full-time public school personnel in North Carolina, the student dropout numbers are not surprising. Lynn et al. (2010) stress the importance of increasing diversity among teachers who prepare our children. White female teachers comprise a significant majority of the public school teaching workforce in the United States. As of 2014, there were 95,542 teachers in North Carolina. Of that number, 79,186 of them were white and 76,425 were women. Black teachers only represented a mere 13,750 (8%) of teachers. Among the state’s 6,864 school administrators, 3,885 were female while 2,979 were male. Furthermore, Blacks only constituted 1,691 of the state’s pool. Meanwhile, a close look at the labor positions revealed that North Carolina public schools employed 22,494 service workers (such as custodians, cafeteria workers) and 11,060 (nearly 50%) of them were Black.

The Composition of Black Teachers in Wake County

A series of reports in The Carolinian (2011) documented that the WCPSS employed more than 9,000 teachers in 2007. Of that population, only 196 of them were black males. This is alarming. In 2005-2006 there were over 2,000 more Black male high school students who dropped out of school than there were Black male instructors teaching in all of the state
of North Carolina. The teaching force does not reflect accurately the population it serves.

**The Composition of Black Teachers Nationally**

The lack of proportionality of Black male teachers in North Carolina and nationally is a serious problem. Milner, Pabon, Woodson, and McGee (2013) posit that white teachers and students of color possess different racialized and cultural experiences. Their repertoires of knowledge and knowing—inside and outside the classroom—coupled with their racial and cultural incongruence, may serve as a roadblock for academic and social success in the classroom. This school of thought is consistent with the research of Banks (1995), Irvine (2013), Gay (2000), and Howard and Terry (2010). However, a look at the composition of Black male teachers in the United States shows that there is a vast divide between research and reality. According to the U.S. Department of Education, Black men make up two percent of the nation’s 4.8 million teachers. Black men comprise only one percent of those currently enrolled in teacher development programs. Attainment of Black male teachers has not been easy nor has it been a priority for many states. To learn why Black males do not join the teaching force it may require more research into why current Black male teachers choose to teach.

**Suspensions Among Black Students**

Given the increasing diversity in the U.S. population, but the comparative underrepresentation of minorities among teachers and administrators in public schools, some researchers have argued that Black males need more role models to encourage them to succeed in school (Delpit, 2006). With Black students representing a fourth of the student body population in the Wake County Public School System, it is alarming that they represent
the greatest percentage of suspensions on record. From 2004-05 to 2008-09, WCPSS short-term suspended more than 20,000 students per year and long-term suspended (for the remainder of the school year) more than 1,000 students per year. During the same period, the district also expelled – i.e., indefinitely removed – 48 students. WCPSS also had massive school discipline disparities and a severe shortage of alternative education. During 2008-09, Black students were 26.1% of the total student population, but were subject to 62.3% of short-term suspensions, 67.5% of long-term suspensions, and 73.4% of school-based delinquency complaints. (Wake County Public School System, Student Due Process: Annual Report of Student Suspensions 2010-2011. (2011)).

Due to these disparities in suspensions there were calls for change at the state and community levels and the drop in suspensions reflects that some changes were made. The overall number of suspensions in both North Carolina and WCPSS has been on the decline in recent years. The long-term suspension rates in North Carolina have decreased over the years. In 2013-2014 there was a 22.9% decrease from the 773 reported in 2012-2013 and a 31.7% decrease from the 871 reported in 2011-2012. In 2013-2014, 245 Black male students per 100,000 students were long-term suspended.

While the overall number of suspensions in North Carolina had been decreasing, the percentage of Black males being suspended had not. Among all male students in North Carolina, Black males continued to hold the highest rates of short-term and long-term suspensions, followed by American Indian students. In 2013-2014 there were 198,254 short-terms suspensions, of which 113,853 were received by Black students. In other words, 4.04 of every 10 Black male students in North Carolina were suspended in 2013-2014.
Additionally, 1,088 long-term suspensions were reported in North Carolina, totaling 68,055 days, or an average of 62.6 school days per suspension, up from 49.3 days per suspension in 2012-2013.

A look at the WCPSS suspension data reflects a similar challenge. In 2013-2014 WCPSS short-term suspended 10,938 students; 4,853 of those were Black male students; 1,635 were White males; 1,125 were Hispanic males; 375 were Bi-racial males; 82 were Asian males. Among the total 267 students long-term suspended in WCPSS in the 2013-2014 school year, over half of them, 155, were Black males. While suspension rates have been on the decline in North Carolina, the suspension rates remain high among Black students, particularly Black males.

Serving students at risk of truancy, academic failure, behavior problems and/or dropping out of school, alternative schools offer services designed to meet the needs of students who have not been successful in the regular public school setting. The alternative schools in WCPSS are usually available to students who are long-term suspended. WCPSS has four alternative schools (labeled “special/optional”): Longview (9-12), Mount Vernon School (K-8), Mary Phillips (9-12), and River Oaks (6-8). Among these alternative schools in WCPSS, Black students represented 88 seats at Longview, 50 at Mt. Vernon, 125 at Mary Phillips, and 9 at River Oaks. White students represented 13 seats at Longview, 22 at Mount Vernon, 7 at Mary Phillips, and 2 at River Oaks. Again, Blacks represented disproportionately the number of students suspended from school. According to the Annual Report, Black students were placed more frequently than other ethnic groups. Black students
were also placed at the highest rate, followed closely by American Indian students. The grade
level most frequently placed was ninth grade.

**Dropout Rates Among Black Students**

When it comes to dropouts, North Carolina reported in the Annual Dropout Event
Report for School Year 2006-2007 a total of 23,550 dropouts (5.24%), an increase of 4.0%
from the previous year. It also reported that Black and Hispanic students accounted for a
disproportionate amount of the increase in the dropout count. The dropout rate for Black
students increased substantially while the dropout rate for Hispanic students slightly
decreased. The dropout rate, according to the annual report, was at 6.16%. In looking at the
dropout reason codes, “attendance issues” was the reason supplied for over half (53.2%) of
all of the dropouts.

A 2013-2014 Report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee from
the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, showed that the number of high school
dropouts and the high school dropout rate had been reduced by about 56% in the last seven
years. In 2013-2014 North Carolina reported in its annual report a total of 10,404 dropouts,
showing that the rate of dropouts in North Carolina has decreased dramatically over the past
decade. Unfortunately, despite the large improvements in recent years, Black males continue
to have higher dropout rates than the state average. The state’s average dropout rate in 2013-
2014 for all races was 2.28%. However, Black students dropped out at a rate of 3.44%. Of
the 10,404 dropouts, 3,281 were Black males.

While North Carolina had 10,404 students to drop out of school in the 2013-2014
school year, 1,017 (close to 10%) of those dropouts were students in the WCPSS.
The Educational Attainment of Black Males

*The Urgency of Now*, a report released by the Schott Foundation for Public Education, tracked public school graduation rates of Black males since 2004. This 2012 report showed that, although the graduation gap among Black males and White (non-Latino) and Latino males was narrowing, it was not closing quickly enough. “At this rate it would take nearly 50 years for Black males to graduate at the same rate as white males,” said John H. Jackson, president and CEO of the Schott Foundation. “I don’t think the country can wait. I don’t think any parent or student can wait for half a century to have the same opportunities, education, jobs as their white male counterparts” (p.1).

The graduate rate of African-American boys in the Unities States from K-12 was 47% (“Given Half a Chance,” 2008). Thus the Morehouse Education Association, a student-led organization that works on placing more African-American men in classrooms across the country, asked the U.S. Department of Education, to assist Morehouse in fulfilling its pledge to create 80,000 new Black male teachers by 2015. The Schott Foundation for Public Education published this report, which tracked the performance of Black males in public school systems over a five-year period. It concluded that when Black students attend schools with talented, caring teachers, well-trained support staff, and challenging curricula, Black males graduate at rates similar to white males.

In a review of the research on the educational attainment of Black males, several themes emerge: (1) Black male teachers are recruited, but the pools are small; (2) Black males are entering into the teaching profession at low rates; (3) Black males who enroll in college often are not finishing; and (4) Black males who graduate are not finishing at the
same rate as White males. At the elementary level, a 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) examination offered data showing that Black male students performed significantly lower than White males (Lewis, Bonner, Butler, & Joubert, 2010). Black male fourth graders scored approximately 39 percent lower in mathematics and 27 percent lower than their white males in reading, with the gap widening at the middle school level. At the high school level, in 2008, only 47% of Black males earned high school diplomas compared to 78% of White males, according to research by Holzman (2010).

Black male students in urban settings especially face challenges to succeed in school. They are often at increased risk for failure early in their matriculation (Fashola, 2005; Ferguson, 2001; Foster & Peele, 1999; Noguera, 2009). Dropout rates, coupled with failure rates and suspension rates, make the educational attainment landscape for Black males bleak. While there is an underrepresentation of Black males at graduation ceremonies and in the teaching force, there is an overrepresentation of Black males in prisons and Black male students serving out-of-school suspensions. This phenomenon is often referred to as the school-to-prison pipeline (Pabon, 2013).

In an analysis of this phenomenon, Milner et al. (2013) state that, “If pre-service teachers are unaware of concepts like the discipline gap and the school-to-prison pipeline as it pertains to Black male students, it is reasonable to conclude that teacher educators have not adequately prepared them for teaching Black male youth, and that teachers are unlikely to disrupt the cycle that keeps Black male youth at the bottom of various social hierarchies” (p. 243).
**A Role Model’s Power**

Because society transmits culture onto each generation, it is a part of the process of socialization. Myers (2004) suggested that perhaps the most important attitude each person holds is his or her attitude about self. If Black high school males are to see themselves in leadership roles, they have to have representation of people who look like them in education. Klopenstein (2005) asserted that Black high school students enrolled in advanced math classes at low rates. In her article, she noted that increasing the percentage of math teachers who are Black had a “nontrivial, positive impact on the likelihood that a Black geometry student will enroll in a subsequent rigorous math course” (p. 416). Prior academic achievement and expectations for future schooling, both of which can be influenced by role models, determine curriculum choice. Nealy (2005) noted that only sixty-two percent of Black males graduate with their original high school class. They also tend to die ten years earlier than do their White counterparts. Furthermore, twice as many Black women as Black men now attend college. In a study on gender and education, Martino and Rezai-Rashti (2010) found that:

Black male teachers are considered to wield a power, in their capacity as role models, which is not available to black female teachers in terms of how they are perceived by their own communities. So, there is this internal power dynamic that operates from within the black community which structures the differential perceptions and treatment of teachers on the basis of their gender. It also produces a glass escalator effect in terms of male teachers ‘being pushed into administration’. (p. 257)
In this study, a Black male teacher named Elton provided insightful points about his interactions with his students. He believes that such ethnic and gender matching leads students to understand implicitly his modus operandi in the classroom in terms of how he approaches discipline:

So, when they come to see me, I’m from that background ... it’s still partially that way because of the way I have been brought up. So, there are things I don’t ask, ‘I want you to do this, do this now. I am not asking you’ ... it’s just like at home, so that there is understanding there. I think that affects their behavior right away, immediately. That’s the way it’s been with three boys that I’ve had. (p. 257)

Conversation around this topic has been going on for some time. Joined by filmmaker Spike Lee, U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan issued the invitation in 2010 during a town hall meeting and panel discussion hosted by Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia and moderated by MSNBC contributor Jeff Johnson. The event was part of the U.S. Department of Education’s TEACH campaign. It was designed to raise awareness of the teaching profession and get a new generation of teachers to join the ones who are already making a difference in the classroom. One Morehouse student spoke about the importance of Black students seeing caring, responsible, and honest black men in positions of authority, because it helps them to recognize what is possible. The student argued that right now there are not enough of these positive images made visible to today’s youth. Black males represent six percent of the U.S. population yet they account for thirty-five percent of the prison population and less than two percent of teachers.
Academically, teachers of color have demonstrated success in increasing the test scores of students with backgrounds similar to theirs. The research on this is robust. Consider the finding from the National Bureau of Economic Research’s (2001) evaluation of the test scores from Tennessee’s Project STAR class-size experiment, which randomly assigned teachers and students. This research showed that when students were matched with a teacher of their own race, it increased student math and reading scores by 3 to 4 percentage points. It was argued that it appeared that students of color benefited by having positive role models and receiving more support (Dilworth, 1990).

**Social Construction of Negative Images of Black Males**

White female teachers, who represent 80% of the teaching force in the United States, often interpreted the behaviors of Black males as hostile, disrespectful, and intimidating (Delpit, 2006; Ferguson, 2000). This may in part be due to stereotypes about Black males have been perpetuated throughout history. Chubbuck (2004) noted, “At a deeper level, however is the possibility that White teachers’ dispositions toward race may create internal obstacles to the implementation of both effective pedagogy and curriculum and a transformative response to inequitable practices” (p. 302). According to NCES (2011), teacher demographics indicate that 83% of all teachers are White and 75% of all public school teachers in the United States are female. Negative perceptions of Black males begin as early as kindergarten (Ferguson 2001; Paley, 1979). Perhaps most importantly, Black males’ behaviors were often adultified. “By this [adultification] I mean their transgressions are made to take on a sinister, intentional, fully conscious tone that is stripped of any element of
childish naïveté” (Ferguson, 2000, p. 83). Ferguson (2000) referred to the adultification of Black males in the classroom when:

. . . age, gender, and race. . . are grounded in the commonsense, taken-for-granted notion that existing social divisions reflect biological and natural dispositional differences among humans: so children are essentially different from adults, males from females, blacks from whites. At the intersection of this complex of subject positions are African American boys who are doubly displaced: as black children, they are not seen as childlike but adultified; as black males, they are denied the masculine dispensation constituting white males as being “naturally naughty” and are discerned as willfully bad. (p. 80)

**Problem Statement**

Public schools daily confront the challenges of providing a quality educational experience for all of their students. This quality experience is not taking place for many Black students, specifically Black males. The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) has been collecting math and reading achievement data for over four decades and it has consistently reported a gap in the math and reading achievement levels between Black and White students. At disproportionate rates, Black males are placed in special education classrooms, suspended, expelled from school, and drop out of high school. Meanwhile, few studies have examined how Black male teachers reflect about, construct, and discuss their attitudes about teaching Black male students.
Purpose of the Study

With a landscape of high suspension rates among Black male students and little insight into the low representation of Black male teachers in education, the purpose of this study is to gain insight into why Black male teachers join the teaching profession. I also aim to get an understanding of how colleges, universities, and local education agencies (LEAs) recruit Black male teachers.

Creswell (2007) recommended that researchers reduce their studies to a minimal number of overarching research questions. The research questions that guide the study are as follows:

1. Why do Black males join the teaching profession?
2. Why do Black males remain in the teaching profession?
3. What strategies do colleges and universities use to recruit Black males to the teaching profession?
4. What strategies do Local Education Agencies (LEAs) use to recruit Black males to the teaching profession?

Significance of the Study

This study hopes to inform the current research in several ways. In North Carolina, Black male teachers are underrepresented in the teaching force. A close look at the discipline data provided by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction indicates that the Black male student is in jeopardy of dropping out of school or failing. Black males are needed as role models like never before. A look at why Black males join the teaching
profession may inform LEAs and university and college systems on how to recruit Black males to the teaching profession. At present, there is a lack of research in this critically important area. Black male students need more role models and the disproportionality and underrepresentation of Black male teachers in education is a problem that must be addressed by colleges and LEAs.

**Overview of the Approach**

This qualitative, interpretive study aims to give voice to Black male teachers in the K-12 setting on why they joined the teaching profession. The qualitative, interpretive approach is appropriate as it seeks to understand the meaning that people give to their lives. Qualitative data take us into the field. Patton (2002) asserted that “Qualitative data describe…They capture and communicate someone else’s experience of the world in his or her own words” (p. 47). Accordingly, I will employ a qualitative, interpretive approach to capture the experiences of Black male teachers in the teaching profession and of those who train and recruit such teachers.

**Organization of the Study**

Chapter 1 provided an overview of the study. It introduced background information on the underrepresentation of Black males in K-12 education in North Carolina and the United States. It delved into the theoretical framework of the study, and it presented the purpose of the study, research questions, and significance of the study.

Chapter 2 will provide a review of the recent research examining the pathways to joining the teaching profession, teacher recruitment strategies employed by LEAs in North
Carolina, and recruitment activities by colleges and universities in the University of North Carolina system designed to attract more Black males into the teaching profession.

Chapter 3 will present the research methodology that will be employed in the study. This chapter will also describe the study’s approach, research design, methods, data collection and analysis, and present the limitations of the study.

Chapter 4 will present the findings of the data and Chapter 5 will offer a discussion of the data and make recommendations for further research and practice.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on Black males in education is copious. However, the literature on their career pathway is lacking. Because Black males are needed as role models in today’s schools, a look at why Black males join the teaching profession may inform LEAs and university and college systems on how to recruit Black males into the teaching profession. At present, there is a lack of research in this critically important area. Black male students need more role models and the disproportionality and underrepresentation of Black male teachers in education is a problem that must be addressed by colleges and LEAs.

This chapter will first review information about the roots of Black Americans as a whole. Next, will be a focus on the roles of mentors and trends in Black male student performance. Then, literature about the barriers to Black males in education, past and present. Next, I review the recruitment of Black male teachers by LEAs and colleges and universities. The final section looks at the success of the Call Me MISTER program in South Carolina.

Introduction

Myers (2004) posits that perhaps the most important attitude each person holds is his or her attitude about self. If Black male students are to see themselves in leadership roles, they must see people who look like themselves in education.
Research on why teachers and leaders should reflect the student population

Why are there so few Black male teachers in U.S. schools? Black males, who are six percent of the U.S. population, make up less than two percent of the nation’s public school teachers. Niesner (2013) posited that:

Using a Black Male Teacher Environment Survey, which the U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan administered to teachers in Boston Public Schools, I found that Black male teachers were more inclined to stay on the job if there were more Black male teachers in the school. Respondents who were the only Black men on their faculty indicated a greater desire to leave their current schools, even in a down economy, whereas respondents with four or more Black men on the faculty expressed a greater desire to stay. (LA School Report, 2013)

Delpit (2006) suggests in her critically acclaimed publication *Other People’s Children* that many academic problems attributed to children of color are actually the result of miscommunication, as teachers of “other people’s children” struggle with the imbalance of power and the dynamics of inequality plaguing our society. She posits “currently minority students represent a majority in all but two of the twenty-five largest cities, and by some estimates, the turn of the century will find up to 40 percent nonwhite children in American classrooms” (p.66). At the same time, “the teaching force is becoming more homogeneously white. African-American, Asian, and Hispanic, and Native American teachers now comprise only 10 percent of the teaching force, and that percentage is shrinking rapidly” (p. 66).

Raising some controversy with her research, Delpit (2006) raised many poignant points concerning cultural differences that affected teachers of the dominant culture’s
perceptions of non-White students’ linguistic styles, non-mainstream varieties of language, styles of literacy, orality, and more. To combat this phenomenon, students must be taught the codes needed to participate fully in the mainstream of American life; that even while being assisted in learning the culture of power “they must also be helped to learn about the arbitrariness of those codes and about the power relationships they represent” (p. 45).

In addressing the underrepresentation of Black voices in the education of Black children I sought insight into the culture of power and, again, Delpit (2006) made a salient case for the importance of understanding the code of the dominant culture—as well as the ability to employ it while not devaluing the code one already possesses. “I tell them that their language and cultural style is unique and wonderful but that there is a political power game that is also being played, and if they want to be in on that game there are certain games that they too must play” (p. 40). She goes on to state that “appropriate education for poor children and children of color can only be devised in consultation with adults who share their culture. Black parents, teachers of color, and members of poor communities must be allowed to participate fully in the discussion of what kind of instruction is in their children’s best interest” (p. 45).

Unfortunately, teachers and parents of children of color have had very little voice in either in the decisions around the way their children are taught or in what they are taught. This has not been without detriment to the non-dominant culture. Delpit (2006) claims, “What the school personnel fail to understand is that if the parents were members of the culture of power and lived by its rules and codes, then they would transmit those codes to their children. In fact, they transmit another culture that children must learn at home in order
to survive in their communities” (p. 30). Furthermore, Delpit (2006) asserts that it is not the children that must change but it is the schools. However, even in allowing children to embrace their own culture the code—linguistic forms, how to dress, how to write, how to interact, how to present oneself (p. 25)—are all key to thriving in a monolithic society. When America’s teaching force is diverse we all benefit. When diversity is celebrated and not merely tolerated our country benefits.

Teachers who are the most successful with African American students respect and value students’ culture and possess sophisticated understandings of their own culture and its relationship to the construction and implementation of a liberatory approach to teaching in humane and equitable ways (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995). Other researchers (Foster, 1995, 1997; Howard 2001, 2008; Irvine, 1991; Lynn 2002, 2006) who have explored the link between the racial and cultural competence of teachers and their ability to be successful with Black students appear to underscore Ladson-Billings’s research. However, this cultural competence does not negate the importance of a teacher’s aptitude, experience, or credentials.

A growing body of evidence has shown that there is a relationship between teacher quality and student outcomes (Darling Hammond, 2000; Peske & Haycock, 2006; Presley, White, & Gong, 2005). However, credentials and experience, when coupled with cultural competence, make for a recipe for success when having successful outcomes with Black male students.
Roots of Black Americans as a Whole

Communities of color have always experienced occupational barriers and challenges, but those barriers have looked different throughout American history. In the South, in the late 19th century, African American public schools were primarily, if not exclusively, staffed with African American teachers. Well into the 20th century in many areas of the United States and not only in the South, this practice continued for decades well into the 20th century with African American teachers predominantly teaching African American children (Harris, 2012).

When the 1954 decision of Brown vs. Board of Education declared school segregation unconstitutional and integration slowly began to take hold, many African American schools were closed and their students were bussed to white schools. As a consequence, in many cases, African American teachers lost their teaching positions to white teachers.

In the years following the landmark Brown decision, many other African American teachers were forced out of the profession through demotions, firings, and pushed resignations. By 1970, more than 38,000 African American educators had lost their jobs (Harris, 2012). In subsequent decades, the emergence of more expansive professional opportunities for African Americans allowed them to choose from a greater range of occupations. Today, over 50 years later, teaching has become a predominantly white profession that is not representative of its student demographics.

Fifty years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court declared the notion of "separate but equal" schooling unconstitutional, saying "separate" was inherently unequal. Yet in the decades
since the Brown v. Board of Education ruling, the demographics of the country have changed in ways the authors of the landmark decision never envisioned. Throughout the country, patterns of housing and immigration have created neighborhoods that are extremely segregated. And in such areas, the quality of education provided by public schools is far from equal. Nowhere is this more evident than in California, where 100 percent of the students in some schools are members of minority groups.

In “The Chronicle of the Sacrificed Black Schoolchildren,” prominent critical race legal scholar Derrick Bell (1987) wrote a parable about how desegregation affected the lives of African American children in the United States. In an article in Teachers College Record, Lynn et al. (2010) argue that critical race theorists in education have used Bell’s work as a foundation from which to argue that African American school children are systematically marginalized and mis-educated in an educational system that seeks only to highlight what they lack and that disregards the “cultural wealth” they bring to bear (Howard, 2008; Lynn & Parker, 2006; Yosso, 2005). In the chronicle, Bell uses fictionalized parables to draw parallels between the issues of power and racism in the United States amidst desegregation. He aimed to show African American children were made invisible through the desegregation of schools:

In the chronicle, Bell (1987) wrote about the dire consequences of desegregation for many African American children. This is a counter-narrative that begins with the notion of African American children having simply vanished on the “implementation day for the new desegregation plan” (p. 102). He does not explain how they vanished or where they went. He explains the impact of this legislation on Black schools: They were closed, and Black teachers and principals were fired. He noted that it was Whites, not Blacks, who stood to gain the most from the losses
experienced by African American children, who would become “invisible” or lost in all-White schools where they were not wanted or appreciated. In schools that were created with White children in mind, African American children’s culture and language were misunderstood and pathologized as deficient, and these students were ultimately framed as oppositional. In this sense, Bell is using the parable to argue that Brown v. Board of Education did not significantly improve the lives of African American children; instead, it made them even more invisible. It could be argued, then, that the problems identified by Bell help to explain the current crisis facing many African American children in U.S. schools today. (Lynn et al., p. 291)

In the years post-Brown we are seeking ways to increase teacher diversity amidst an ever-increasingly diverse student population. The challenge is not just how to increase diversity across ethnicities, but also how to increase diversity across gender. While the recruitment and retention numbers of minority teachers are proportionately low, the recruitment and retention numbers for African-American males are much lower.

**Teaching Traditionally a Feminine Role**

Historically, teaching has always been a role for women. Before the first world war of 1814 women held very traditional roles and expectations to take care of the family. A woman’s place was in the home. If she did work outside of the home it was due to necessity brought on by her husband being off to war. The economy swayed women to begin to work in the absence of their husbands at war.

As women began to be liberated to a degree and get educated, working roles such as nursing, clerical work and teaching were deemed suitable careers for women. Heavy duty and mechanical jobs were no place for a woman. Rather, the traditional role of wife and mother were emphasized. Women were often reminded to keep their husbands motivated by
writing letters often and mailing them to troops on a weekly basis. Because of a shortage of workers during the first world war, women were asked to step in but once the troops returned, women were expected to resume their roles of homemakers.

Today, women make up 80% of the teaching force. Jobs dominated by women pay less on average than those with higher proportions of men, and studies have shown that these careers tend to enjoy less prestige as well. While teaching was once a career for men, by the time women began entering the work force in droves in the 1960s, teaching, along with nursing, was one of very few careers open to women. Despite strides that women have made entering previously male-dominated fields, there has not been a corresponding flow of men into teaching and nursing. Although teachers have more time off and, at least for now, better benefits and job security than many other professions, their pay has remained essentially stagnant since 1970 in inflation-adjusted terms.


**Trends in Studies of Black Male Teachers and Teaching**

The teaching profession in the United States of America faces many challenges---teacher shortages in various subject areas, such as math and science; teacher shortages related to gender, such as the proportionately low numbers of males in elementary education; and the retention of educators already in the teaching profession. However, none have witnessed as steep an increase as the teacher-student diversity gap.

Teaching used to be one of the few professions that black college graduates could aspire to and make decent money, said LaRuth Gray, who is scholar in residence at the
Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools at New York University. However, as the country integrated and other professions opened their ranks, education lost its cachet, and fewer black students thought about becoming teachers (Holland, 2015). “It’s not seen as the ideal careers to have, and so therefore our youngsters, our black children tend to move in other directions,” said Gray, who also serves as a government liaison for the National Alliance of Black School Educators (p.1).

According to the Occupational Employment Statistics Survey, there were approximately 2.3 million teachers working at the elementary and middle school level in the U.S. in 2008. When census information includes pre-schools, high schools, special education teachers, and college instructors, the number climbs to approximately 6.1 million. The total U.S. population is more than 300 million. In estimated figures, this means that teachers comprise about 2% of the total population (Ahmad & Boser, 2014).

A 2005 University of Pennsylvania study by Richard Ingersoll found that teachers of color left the profession twenty-four percent more often than white teachers did. According to the National Education Association, the declining numbers of Black and Hispanic students majoring in education is steeper than the overall decline in education majors and minority teachers leave teaching at higher rates than do white teachers. An article on the National Education Association’s website admitted this when describing reasons for the national shortage of teachers of color: “Salaries are low for teachers compared to salaries for other professionals, which lowers the prestige and social value of a career in teaching for many potential minority teachers” (Machado, 2013). Secretary Arne Duncan addressed this issue when he called for a $60,000 starting salary for teachers: “Many bright and committed young
people are attracted to teaching, but they are reluctant to enter the field for the long-haul” (“Why Teachers of Color Quit,” 2011). These prospective teachers are reluctant to make such a commitment. Many outside and inside of education view the teaching profession as both low paying and low-prestige.

A look at some statistics from a report by *The Atlantic* (2013) on Teach for America participants underscores this notion. Twenty-seven percent of Teach for America teachers of color are the first in their families to earn a college degree. Many more are the first to go to a top-ranked school. To people from our backgrounds, admittance to college is not seen as only an opportunity for intellectual pursuits. It is seen as a means to escape a lower social status and to gain the admiration or financial success of the upper class (“Why Teachers of Color Quit,” 2011).

**Composition of Black Teachers in the Nation**

The total population of the United States in 2014 was 318 million inhabitants. In regards to ethnicity, a 2012 statistical report by Statistica.com shows that Caucasians represented 63% of the United States population: Hispanics 17%, African Americans 13%, Asians 5.1%, two or more races 2.4%; Indigenous people/Indians 1.2%; and Native Hawaiian and other pacific Islanders 0.2%. U.S. teachers are nowhere near as diverse as their students. Almost half the students attending public schools are minorities, yet fewer than one in five of their teachers are not white, according to two new studies (Center for American Progress, 2012).
The studies from the Center for American Progress and the National Education Association are calling attention to this “diversity gap” at elementary and secondary schools in the United States. The groups want more to be done to help teachers more accurately mirror the students in their classrooms. There were about 3.3 million teachers in American public elementary and secondary schools in 2012, according to a study by the National Center for Education Statistics. It found that 82 percent were white, 8 percent were Hispanic, 7 percent were black, and about 2 percent were Asian.

Overall, public schools in the nation have a diversity index of 30, which represents the percentage-point difference between teachers and students who are not white, according to the center’s study, which examined data from the 2010-11 school year. Moreover, recent statistics from the Center for American Progress show that 48 percent of the students in public schools are not white and that percentage is expected to continue to rise. The center’s study said that almost every state has a significant diversity gap between teachers and their students.

The Minority Teacher Dilemma

According to the National Education Association, the minority teacher shortage presents a dilemma for education associations across the country. At a time when the demand for minority teachers is rising, the supply is falling. Despite many efforts, the number of minority teachers continues to decline (Tyler et al., 2011; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Reasons include:

- Demographically, a region, state, or school district contains few minorities locally
available for its teacher pool.

- Burn out and frustration are caused by on-the-job hazards, such as poor working conditions, discipline problems, spreading school violence, and a lack of support from colleagues.

- Inadequate schooling leaves some minority students ill prepared and unmotivated for higher education. Standardized tests often have cutoff scores that exclude minority students from higher education, teacher training, and teacher certification programs.

- Licensure tests screen out minorities disproportionately.

- Salaries are low for teachers compared to salaries for other professions, which lowers the prestige and social value of a career in teaching for many potential minority teachers.

- Minority students find more career opportunities outside of teaching.

- The declining numbers of Black and Hispanic students majoring in education is steeper than the overall decline in education majors.

  Minority teachers leave teaching at higher rates than white teachers do.

  American public schools reflect diversity only in their student populations, not in their teaching force. Despite efforts by some school districts to hire minority teachers, most have faculties that are overwhelmingly white. Most districts still fail to hire minority teachers proportional to the increasing number of minority students in schools. This minority teacher shortage becomes more acute each year.

  With 40 percent minority students and five percent minority teachers predicted for early in the next century, a critical shortage of education workers and role models may be at
hand that could contribute to a worsening urban plight. Indeed, such a crisis could lead to a failure of all American students to learn the academic, personal, and social skills they need in the multicultural workplace of the future. To avert such an outcome, the NEA has formulated a policy resolution on minority educators. It reads as follows:

The National Education Association believes that multiracial teaching staffs are essential to the operation of schools. The Association deplores the current trend of diminishing numbers of ethnic minority educators and urges local and state affiliates and appropriate governing bodies and agencies to work to increase the number of ethnic-minority teachers and administrators to a percentage at least equal to, but not limited to, the percentage of the ethnic minorities in the general population. The Association further urges U.S. Department of Defense Schools to actively recruit and hire ethnic-minority educators. (http://www.nea.org/home/29031.htm)

**Research on Role Models**

Students of color need teachers who not only set rigorous standards for them but teachers who also can provide models of professional success. Studies have shown that diversity reinforces teacher effectiveness; it is not simply an add-on. Students who have a teacher to whom they can relate become more engaged, which engenders effort, interest, and confidence—benefits that can enhance student performance.

Academically, teachers of color have demonstrated success in increasing the test scores of students with backgrounds similar to theirs. The research on this is robust. Consider the finding from the National Bureau of Economic Research’s (2001) evaluation of the test scores from Tennessee’s Project STAR class-size experiment, which randomly assigned
teachers and students. This research showed that when students were matched with a teacher of their own race, it increased student math and reading scores by 3 to 4 percentage points. Is argued that it appeared that students of color benefited by having positive role models and receiving more support (Dilworth, 1990).

An expansive literature review showed that overall, teachers of color engage in the following practices: having high expectations of students of color; providing culturally relevant teaching; developing trusting relationships with students; confronting issues of racism through teaching; and serving as advocates and cultural brokers (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Delpit, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 1999; Yasso, 2005). These practices have been shown to improve outcomes for students of color, not only when it comes to test scores but also in K-12 attendance, high school completion, and college attendance rates.

Historical and emerging research supports the observation that on average low-income students and children of color receive less effective teaching than do their white and more advantaged peers. Unfortunately, disparities in teaching effectiveness build at a compound rate over months and years, exacerbating the differentials in academic achievement across ethnic populations that are discussed in this report. These findings speak to the importance of consistently having a well-prepared, effective teacher in every grade and subject, every year, which is the only way the education gap faced by students of color can be closed. Teachers of color are an important part of that solution.

Then there is the issue of socialization. With a staggeringly low number of Black male teachers, are Black male students expecting to become teachers? The lifelong process of socialization continues throughout different stages of the life course. This process includes
childhood through early adulthood, and finally old age. It is the process through which social experiences make us fully human. It is also the means by which society transmits culture to each generation. Basic aspects of socialization lead to the rise and meaning of selfhood in social interaction. Perhaps the most important attitude each person holds is his or her attitude about self (Myers, 2004). This socialization is pervasive in schools. Students are aware that Black males are underrepresented and that transmits a subliminal message.

**Trends in Academic Performance for Black Males in Secondary School**

According to a study by the Center for American Progress entitled *America’s Leaky Pipeline for Teachers of Color* (2013), test scores on the SAT and ACT reflect the challenges that we face in creating a pool of students of color who are positioned to excel in college and, in turn, to become potential teachers (p. 9). In an ethnographic study of Black male students in a high-performing urban high school, race scholars Duncan and Jackson (1996) cited “limit situations” as a major challenge Black male students face in U.S. school systems. Leaning on Paola Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, they argue that this set of conditions limits any real transformative change for oppressed peoples. The conditions were disempowering and diminished by a lack of any power over the larger political, economic, or social system. As such, a review of the academic performance of Black males in secondary education reveals that not much has changed in the twenty years since their study.

Black males in America’s public education system are lagging behind. Black male students in America’s public education system represent 50% of America’s dropout rate. They are represented disproportionately higher than their White counterparts in America’s
prisons—a hefty 40% (U.S. Department of Labor, 1994). Yet Blacks as a whole represent only 12% of the American population.

**Trends in Academic Performance for Black Males in the Wake County Public School System**

Talk of macro-challenges may seem remote but when those challenges are in your own backyard, challenges have a face. From 2004-05 to 2008-09, the WCPSS short-term suspended more than 20,000 students per year and long-term suspended (for the entire remainder of the school year) more than 1,000 students per year. During the same time, the district also expelled – i.e., indefinitely removed – 48 students. The WCPSS also had massive school discipline disparities and a severe shortage of alternative education. During 2008-09, Black students were 26.1% of the total student population but were subject to 62.3% of short-term suspensions, 67.5% of long-term suspensions, and 73.4% of school-based delinquency complaints.

**Trends in the Teaching Profession**

The teaching profession has changed a great deal over the past few decades. The students entering the classrooms today come from very diverse backgrounds with their own respective cultural differences. Perhaps more than ever there is a need for teacher preparatory programs to attract minority ethnic and racial groups into the teaching profession. Manson (1999) asserts that students need to be able to identify with persons that look like them, which may be a reason why there are not many Black male teachers in the American educational system. As much as things have changed a look at history shows that not much
has changed by way of inclusion. Teachers and parents of color still seldom are included in conversations about what is good for their children (Delpit, 2006).

Another issue is money. Teaching used to be one of the few professions that black college graduates could aspire to and make decent money, according to LaRuth Gray, a scholar in residence at the Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools at New York University who also serves as a government liaison for the National Alliance of Black School Educators: As the county integrated and other professions opened their ranks, education lost its cachet and fewer black students thought about becoming teachers. It’s not seen as the ideal careers to have, and so therefore, our youngsters, our black children tend to move in other directions. (“Studies Sound Alarm on Teacher-Student “Diversity Gap” in U.S.”, 2014, p. 1).

According to the Occupational Employment Statistics Survey, there were approximately 3.2 million teachers working at the elementary, middle and high school levels in the U.S. in 2009. When census information included pre-schools, high schools, special education teachers and college instructors, the number climbed to approximately 6.1 million. The total U.S. population is more than 322 million. In estimated figures, this means that teachers comprise about 2% of the total population (Center for American Progress report: http://tinyurl.com/qeq736gState-by-state analysis: http://tinyurl.com/m47fy98). If 80% of teachers the entire 2% of the population who are in the profession are not diverse, the student bodies of teacher preparation programs in the colleges of education must not be diverse either.
Diversity in University Teacher Preparation Programs

A great deal of the research in higher education traditionally has examined the ways in which individual students grow and change while in college (Astin, 1977, 1993; Feldman & Newcomb, 1969; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). In recent years, more of this research has focused on the ways in which racial dynamics on campus influence student outcomes. The most abundant research evidence supporting arguments for the continued use of affirmative action in college admissions exists in the area of how individuals benefit from diversity.

Studies show there are implications for teachers and students of color (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986; American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, 1999; Banks, 1995; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Dilworth, 1992; Irvine, 1998, 1999; Kirby et al., 1999). Taken together, these findings have significant ramifications for students and schools. Teachers of color can serve as role models for students of color, as noted in a previous section of this literature review, and “when students see teachers who share their racial or ethnic backgrounds, they often view schools as more welcoming places” (Boser, 2014, p. 1).

Students of color also do better on a variety of academic outcomes if teachers of color teach them. Alternatively, as education professors Richard Ingersoll and Henry May (2011) have argued, “minority students benefit from being taught by minority teachers, because minority teachers are likely to have ‘insider knowledge’ due to similar life experiences and cultural backgrounds” (p. 1). What’s more, it is important for all students to interact with people who look and act differently than they do in order to build social trust and create a
wider sense of community. In other words, the benefits of diversity are not just for students of color. They are also important for white students (Ahmad & Boser, 2014).

As evidenced by the statistical ratios of students and teachers in the United States, states have not been doing nearly enough to increase the diversity of their teaching ranks. In 2011, for instance, North Carolina slashed funding for its Teaching Fellows Program. The program had a dedicated focus on recruiting people of color, and experts had hailed it as an important way to get more teachers of color into the nation’s classrooms (Fitzsimon, 2015).

Why isn’t more done to recruit minority teachers into America’s classrooms? Not nearly enough districts have offered bonuses or other benefits to people of color who are interested in becoming educators. Given these benefits, why are there such large diversity gaps between teachers and students? In other words, if teachers of color bring so much to the academic table, why don’t states and districts do more to bring them into the classroom?

There is no single reason for this disconnect; multiple factors are at play. Part of the issue is market forces, as we have noted in previous reports, and today, people of color have far more job choices than ever before. Furthermore, the K-12 system itself is partially to blame; there are large racial gaps in high school graduation rates, which means that fewer people of color attend college relative to their white peers. As a result, fewer enter teacher preparation programs or major in education or a related discipline.

Researchers Saba Bireda and Robin Chait argued in the 2011 CAP report that education leaders have a wide number of policy options that have been shown to improve the demographics of the teaching profession. Bireda and Chait (2011) suggest, for instance, that states should do more to fund teacher-preparation programs. They also argue that the federal
government can do more by creating financial aid programs for low-income students to help them deal with the costs of teacher preparation. Perhaps the most successful approach, though, has been providing students of color with supports—including mentorship and practicums—and financial incentives ("Teacher Diversity Revisited," 2014).

There are many avenues into the teaching profession, but completing high school and then attaining a college degree in education is the traditional route; and racial and ethnic differences exist along this traditional pathway. Only 10.6 percent of college students in the United States are education majors (Ahmad & Boser, 2014). While people of color pursue careers in teaching at higher rates than their white counterparts do, they enroll in post-secondary education institutions at a disproportionately low rate. This means that the overall number of college students of color who major in education is relatively small (Ahmad & Boser, 2014).

While non-whites are entering teaching through alternative routes at higher rates than are white teachers, “only 18 percent of white teachers entered teaching through alternative routes, more than half (53 percent) of Hispanic teachers, four out of 10 (39 percent) of Black teachers and one-fourth (24 percent) of teachers form all other races entered teaching through alternative routes to college campus-based teacher education programs” (Feistritzer, 2011, p. 23).

**Barriers to Black Males in Higher Education**

Fifty-one percent of Black male undergraduates in 2012 attended college exclusively full-time; thirty-two percent attended exclusively part time; and, eighteen percent attended a combination of full and part-time courses. High-achieving, low-income students are more
likely than high-achieving, high-income students to “under match” and enroll in colleges where they are overqualified for admission (Avery & Hoxby, 2004).

A study from ETS’s Policy Evaluation & Research Center and the Children’s Defense Fund outlines some statistics that affect Black males in college. In 2013, while 69 percent of Black students who took the ACT® test had taken a core curriculum in high school, only 5 percent of Black students who took the test scored “college ready” in all four tested subjects. Seventy-four percent of all students who took the ACT® test had taken a core curriculum in high school and twenty-six percent of all test takers scored “college ready” in all four tested subjects. Eighty percent of Black male undergraduates in 2012 applied for federal financial aid, compared to sixty-three percent of White male undergraduates.

In 2013, 28 percent of Black men age 25 and older had a postsecondary degree compared to 41 percent of men age 25 and older of all races. Another 20 percent of Black men in this age group had some college, but no degree compared to 17 percent of men of all races. Less than one-third of Black men who graduate do so in four years and Black men were half as likely as White men were to earn a Bachelor’s degree within six years of entering college. Additionally, among male undergraduates ages 18-24, Black men are more likely to enroll in less competitive colleges than are White men (ETS’s Addressing Achievement Gaps Symposium, 2014).

**What Do Black Males Major in in College?**

With low percentages of males entering college, it is important to look at the major choices made by the Black males who do. Because a student’s choice of college major affects
her occupational choice, earnings, and the probability that she will pursue advanced degrees, it is important to understand why college major choice varies by race and gender.

According to a study looking at *Race and Gender Differences in College Major Choice* (Dickson, 2009), “Among male students, African-Americans are the most likely to be undecided at the start of their academic career” (p. 5). The study also revealed that, “Black male college graduates appear to be rather evenly distributed across the different major categories, however black females are overrepresented among the natural and physical science and the social science graduates relative to their share of all graduates, and they are underrepresented among business, engineering, and computer science majors” (p. 7).

**National Incentives Focused on Black Males in America**

Persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color prompted President Obama to launch the My Brothers Keeper Program. This initiative focuses on six milestones:

- **Reading at Grade Level by Third Grade**
  All children should be reading at grade level by age 8 – the age at which reading to learn becomes essential.

- **Graduating from High School Ready for College and Career**
  All youth should receive a quality high school education and graduate with the skills and tools needed to advance to postsecondary education or training.

- **Completing Postsecondary Education or Training**
  Every American should have the option to attend postsecondary education and receive the education and training needed for the quality jobs of today and tomorrow.

- **Successfully Entering the Workforce**
Anyone who wants a job should be able to get a job that allows them to support themselves and their families.

- Keeping Kids on Track and Giving Them Second Chances

Through this initiative, the Administration is partnering with organizations in cities and towns, businesses, and foundations who are taking important steps to connect youth to mentoring, support networks, and the skills they need to find a good job or go to college and work their way into the middle class. One of the interesting facets of the My Brother’s Keeper initiative is its Task Force that looks at Government’s own policies and programs and how they can better support these efforts. The Task Force looks at how to better involve State and local officials, the private sector, and the philanthropic community in these efforts. The Task Force works across executive departments and agencies to:

- Assess the impact of Federal policies, regulations, and programs of general applicability on boys and young men of color, so as to develop proposals that will enhance positive outcomes and eliminate or reduce negative ones.

- Recommend, where appropriate, incentives for the broad adoption by national, State, and local public and private decision makers of effective and innovative strategies and practices for providing opportunities to and improving outcomes for boys and young men of color. (https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/02/27/fact-sheet-opportunity-all-president-obama-launches-my-brother-s-keeper)

**MISTER program in South Carolina**

If local education agencies are to address the underrepresentation of Black males in K-12 education, they have to work with university teacher preparatory programs. In South Carolina there is a program called “Call Me Mister” where African American males from
Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are recruited to participate. MISTER is an acronym meaning: Men Instructing Students Toward Effective Role Modeling. The program received several awards in its first years, was acknowledged on the Oprah Show, and received many other honors. The MISTER program gave a remarkable report in its Executive Summary of Outcomes.

- The ages of the students in the program range from 17-23
- The overall retention rate for students in the Call Me Mister program is approximately 71%
- The average GPA for students in the spring semester 2002 was 2.9, exceeding the GPA of “regular” students on the three campuses
- The Praxis I pass rate is up to 40% on all three sections
- Students spent between 6 and 15 hours per week in activities related to their academic program
- When asked if MISTER program gave them a sense of purpose in their lives, 81.6 percent responded very favorable that it did
- Over 75% of the Misters have indicated that they plan to undertake graduate study for the master’s degree after receiving teacher certification and entering the teaching profession
- Most of the Misters (89.5%) believe they are being prepared for their professional roles as elementary teachers

South Carolina felt it important enough to recruit Black male teachers to elementary school classrooms and they are seeing positive outcomes. Still relatively new, policymakers
in North Carolina could learn from this model. North Carolina has a wealth of universities to pool from, train, and hire. In a discourse on affirmative action, Hughes (2001) notes that while some organizations may promote a commitment to hiring minorities, they are unwilling to purposefully recruit, support, or facilitate minority members’ transition to a majority White organization (Mabokela & Madsen, 2002).

**Black Males are At-Risk**

As mental models form in the early years, it is vital that educators not wait until the students become of high school age. By then, the achievement gap is often too wide. To be a role model for Black male students at the elementary school level, a level where men in general are an endangered species, could have profound effects. Data from a wide variety of sources show that females in all ethnic groups tend to earn higher grades in school than do males, across different ages and eras and across different subject matter disciplines (Kleinfeld, 1998).

Not only does research show that Black males are at risk for remedial instruction, but they are also at increased risk for suspension. Mendez (2003) offers that across school levels, most suspensions were for relatively “minor behavior” and that Black males were overrepresented in suspensions across almost all infraction types. Remarkably, in this study that looked at a west central Florida school district, 26.28 percent of Black males compared with 11.95 percent of White males experienced at least one suspension from school. It is notable that at the middle school level, approximately one-half of all Black male students and almost one-third of all Black female students experienced at least one suspension (Mendez &
Knoff, 2004). It is troubling that Black male students even at the elementary school level have experienced a disproportionately large amount of disciplinary action.

**Graduation Rates for Black Males**

New York City and Chicago, which enroll 10% of the country’s Black male students, fail to graduate more than 70% of those students with their entering classmates. Only 41% of Black males in public schools graduate with their high school classes, compared with 70% of non-Hispanic White males (Gewertz, 2004). Statistics provided by the Editorial Projects in Educational Research Center (Gewertz, 2007) show that 46.2% of Black male students graduate with a general high school diploma, as compared with 72.3% of White and 52.3% of Hispanic males.

Manson (2006) highlights in his book that children who are too old for their grade are much more likely than their classmates to drop out of school (p. 243). Manson (2006) also notes that when it comes to retention and student achievement, retention damaged student self-esteem and retained children continue to decline in academic achievement over time compared with their non-retained students in reading (p. 243). With the numbers retained and the dropout rates increasing each year in North Carolina, negative imagery of Black males at every turn in the media, and suspensions for this group abound, it is no wonder that their self-esteem is being negatively affected.

Understanding what has already been researched on this topic, I seek to explore deeper meaning and invigorate change in the recruitment and retention of Black male teachers in K-12 education, hence, the hiring landscape in American schools. Understanding what has already been researched on this topic, I believe that this research is worth
conducting, as there are Black male students looking around the hallways of the schoolhouses hard-pressed to find a teacher who mirrors their image or cultural identity.

**Summary**

Chapter 2 illustrated through a review of the research on the topic that there has been substantial research on black males in the teaching profession. However, the scholarly literature does not give voice to the Black male teachers who are underrepresented in the public schools of North Carolina. This study aims to add to the body of knowledge that exists on Black males who join the teaching force. The findings will have significant, great implications for university and LEA recruitment practices in North Carolina and beyond.

In the next chapter, the research methodology for this study will be discussed. The chapter outlines the study’s approach, research questions, methodology, data collection, and data analysis. Issues of validity and reliability will be addressed, as will the limitations of the study. The study concludes with a discussion of ethical considerations and my subjectivity.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Female teachers represent the majority of the teaching force in the United States of America, with 80% of the teaching force being represented by White females. Daily, Public schools confront the challenges of providing quality education and experiences for all of their students. With Black male students disproportionately placed in special education classrooms, expelled from school and dropping out of school altogether, male teachers and role models are needed like never before (Chubbuck, 2004).

Male teachers are hard to come by. Black male teachers are even harder to come by. Despite some effort to get more males into K-12 teaching, the public schools in the United States continue to get more females. A national education study asserts that “Eighty-four percent of public school teachers are female. This is up from 82 percent in 2005, 74 percent in 1996, 71 percent in 1990 and 69 percent in 1986” (Feistritzer, 2011, p. 12).

Looking at the statistics on the average Black male student’s academic plight raises concerns about the underrepresentation of Black male teachers in education. Studies show that students of color need to see educators that look like them in the educational setting (Madsen & Mabokela, 2002). Diversity is important as students form opinions about themselves and the worlds in which they live. This study aimed to contribute to our understanding of what makes Black males choose teaching as a profession and offered insight into what is being done at the university and LEA levels to recruit Black males to the teaching profession.
This study contributed to the research by expanding our understanding of the recruitment process of Black male teachers by universities and LEAs by examining the study participants' pathways into teaching. I also aimed to gain understanding by giving voice to Black male teachers on their thoughts on the state of the Black male and explored whether or not the state of the Black male influenced their decision to join the teaching force. Ultimately, I hoped to inform recruitment and retention divisions of universities and LEAs in North Carolina.

**Research Questions**

The research questions that guided this study are:

1. Why do Black males join the teaching profession?
2. Why do Black males remain in the teaching profession?
3. What strategies do Local Education Agencies (LEAs) use to recruit Black males to the teaching profession?
4. What strategies do colleges and universities use to recruit Black males to the teaching profession?

**Research Design**

Unlike quantitative research that seeks to create sets of data which can be used to explain and interpret large-scale phenomena and patterns and which does that through numbers or some other quantifiable means, qualitative research has a different purpose. As its name suggests, qualitative research is interested in conducting in-depth studies of smaller populations and groups. Qualitative researchers do not seek to obtain data that can be applied across the board, but seek to find out as much as possible about a smaller sample or a smaller
phenomenon. Qualitative researchers do not use statistics. Instead, they observe, conduct interviews and surveys, and examine documents.

Patton (2002) cautions that qualitative methods are best when one desires to ask “questions about people’s experiences, inquire about the meaning people make of their experiences” (p. 33). A qualitative design was the best approach for the research questions because I aimed to capture the meaning Black male teachers make of their experiences entering the teaching profession. Additionally, this topic dictated qualitative methodology for the purpose of allowing for open-ended, naturalistic inquiry without predetermined constraints.

Qualitative research is a type of scientific research (Patton, 2002). In general terms, scientific research consists of an investigation that:

- seeks answers to a question
- systematically uses a predefined set of procedures to answer the question
- collects evidence
- produces findings that were not determined in advance
- produces findings that are applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study

Qualitative research shares these characteristics. Additionally, it seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves. Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular populations. It provides information about the “human” side of an issue – that is, the often-contradictory behaviors, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals. Qualitative methods are also
effective in identifying intangible factors, such as social norms, socioeconomic status, gender roles, ethnicity, and religion, whose role in the research issue may not be readily apparent (Patton, 2002). Gaining a rich and complex understanding of a specific social context or phenomenon typically takes precedence over eliciting data that can be generalized to other geographical areas or populations.

**An Interpretive Qualitative Study**

I conducted an interpretive qualitative research study as I sought to provide an understanding of the common experiences of the participants. This qualitative interpretive study gave voice to Black male teachers navigating their educational experiences by telling their individual stories. The study also sought to explain and understand the practices employed by local education agencies and universities to recruit Black male teachers to K-12 education and their experiences in doing so. The purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of Black male teachers who joined and have remained in the teaching profession and to gain insight into the strategies used to recruit them.

**Site Selection**

**Description of Wake County.** Founded in 1771, Wake County is home to eight institutions of higher learning. They include Meredith College, North Carolina State University, Campbell University's Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law, Peace College, Saint Augustine's College, Shaw University, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Wake Technical Community College. Wake County, North Carolina is an area frequently ranked as one of the nation’s best places to live and work. Centrally located in the Triangle area of North Carolina, Wake County is one of the fastest growing areas in
the nation and the second-most populous county in the state with approximately 975,000 residents. The County currently encompasses about 860 square miles, and is the center of the state government, with the Capitol Building, legislature, and many government offices located in Raleigh, the County seat. Wake County is a thriving community whose population has grown approximately 130% since 1990, 55% since 2000, and is forecasted to maintain substantial growth of approximately 23,000 new residents per year for the next few decades (Wakegov.com). Wake County is part of the Research Triangle Park, one of the nation’s largest planned research development communities. It has received national and international rankings and accolades from publications such as Money, Fortune and Time magazines as being one of the best places to live and work, best business climates, and best places to earn a world-class education, among others. Wake County is home to some of the world’s largest corporations as well as many start-up businesses. (Wakegov.com, 2015). Its twelve municipalities include Apex, Cary, Fuquay-Varina, Garner, Holly Springs, Knightdale, Morrisville, Raleigh, Rolesville, Wake Forest, Wendell and Zebulon.

Description of Wake County Public School System

Located in Wake County is a large school system called Wake County Public School System (WCPSS). Public education in Wake County is administered by the Wake County Public School System, the 16th largest public school district in the country with over 155,000 students. There are 20 high schools, 30 middle schools, 93 elementary schools, and 8 specialized schools. In addition, nine charter schools and 31 private schools are located in the county. Wake County is ranked the No. 1 school district in the country for certified teachers (Wakegov.com).
Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) employs over 18,000 staff and faculty to support more than 155,000 students. Their enrollment for the 2014-2015 school year was 155,184 students -- an increase of 1,884 children. 44.9 percent of its 10,060 teachers hold advanced degrees. Operating on a $1.3 billion budget, WCPSS is the largest school system in the state and the 16th largest in the nation. The student population has almost tripled since 1980 and as many as 20,000 additional children are expected in WCPSS classrooms by 2020 (Wcpss.net, 2015). It has a robust beginning teacher support program, beautiful school facilities and flexible school calendars.

**Description of North Carolina State University**

Not only does Wake County have one of the largest public schools systems in the nation, it also is home to one of the largest universities in the Carolinas. Founded on March 7, 1887, NC State University (NCSU) has an enrollment of more than 34,000 students. It has historical strengths in engineering, agriculture, life sciences, textiles and design and now offers 106 bachelor's degrees. The graduate school offers 104 master's degrees, 61 doctoral degrees, and a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine. NCSU is the largest university in the state and NC State has almost 8,000 employees, nearly 35,000 students, a $1.01 billion annual budget, and a $884 million endowment (Wikipedia, 2015). NC State is one of 16 campuses that constitute the University of North Carolina system. Each campus has a high degree of independence, but each submits to the policies of the UNC system Board of Governors. The 32 voting members of the Board of Governors are elected by the North Carolina General Assembly for four-year terms. For 2010 the Wall Street Journal surveyed recruiters and ranked NC State number 19 among the top 25 recruiter picks (Wikipedia, 2015).
Its College of Education was founded in 1948. 64% of its students receive their degrees on-time, making the College of Education second in the nation. It was designed for students with a drive to improve the field of education. The college has a strong research culture and dedicated faculty that inspires and guides students through teaching, advising and dissertation supervision. Its inquiry and practice reflect integrity, a commitment to social justice, and the value of diversity in a global community (Ced.ncsu.edu, 2015).

Description of Shaw University

Wake County is home to many institutions of higher education. One such institution is Shaw University. Founded as Raleigh Institute, it is a private liberal arts institution and historically Black university in Raleigh, North Carolina. Founded in 1865, it is the oldest HBCU (historically black college/university) in the Southern United States. Shaw University has a rich history as some of the first Black college–trained missionaries were Shaw graduates. Shaw has many “firsts as leaders” who have helped gain renown for the University as a producer of Black leaders (Shawu.edu, 2015).

The first HBCU of the south, Shaw University offer numerous undergraduate degree programs leading to the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, or Bachelor of Social Work. In addition, graduate level degrees are also offered leading to the Master of Divinity, the Master of Arts in Christian Education and the Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction - Early Childhood Education. Its accredited programs include kinesiotherapy, athletic training, social work, divinity, religious education, and teacher education (Shawu.edu, 2015).
Data Collection

To address the research questions of this study, I conducted interviews. “Interviews provide researchers with information about a phenomenon directly from those people who have experienced it and provide information about the participants’ feelings and opinions as it relates to their experiences” (Patton, 2002, p. 4). To this end, I conducted 9 interviews with Black male teachers in the Wake County Public School System. I conducted semi-structured interviews with 2 admissions and recruitment/retention personnel at both the university and LEA levels. Patton (2002) notes that interviews allow for open-ended questions and transcription, which may be reviewed by participants to ensure understanding and clarification of significant quotes, statements or sentences.

While I had a structured interview guide, I employed flexibility to explore additional questions based upon the responses of the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The interviews took place in a quiet setting such as an office over the phone. I set up the interview location based on the interviewee's specifications, by phone interview. The interviews lasted approximately thirty to sixty minutes each. Before each interview session the participants were reminded that the interviews were voluntary. They were also asked their permission to record. I closed each session by thanking the participants for their time and their responses.

Selection of Wake County Public School System Teacher Interviewees

Participants in this study were Black male teachers in the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS), administrators from the Recruitment and Retention Division of WCPSS, and recruitment personnel from a large university in North Carolina.
I selected nine Black male teachers with varying years of teaching experience. It was not necessary to collect data from everyone in the community in order to get valid findings. In qualitative research, only a sample (that is, a subset) of a population is selected for any given study. The study’s research objectives and the characteristics of the study population (such as size and diversity) determine which and how many people to select. I used purposive sample sizes that were often determined on the basis of theoretical saturation (the point in data collection when new data no longer brings additional insights to the research questions) as purposive sampling is most successful when data review and analysis are done in conjunction with data collection.

Accessibility was a factor in selecting the sites as I determined which subjects were able and willing to be interviewed. To solicit participation, I sent an explanation letter and an Informed Consent letter through electronic mail to WCPSS principals who have Black males teachers on their staff rosters. I sent out the letter to the principals of ten schools (2 elementary, 3 middle and 5 high schools) in the WCPSS requesting Black males teachers to participate in an interview about their pathway into the teaching profession, their experiences as a Black male teacher, and their perspectives on the profession. The letter included the date, time, school location, and my contact information with a “respond by” date. I followed up with any willing Black male teacher participants the same week for the study. I contacted the twenty teachers by electronic email (see Appendix A) and selected nine teachers to interview based on promptness of response.

Upon response, I selected nine Black male teachers to participate in an interview. The participants were selected by school level, years of experience, and availability. I followed up
with each respondent by letter. A consent form and list of the questions were provided to the participants in advance to allow for thoughtful responses to the questions and meaningful reflection prior to the actual interview. Patton (2002) stated that "standardized open-ended interviews consists of a set of questions carefully worded with the intention of taking each respondent through the same sequence and asking each respondent the same questions with essentially the same words" (p. 342).

With receipt of the signed consent forms, I conducted a pre-arranged phone interview. In instances of discomfort with that interview arrangements, I had pre-arranged alternative meeting locales within the Wake County Public School System but they were not requested or needed. All settings were quiet and private, as most conducive for the interview.

Selection of Wake County Public Schools Recruitment Interviewees

I worked with the WCPSS Director of the Recruitment and Retention Division to identify two persons to interview about the recruitment of Black male teachers into WCPSS. I provided a solicitation to interview letter by email and mail for the Director and any willing participant from the division. I also provided consent forms for participants involved, outlining the aim of the study and the requirements and expectations for participating in the study. Once two participants were identified, and all pertinent consent forms were provided, I arranged a date for the consenting participants to conduct the interviews, providing some guiding questions for meaningful reflection. Some of the interview questions included: How do you collaborate with colleges and universities to recruit teachers? What strategies are used by Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to recruit Black males to teach for WCPSS?
Selection of University Recruitment Interviewees

To inquire about the strategies used by colleges and universities in North Carolina to recruit Black males into the teaching profession, I aimed to conduct semi-structured interviews with 2 to 3 admissions and recruitment/retention personnel at two colleges or universities in Wake County. Due to the lack of response from the smaller university—to phone calls, messages and emails—I interviewed 2 admissions recruitment personnel from one large university. The interviews took place via recorded phone interviews. I set up each interview based on the interviewee's specifications. The interviews lasted approximately one hour each.

To initiate the interview process, I sent a solicitation letter to the recruitment and admissions offices of these major universities and colleges in the county, soliciting participants to interview. I provided a consent form for admissions officers and administration involved, as well as the purpose of the study.

Names were coded to protect identities with a pseudonym assigned to each participant. There were no foreseeable risks involved with this study. No procedures of the study should have produced anxiety, threatened, degraded, or been considered offensive. Electronic audio recordings via phone interviews were conducted and then transcribed by me. Patton (2002) emphasized that "the purpose of interviewing is to enter into the other person's perspective" (p. 341).

Data Analysis

I interviewed participants in this study until the point of saturation. Scholars in the field (Guba, 1978) place emphasis on saturation of data. Guba (1978) stresses that
researchers are to look for recurring regularities in the data. I, therefore, used a code-recode method to code the data in a meaningful way to "flesh out" the patterns that emerged. I took field notes that assisted in the coding. Information from all interviews and notes were coded for themes and sifted until the point of saturation. Transcription was verbatim for authenticity. I also conducted member checks. In qualitative research, a member check, also known as informant feedback or respondent validation, is a technique used by researchers to help improve the accuracy, credibility, validity, and transferability (also known as applicability, internal validity, or fittingness) of a study. Doing so provides respondents the opportunity to assess the adequacy of data and preliminary results as well as to confirm particular aspects of the data (Angen, 2000). These recordings were stored and locked in a file cabinet in my home office. Recordings will be destroyed after two years.

**Validity and Reliability**

Creswell (2007) noted that the qualitative researcher seeks "confirmability" rather than objectivity in establishing the value of the data. The reader must be able to "audit" the research process. I made explicit all methods in this study. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) also affirmed that qualitative research, unlike quantitative research, does not require generalizability or duplication of the results. I instead sought to confirm the data to lend credibility to its value. Multiple sources of data allowed me to do such.

Through rich, thick description of the subjects the reader is able to make judgments on the generalizability of the study. I generated in-depth accounts that present a lively picture of the participants' reality within the field of education. The rich, thick description enables the reader to determine how closely their situation matches this context and whether these
findings can be transferred. Therefore, interviews with Black males teachers in WCPSS, with recruitment administrations in WCPSS and with recruitment personnel in a large university in Wake County enabled me to collect data to richly describe the environment. Janesick (1994) declared that description is the cornerstone of qualitative research. Because qualitative researchers are storytellers, through clear description of the culture, the context and the process of the research, the reader can follow the pathway of the researcher, and the two share the construction of reality coming to similar conclusions in the analysis of research (Erlandson et al., 1993). To establish trustworthiness in consistency, I employed Kreftings’ (1991) “Code-Recode” procedure. Essentially, I coded a set of data, waited two weeks, and returned to recode the same data set and then compared the results.

I developed a database to organize and house all notes, interview recordings, tables, graphs and school documents. The matrix within the database provided for categorization. This categorization of data allowed me to analyze and examine timelines and themes. It also served to assist me in understanding multiple meanings.

**Ethical Issues**

In qualitative research, ethical dilemmas may arise in the collection of data and in the dissemination of the findings. Merriam (2002) asserted that the researcher who aims to yield a good study should take precautions to protect the fidelity of the research process. Creswell (2007) outlined various safeguards to protect the process and the participants’ rights. To protect the participants’ rights I:

1. Clearly articulated the research objectives, verbally and in writing;
2. Confirmed receipt of written permission to conduct this qualitative, interpretive study was obtained from the participants;

3. Obtained an approval form from the North Carolina State University Institutional Review Board;

4. Ensured that the participants were informed of all data collection devices and activities

5. Made available to all participants verbatim interview transcriptions and written report interpretations;

6. Considered first the participants’ rights and wishes when reporting the data; and

7. Ensured that the final decision regarding anonymity rested with the participant.

To protect the process and to guard against any ethical dilemmas, I (1) sought the approval from the dissertation committee, LEA administration and university administration to conduct the study, (2) acquired informed consent from the Institutional Review Board, (3) conducted member checks, (4) provided verbatim transcription, and (5) used pseudonyms for the participants to protect their identities.

Written approval from the North Carolina State University Institutional Review Board was obtained prior to the start of this study. I foresaw no risks to the participants of this study. All information that could identify a participant was deleted and pseudonyms were assigned for confidentiality purposes. I obtained individual informed consent from participants. The participants were told:

- the purpose of the research
• what was expected of a research participant, including the amount of time likely to be required for participation
• expected risks and benefits, including psychological and social
• the fact that participation was voluntary and that one could withdraw at any time with no negative repercussions
• how confidentiality would be protected
• the name and contact information of the local lead investigator to be contacted for questions or problems related to the research
• the name and contact information of an appropriate person to contact with questions about one’s rights as a research participant (usually the chair of the local ethics committee overseeing the research)

Limitations of the Study

I chose to employ research methods that had a degree of limitation. Interviews lent a great deal of information but had weaknesses. One such limit was that researcher depended on the participant to tell the truth.

Delimitations of this study concerned the boundary of the problem, the individuals that were studied, and the setting of the study. This study considered the perceptions of others within the teaching profession concerning the career pathway and plight of individual Black male teachers. Delimitations were choices the researcher made to limit the study. Because I had 20 potential interviewees, I chose to interview 9 because I needed to keep the study manageable.
Limitations are factors beyond the researchers control that keep the researcher from being able to conduct the research as planned. I was not able to reach Shaw University faculty to conduct an interview despite many attempts to connect with them. Other limitations of this study included researcher bias, and the effect of the environment on the responses of the subjects, as well as the role of memory and perception to recreate history. I was committed to the belief that Black male teachers make an impact by being present in the classrooms of America.

Another limitation was that I had to conduct phone interviews instead of face-to-face interviews. Face-to-face interviews would have allowed me to read body language and to connect even more with my study participants. I would also have had the benefit of seeing them in their natural environment.

This study resulted in rich descriptions of the career pathways described by the individual Black male teachers. It was assumed that the participants offered honest responses throughout this study. In qualitative research the rich data resulting from this study aims to inform local education agencies, colleges, high schools, and future researchers on motivators for Black male teachers to enter and remain in the teaching workforce.

**Subjectivity Statement**

Qualitative research is subjective because the primary instrument is the researcher (Merriam, 2002). To be inspired is a pleasure but to inspire is an honor. I have spent my entire life in the inspirational and empowering space. To this end, the very essence of who I am is deeply rooted in the consistent plight to ensure that the disparities in educational systems are acknowledged, addressed and remedied.
As a professional who has dedicated over 16 years as a soldier in the army for educational opportunities for all students, I have witnessed many of the inequalities and recognize the disparity in the efforts made to ensure the overall preservation and retention of black male educators. After working as a teacher, as well as an Assistant Principal, my passion and purpose to address gender disparity has grown. As an advocate for equity I can do no less than champion the cause for equity. As the wife of a black husband and the mother of black two black sons, idle is not an option. The fact remains that although I am black and my family is black, I have never witnessed a black male educator in my lifetime.

The effects of inequality are profound and utterly discouraging. To this end, black males and young males of color are being suspended at alarming rates and school districts are left to figure out why? Not only is the absence of black male educators profound but it is also discouraging. If the very system that is established to cultivate our minds does not find necessity in ensuring that equality is abundant, how then are our views of the world to reflect equity?

We are also forced to consider the alarming rates in which black male students are being suspended from school. Is there a parallel that can be drawn between the high rate of dropouts and suspension and the major demographic selected and trained to provide oversight of black male students? I stand firmly on the belief that black male students would benefit from having the presence of black male educators who play an active and significant role in their lives as well as their educational careers. This vital factor cannot be optional if we expect to yield the results that we so desire from the generations of students to come.
Accordingly, I hoped to collect, analyze, and present data in such a manner that both myself and the reader would be able to draw conclusions and come close to observing reality as it truly existed.

Summary

This chapter provided a view into the methods that were used in this study. This study used one primary source of data: interviews. I discussed the appropriateness of the design and the method of analysis. Lastly, the chapter concluded with a discussion on ethical issues of the study and possible limitations of the study. In the next chapter, I will discuss the findings of the study.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Reported in this chapter are findings from semi-structured interviews conducted with Black male teachers who teach in a large school district in North Carolina. Also reported are findings from semi-structured interviews conducted with two LEA recruiters of a large school district in North Carolina and two interviews with college recruitment personnel in the North Carolina College System. Patton (2002) emphasizes that "the purpose of interviewing is to enter into the other person's perspective" (p. 341). Twenty Black male teachers were offered the opportunity to participate in the study. Nine Black male teachers participated in this study.

Chapter 4 contains an overview of the participants involved in the study. Chapter 4 also includes a detailed analysis using the information collected from the 9 standard interview questions for the Black male teacher participants (see Appendix E), the 6 standard interview questions for the LEA recruitment administration (see Appendix G) and the 6 standard interview questions for the college recruitment administrators (see Appendix F), used in the study. Under each theme, I described the pattern and added counts or percentages in a narrative format (Creswell, 2004). The chapter contains the responses each participant provided for the corresponding interview question as well as discussions on the emerging themes. To conclude, Chapter 4 provides a summary of the findings of the study.

The data collected through the interviews helped in answering the four research questions designed to gain an understanding of the perspectives of Black male teachers in
education and how they are recruited. The data was organized into categories and themes, which captured the general ideas the participants expressed throughout the interviews.

This chapter uncovered positive developments such as family influence, pride in community activism/social responsibility, a keen desire to empower youth to navigate life, perspectives of teacher preparation programs as experienced by Black male teachers and a desire to learn more about them. It also discussed drawbacks, such as frustration, isolation, and monetary concerns. The data in this chapter also revealed an unspoken burden Black male teachers feel to help Black youth to “navigate the system”.

**Research Questions and Thematic Analysis**

The data analysis procedures began once the interview data was converted from audio recordings to transcribed text. Data reduction began with reading and re-reading the transcribed data. Themes began to emerge with the initial reading of each transcript. Next, a code-recode procedure was utilized for the identification of emergent themes.

The development of themes, as described by the voices of the participants, provides thick descriptions of their career pathways and experiences. The pages that follow present the experiences as expressed by the participants and are the major findings that emerged in accord with each theme. The quotes from the participants are presented to allow the reader an opportunity to draw on the reflection of thought given to the participants’ responses. I was aware that the opposite response of the majority of the responses can be significant (Yin, 1993) and, therefore, included several outliers in the study.

The data were reviewed multiple times to reduce, amend, and revise the themes for a
more clear and accurate portrayal of the findings. Data are reported as they relate to each of the study's research questions. I employed inductive reasoning in this interpretive qualitative study to interpret data from the personal interviews with teacher and recruiter participants.

In this chapter, research question data were gathered for each group and compared/contrasted, as applicable, for each individual research question. The presentation of the data follows the order of the research questions. Subheadings identify the major themes and the data reported for each participant group. The four research questions guiding this study are:

1. Why do Black males join the teaching profession?
2. Why do Black males remain in the teaching profession?
3. What strategies do Local Education Agencies (LEAs) use to recruit Black males to the teaching profession?
4. What strategies do colleges and universities use to recruit Black males to the teaching profession?

**Participants**

This qualitative interpretive study explored the perspectives and experiences of Black male teachers answering the call to teach in North Carolina Public Schools by employing homogenous purposeful sampling to select the participants. Homogenous purposeful sampling is intentionally selecting participants of the same or similar in nature and uniform throughout (Patton, 1990). Homogenous purposeful sampling is used when conducting a study on a specific phenomenon to gain an understanding of the collective (Patton, 1990).
Therefore, Black male teachers in the target school system were purposefully sampled for the study.

Among the 13 interviewees, there were two distinct groups: (a) Black male teachers and (b) recruiters. Nine Black male teachers completed the interviews about their perspectives of teaching in North Carolina Public Schools. Four interview participants included two LEA recruiters from a large school district in North Carolina and two university recruiters from a large university in North Carolina. The LEA and college/university recruiter interviews each contained six questions that focused on the recruitment procedures of Black males into the teaching profession.

Among the teacher participants, there were a total of two elementary teachers, three middle school teachers, three high school teachers, and one alternative school teacher (see Table 1). The nine teacher participants who volunteered for the study responded to a series of demographic questions during the first part of the interview. The demographic information included: professional grade level, teaching subject area, and years of experience.
Table 1 summarizes the teaching grade level of each of the teacher participants.

Table 1

*Total Interview Participants (n=13)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional/Grade Level</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEA Recruitment</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Recruitment</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 describes the years of experience of the teacher participants. There was an equitable representation of experience among the teacher participants included in this study. I found this to be valuable in looking at the recruitment and retention of Black male teachers in the target school system.
Table 2

*Years in Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Years</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>3 of 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>2 of 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-17</td>
<td>1 of 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>3 of 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 summarizes the teaching certification areas of each of the teacher participants.

Table 3

*Teacher Participant Subject Area*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question One

Why do Black males join the teaching profession?

To explore the first research question, I prepared and analyzed data that examined the thoughts and expressions of the participants gleaned from their personal interview transcripts. Four interview questions were asked to discern from teacher participants what factors influenced their decision to join the teaching profession. The first question asked participants to reflect on when they were initially introduced to the teaching profession and provided information as to what they recall as reasons considered for joining. After coding the interview transcripts, I recoded them three weeks later for reliability and validity. For the first research question, I identified six major themes:

1. Relationship with a mentor
2. Desire to be a role model
3. Family value and emphasis on education
4. Feelings of social responsibility
5. Necessity
6. Pathway to a parallel career ambition
Figure 1 provides a quick glance at the themes that emerged from the participant interviews in response to research question one.

Table 4 summarizes the six themes that emerged from participant interviews in response to research question one.
Table 4

Why Do Black Males Join the Teaching Profession?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with a mentor</td>
<td>9 of 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to be a role model</td>
<td>5 of 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family values and emphasis on education</td>
<td>4 of 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of social responsibility</td>
<td>3 of 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathway to a parallel career</td>
<td>3 of 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Necessity</td>
<td>2 of 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Relationship with a Mentor**

Mentoring emerged as a salient theme, and all interviewees discussed how it impacted their decision to become a teacher. Mentoring impacted the participants in a variety of ways, as they comprised of teachers, coaches and family members. A mentor can be a person or friend who guides a less experienced person by building trust and modeling positive behaviors. An effective mentor understands that his or her role is to be dependable, engaged, authentic, and tuned into the needs of the mentee. The Oxford Dictionary (www.oxforddictionaries.com) defines a mentor as “an experienced or trusted advisor”. Evidence presented for each of the nine Black male teacher participants showed that 100%
demonstrated that they espoused a desire to honor the mentors who impacted them by, in turn, giving back.

A big take-away in examining the data from the interviews with the Black male teacher participants was the significance of the connections that they had with their own mentors. These mentors comprised of teachers, coaches, and family members. A few laudable quotes from the interviews include,

*Interview Question 1: Why did you become a teacher?*

*BMT #6 (I 1):* That comes from…I was raised by my grandmother for the first seven years of my life, and she was in education. And so just seeing her push her way through. She was never a teacher but she did all the other jobs, whether it was a teacher’s assistant, whether it was a secretary, and I just seen the dedication and education that she put in. And it kind of—it really jumpstarted me to really say, okay, I can do that, too, or take it to the next level.

*Interview Question 2: Why do Black males join the teaching profession?*

*BMT #4 (I 2):* Because they want to help their community and because they want to show themselves as an example of a good Black male.

*BMT #7 (I 2):* My dad is a dentist, but he’s always worked in the city of Detroit, and he’s always worked in what some would consider—and I use this term loosely—the hood. And so, he’s always been a guy to just give back to the community and serve the people.

*Interview Question 5: Who inspired you?*

*BMT #3 (I 5):* I can say it was a combination of seeing my mother do it and seeing the
impact and influence she had. And I just think other Black leaders before me kind of just inspired me to be a community activist and a lot of it starts with education.

**BMT #5 (I 5):** I think my Dad, originally. And he had this thing for—well, he did. He had this thing for men being mentors to African American men. He had this hierarchy where he thought teachers were the top of the line, especially again for African Americans. I mean that was a great honor to be a teacher, and so he inspired me a lot. He inspired me to also go to college and make college a priority. And as far as really getting into teaching history, I have, oh, my gosh, I have a—oh, I know. Well, my professor, his name was Dr. W--, and he was famous for winning a Pulitzer for Washington Post for an editorial on Watergate. And he—African American professor, and he was just out of sight and the greatest mentor I had in college, I think. And even though I was a history major, I wasn’t sure if I was going to actually teach until he came along and he solidified that.

While the above examples in the data highlighted the impact of having a mentor, one interesting response came from a Black male teacher participant who stated that he wished he had a mentor in high school:

**Interview Question 1: Why did you become a teacher?**

**BMT 9 (I 1):** I started looking over my life and saying when I was in school, I feel like a lot of things could have been a lot different for me. And some of the rough patches that I did have over the years could have been different if I had a black male who would have pulled me back and said, like, what are you doing? Stop doing that. Stop hanging with that group, or stop giving your teachers a hard time. I didn’t really have that in school. I had one black male teacher that I can think of off the top of my head when I was in high school and he wasn’t even one of my teachers. He was one of the teachers who helped out with the behavior kids. So, and I wasn’t a major behavior problem, so I very rarely saw him. So, I went into education originally
looking to get a job, just to be honest, but then later on I realized I need to be that change that I want to see within the world, I guess. And I feel I could be a lot more beneficial to a lot of Black kids if I’m in the classroom.

Desire to Be a Role Model

In alignment with all participants expressing that having a mentor positively impacted their desire to become a teacher, 67% reported that they were attracted to the profession because they saw it as a way to give back and serve youth…to become a mentor themselves. This speaks directly to the power of mentorship. With an understanding and recognition that far too often the unfortunate narratives that depict Black men in America, many participants saw it as necessary to be teachers. Teaching allowed them to be role models who could not only provide accurate accounts of Black men but also serve as a vehicle for positive narratives to be told, honored and taught. Exemplary quotes from the interviews include,

*BMT #2 (I 2):* I was a camp counselor for a whole summer, for three summers in high school. So, things like that...just seeing the impact that—and the relationship I had with the kids was great.

*BMT #4 (I 1):* I became a teacher to become a role model for others, for the students.

*BMT 5 (I 1):* I had two things I wanted to do or two loves in my life. I found out that I really love working with young people and that I really love history. And that just came easy, to become a history teacher.

*BMT 7 (I 1):* I did some internships working with the kids and working with some students in the town that I was going to college in, and I really enjoyed it.

*BMT 9 (I 1):* I enjoy being around the kids. And on top of all that, I started looking
back over my life and saying when I was in school, I feel like a lot of things could have been different for me. And some of the rough patches that I did have over the years could have been different if I had a black male who would have pulled me back and said, like, what are you doing? Stop doing that. Stop hanging with that group, or stop giving your teacher a hard time. I didn’t really have that in school. I had one black male teacher that I can think of off the top of my head when I was in high school, and he wasn’t even one of my teacher. He was on the teacher who helped out with the behavior kids. So, and I wasn’t a major behavior problem, so I very rarely saw him. So, I went into the education originally looking to get a job, just to be honest, but then, later on, I realized that I need to be that change that I want to see within the world, I guess. I and I feel that I could be a lot more beneficial to a lot of black kids if I’m in the classroom.

**Family Values and Emphasis on Education**

The next most prevalent response, family values and emphasis on education, was mentioned by four out of nine (44%) of the black male teacher participants. What is the value of education? The edification of a people is directly correlated to the education consumed. To recognize education can be the single most important factor determining prosperity. Many Black male teachers expressed this pride and felt that becoming an educator was not an optional because they recognized the need for quality instructors and providers. The sense was that we could continue to look at many factors that affect the quality of education but that they must also assume responsibility for their commitment and the value placed on education. The following are a few illustrative quotes,

*BMT 1 (I 1):* I highly valued education all my life. So, teaching was a natural progression for me.
BMT 3 (I 1): Well, my mother has taught for 35 years, so she kind of was influential. I just saw her kind of leading my example...

BMT 6 (I 1): I was raised by my grandmother for the first seven years of my life, and she was in education. And so just seeing her...it really jumpstarted me to really say, okay, I can do that, too, or take it to the next level.

Feelings of Social Responsibility

Not only did the Black male participants express that family ties were salient in their choice to become teachers but they also felt compelled by a sense of social responsibility. For some, social responsibility begins and ends with those who are directly connected with them. For others, social responsibility is an after-thought. However, social responsibility is and always has been an intricate part of my genetic makeup. It has always been about bringing balance to our communities. I never believed it to be optional and it was not optional for the teacher participants in this study. They recognized that education was the pillar of hope and promise for the empowerment of the generations to come. They believe in the old saying, “It takes a village to raise a child.” The act of cultivating productive citizens they believed was a collaborative effort with community members and stakeholders. They acknowledged that we were all responsible for paying rent for the consumption of the resources utilized while here, and that students were the cornerstone of this paradigm. Three participants shared that it is because of this sense of social responsibility that they are teachers today. One explained,

BMT 1 (I 1): I became a teacher because I see education as a civil rights issue.

Two others stated,
BMT 7 (I 1): I developed a love for it and teaching kids and especially helping minority students as well. That was a passion of mine. That’s easily become one of my passions, is really helping minority students in school.  

BMT 9 (I 1): I feel like I could be more beneficial to a lot of Black kids if I’m in the classroom.  

When asked, “Why do Black males join the teaching profession?” six of the nine Black male teacher participants (67%) communicated a desire to give back to the Black community through service and mentoring. A couple of illustrative quotes:  

BMT 3 (I 2): I think that as a Black male, we all have a desire to help others out, especially our own. And due to societal things that have kind of affected and diminished the black community, we feel as though there may not be as many black fathers out there nurturing Black males and they need to see teachers that look like them…within the same predicament. So, we just have a way of giving back, helping the next generation and thinking about posterity.  

BMT 4 (I 2): Because they want to help their community and they want to show themselves as an example of a good Black male.  

BMT 6 (I 2): From my perspective, I know I—once I figured, okay, this is what I want to do, I joined for the fact that I didn’t see anyone really like me. And as a Black male growing up in a poverty school, you don’t really see the males. You don’t see males anywhere, and if you do see the males, they’re more—they’re Caucasian. But, you don’t see anybody that looks like you. So, I took it as, okay, if I didn’t see anyone, I want to give these kids someone they can say, okay, I see someone just like me. I can be just as successful as they are.  

More in-depth reasoning was voiced by two of the Black male teacher participants,
citing the unique relationship between the Black male and the Black community. Each explained,

_BMT 7 (I 2):_ I think Black males in general, they get into things that help promote giving back, if that makes sense. A lot of African Americans, in my experience, have gone into fields like social sciences, education, things to help give back to the community. I just recently read an article, I don’t know how off-base the article was, but they just talked about how the majority of Black people enter into undergraduate degrees they usually kid of do like social sciences and teaching. But, I think that, you know, as a Black person, you have a pride in the community, especially a Black person who comes from predominantly White areas, you just have a pride in your community and you want to give back. Because that was the message that was given to me. My dad is a dentist, but he’s always worked in the city of Detroit, and he’s always worked in what some would consider—and I use this term loosely—the hood. And so, he’s always been a guy to just give back to his community and serve people and serve people. So, I think that’s translated into my life as well, and I think that it might hold true for a lot of other African Americans, especially African American males. Because growing up as an African American male, I think our experience is very unique in that we have to deal with a lot of unique circumstances coming up in public schools or going to colleges, especially if its predominantly while colleges. You have a very unique perspective, so I guess that was kids of long answer, but that’s—yeah.

_BMT 9 (I 2):_ I think a lot of Black males join the teaching profession for, I guess, similar to the second reason why I said I’m doing which is they want to—they see that there is a need. And you got a lot of things going on in the world right now where a lot of Black kids are struggling, and it mainly starts in schools. And a lot of Black males—well, not a lot. Let me that that back. The Black males who join education, they see that there’s a problem. Here’s the root of the problem. Let me go back to
help and fix that problem. I think that’s really what it is, or they see themselves as, let me go back and be the person I never saw within the classroom. So, they try to be that particular person to go back and help out and so on and so forth. I think that’s honestly why a lot of them join. I don’t necessarily know if that’s the right answer all the time, but I think that’s why a lot of them join because they want to go back and help the kids who they see themselves—they see a lot of themselves in those kids. So, they want to go back and help those kids.

Pathway to a Parallel Career

In addition to the previous responses, one individual added that teaching was a good pathway to coaching, being a huge sports fan and athlete. My own experience has taught me that the best teachers teach in a coaching capacity. Coaches are recognized for their innate ability to motivate other toward a specific action or the acquisition of specific skill sets. Teaching and coaching are arguably executed with the intent to take a person or group of people from one body of knowledge or skill set to another level. In each case the intent is that the group would be better off than when they began. So, naturally, three of the Black male teacher participants mentioned pathways to parallel careers such as coaching as a motivating factor to become a teacher. Three exemplary quotes include,

BMT 1 (I 2): From what I’ve been able to gather, a lot of Black males join the teaching profession as a pathway to something else, usually school administration.

BMT 2 (I 2): Oh, man. That’s a good question. That’s kind of difficult because only 2 percent of all teachers are Black males. A lot of times we join it because—a lot of the coaches, maybe because they like to coach and you’ve got to be a teacher in order to coach nowadays or they might have a teacher they had growing up that might have impacted them. They want to go into education that way. Because I didn’t see any
Black male teachers until I got to [University], not any Black male core teachers. I had a Black male PE teacher and that was it. That was in middle school. I didn’t have any Black science or history teachers or math teachers or English teachers.

**BMT 7 (I 2):** I became a teacher almost on accident. I initially wanted to become a dentist. My father is a dentist, and that just wasn’t something I was completely interested in. And I start—in college I did some internships working with kids and working with some students in the town that I was going to college in, and I really enjoyed it. I thoroughly enjoyed it. I also wanted to be a football coach, so I knew that would be a good pathway to become a football coach is to start teaching and then I can coach. And that’s—because I’m a huge athlete, a huge sports fan and athlete.

**Financial Necessity**

I have watched counterparts in corporate careers climb the ladder relentlessly with increases in pay, notoriety, and quality of life. The absence of Black males teachers demonstrates the disparity in this sector. In addition to what many refer to as a lack of upward mobility, the ever-present stigma of a lack of success is also associated with Black male teachers. While six participants offered a desire to give back to the Black community and youth, two participants responded that Black males do not enter the profession. Two participants made it known that they remained out of financial necessity. The exemplary quotes are,

**BMT 8 (I 2):** Well, out of necessity. I was just told by one of my advisors that he had a job for me, but he didn’t tell me what the job was. He sent me to a small town in North Carolina…and told me…he gave me the address and [said] go for this interview. And low and behold, it was a teaching job.
**BMT 9 (I 2):** In all honesty, my original reason for going—I guess studying education at all was—I’m not going to sit here and lie and make it sound like it was this noble cause and [I] wanted to change the world. Honestly, when I graduated from high school, it was 2008. And that’s when the recession hit and I remember thinking, I don’t want to go—I don’t want to major in something that I’m not going to be able to find a job in.

To elicit Black teacher participants’ perceptions of their relationships and influences in deciding to become teachers, they were asked, “Why inspired you?” Once all responses were analyzed, they were categorized into two themes based on participant responses: Parental/Family Influence and Teacher/Mentor/Coach Influence.

**Parent/Family Influence**

Out of the nine Black male teacher participants, seven (78%) identified themselves as persons who were inspired by a parent/grandparent or family member. Again, most of the participants were raised to value education and what it did for their communities and legacies. They did not take lightly the need for their presence in the schools. A few responses reflective of this view are,

**BMT 2 (I 2):** My great grandmother was a teacher. Aunts were teachers. So, things like that coming from an older family of educators. My immediate family didn’t go to college, but my grandmother, great grandmother, went to a teacher’s school—actually, Bowie Teacher’s College. But it’s now Bowie State. And, so, she went there and got her teaching degree, so she inspired me to give back and work with kids and that nature.

**BMT 3 (I 2):** I can say it was a combination of seeing my mother do it and seeing the
impact and influence she had.

BMT 5 (I 2): I think my dad, originally. And he has this thing for—well, he did. He had this thing for men being mentors to African-American men. He had this hierarchy where he thought teachers were the top of the line, especially, again, for African-Americans. I mean, that was a great honor to be a teacher, and so he inspired me a lot. He inspired me also to go to college and make college a priority.

BMT 8 (I 2): Wow, it’s a few folks. First of all, my mother has inspired me throughout my life. My grandmother. My grandfather, who was a civil rights attorney in Charleston, South Carolina. My family members that have all been educators in Mississippi and Chicago. So, there are a few folks that inspire me.

BMT 9 (I 2): I guess I would say more my dad. He was—I guess my dad was really just trying to help me find a good profession that I will be able to work in and have stability and those things. So, my dad kind of inspired me to go into teaching.

Seven teacher participants (78%) also indicated that their teachers, mentors, and coaches inspired them. An illustrative quote is,

BMT 5 (I 5): As far as really getting into teaching history, I have, oh, my gosh, I have a—oh, I know. Well, my professor, [name], and he was famous for winning a Pulitzer for Washington Post for an editorial on Watergate. And he [was an] African American professor, and was just out of sight. And the greatest mentor I had in college...

Sub-themes Emerge: Civil Rights, Black Female Influence, and Identity

As the teacher participants grappled with what motivated them to be educators, the themes discussed were consistent and repetitive. However, as I reviewed the data, other themes became apparent. Three sub-themes emerged from these overarching themes: Civil
Rights, Black Female Influence, and Identity. Notable in the responses is the consistent mention of the influence of Black female teachers and administrators as mentors and guides by 44% of the Black male teacher participants. Five of the nine teachers (55%) referenced civil rights as motive to pursue the teaching profession. Four of the nine teachers (44%) expressed appreciation for the mentoring they received from Black females who impacted their career journeys in one way or another.

Civil Rights

While many of the participants stopped short at feeling a level of social responsibility, several of the Black male teacher participants prescribed a deeper meaning to their choice of vocation. For these participants, being considered part of something that was once denied to them was both pivotal and central to their resolve to educate youth. Civil rights were emphasized by five Black male teacher participants during the course of this study. For these individuals, working tirelessly to ensure that students, especially Black male students, do not fall through the cracks, as they navigate school and life, was paramount.

*BMT 3 (I 5):* And I just think other Black leaders before me kind of just inspired me to be a community activist and a lot of it starts with education. So, like Martin Luther King and Malcolm X and just seeing their dedication to just change...I think many of that, the transformation, is rooted in education.

*BMT 5 (I 5):* I think my dad, originally. And he had this thing for—well, he did. He had this thing for men being mentors to African-American men. He had this hierarchy where he thought teachers were the top of the line, especially, again, for African-Americans. I mean, it was a great honor to be a teacher, and so he inspired me a lot.
He inspired me to go to college and make college a priority.

BMT 7 (I 5): My dad inspired me to just serve people. He never directly said you should be a teacher. He just said, you know, you got to make sure that you do for people and you serve people and you lead through service.

BMT 8 (I 5): My grandfather who was a civil rights attorney in Charleston, South Carolina.

BMT 9 (I 5): Who inspired me to go more into education, I guess would be Carter G. Woodson. I read a book when I was in high school, “Mis-Education of the Negro,” and at the time, when I was in high school, I understood some of it. But as I got older and every time I go back and reference it and every time I go back and look at it, I notice—I pick up more things here and there along the way. And in terms of going into teaching, wanting to go back and help and realizing it’s not always about the money. Like, money comes and goes...Things like that, that I really learned and picked up by reading “Mis-Education of the Negro” from Carter G. Woodson. I would say that he was definitely a big inspiration in having me, you know what? Go back. Help out.

Black Female Influence

Being a mentor is just as important as having one. A mentor can be beneficial for the continued progress of the social, emotional and educational knowledge acquired in the workplace. After all, sometimes we all need encouragement, empathy and direction. Accordingly, another interesting finding that emerged was the influence of Black women on the participants—the extent to which the Black females in their professional lives served as mentors and engaged them in education is significant.
Interview question: Who inspired you?

BMT 1 (I 5): My mom first.

BMT 2 (I 5): And not just the male teachers, I didn’t have too many male teachers, but I had some good female teachers. They always sparked my interest in a variety of things and what it meant to my, just my love for learning...

BMT 3 (I 5): As far as males, there was only one or two of those, but we did have several Black females. And that was one of the things where I went to the Black school and things like that just to feel connected to the Black experience and be able to be taught by a majority of Black teachers that looked like me and really cared about me.

BMT 6 (I 5): I had—besides my grandmother, I had two teachers in high school. One was a math teacher and that’s why I chose to teach math. She just had this aura about her in class. It was just—she was a no-nonsense type of teacher. It’s really hard to explain her, but she was always prepared. She was always on it. Any question you had, she answered in a way that made you think instead of her just giving you the answer. And that just drew me closer to math. And then I had another teacher who, she had the same just attitude, she came in and it was about, okay, we’re about the business here. Like let’s get this done. And throughout, she showed that, yes, I can be a teacher. Yes, I can be a friend. Yes, I can be a confidante, but when you are in my class, this is about business. And those teachers I actually still keep in contact with today... Both were African American females.

Identity

The notion that Black female colleagues were influences on the teacher participants reinforced another theme that emerged from the data. Also notable in the responses is the consistent references to identity by the Black male teacher participants. As I have walked the
halls of schools over the years as both advocate and a parent, it has become apparent with each passing year that the vast majority of those who teach are not Black males. This paints a portrait of the truths of isolation that many Black male educators feel.

A factor that is not often discussed is the sense of isolation that Black males experience in their communities by selecting a job as an educator. Many see it as a career with little promise. Where is the support for Black males in education and who can they look to find a sense of belonging? If we continue to isolate Black male perspective and his ability to teach future generations, we erase a valuable perspective and tremendous insight that could enhance the quality of education for students of all ethnicities.

Many participants remarked on the absence of Black male teachers in the classroom while growing up and the value in being able to look out and identify with someone who looked like them. Below are some supporting extracts:

_BMT 2 (I 2): Because I didn’t have any Black male teachers until I got to Temple, not any Black male core teachers. I had a Black male P.E. teacher and that was it. That was in middle school. I didn’t have any Black science or history or math teacher or English teachers. My first Black core teachers, I call them, you know, core subject was English, Dr. (name), at Temple._

_BMT 3 (I 2): And due to societal things that have kind of affected and diminished the Black community, we feel as though there may not be as many Black fathers out there nurturing Black males and they need to see teachers that look like them and within the same predicament._

_BMT 3 (I 5): And that was one of the things where I went to the Black school and things like that just to feel connected to the Black experience...I think just being in_
that environment, they teach you how to navigate and to be successful. So, they’ve experienced certain things as a Black man dealing with society and things of that nature.

*BMT 4 (I 9): I think I’m a good teacher, and I think I am that role model for people to see a good Black man.*

*BMT 7 (I 5): So all—the most influence I’ve gotten were from Black people. And I tell people, I feel like if I had an opportunity to go back to maybe an HBCU, I think I would have done so now in hindsight looking back, because the Black people, the professional Black people in my life always motivate me to go further and to do more. Whereas when I was in my, doing my undergraduate degree, which was not a Black college, it was—I felt like I was floundering at times, and I didn’t get a lot of advice or good advice that would lead me in the right direction.*

**Interview with LEA Recruitment Administration**

*Interview Question: What challenges do you face in the recruitment of Black males in your school system?*

To explore the first research question, I also prepared and analyzed data that examined the thoughts and expressions of the LEA recruitment participants. This data was gleaned from their personal interview transcripts. Four interview questions were asked to discern from LEA recruiter participants what challenges they face in recruiting Black males to join the teaching profession. After coding the interview transcripts, I recoded them three weeks later for reliability and validity. For the first research question, I identified three major themes:

1. Black male shortage
2. Testing Troubles
3. Dwindling Numbers across U.S. teacher education programs

Black Male Shortage

Echoing the sentiments of the college/university recruiters, the LEA recruitment administrator also pointed out that the shortage of Black males, in general, is a challenge in recruiting them into the teaching profession. Due to lack of exposure to career fairs and educational options, many Black males are undecided majors upon entering. There are few programs that provide Black males with introductory lessons and information to assist them in making a sound career choice in adulthood. There are countless accounts of Black students who are not joining the rod raisin of teaching because they do not know that is an option for them. This must change.

LRT 1: I—honestly, the first thought that pops in my mind is that that’s sort of a simple question in some ways and that’s that there’s just not enough African-American males of any demographic that are entering the education field. So, I think programs like our Future Teachers that we reference and several of the other internal programs we have, those are designed to kind of grown our own, if you will.

An illuminating finding in the research was revealed with the following quote. The LEA recruiter disclosed that even at the HBCUs (historically black colleges and universities) where they expect to see more Black male representation, that they see more non-minority representation than African-American.

LRT 2: Even say, for instance, at like a Howard University or something along those lines which is considered one of the cream of the crop HBCU institutions that are out
there, you go to their education fair and I’m not going to say it’s predominantly white, but it’s almost 50-50 in there. You know, where you’re going there, and I know everybody goes there with the hopes of increasing minority candidate numbers, which you can, because they have some very bright students at Howard. They really do. But when you get into the fair and you start seeing almost every other nationality except African-American. It’s like, wow, what’s going on with this?

Testing Troubles

Some new insight into the challenges facing the large target school system in its recruitment of Black males was the testing troubles among recruits. According to the data examined, another hurdle for recruiters tended to be getting a passing score on the teacher exam required to become certified. Certified status affects teacher pay. The recruiter participants acknowledged that the very system used to train Black males to be educators simultaneously expected to see those potential teachers adversely affected.

LRT 2: Yeah, I can add something that’s pretty profound in that when it comes to the testing, actually, what we are seeing is a number of students that may want to get into the school of education into our institutions, but when it comes to the testing that is required, Praxis testing, depending on the certification area that they are going into, we are finding that a lot of them are not being able to pass the testing. So, when they don’t or when they are not payable to do that, they tend to look for other majors. So, they may leave the education profession and go to another major. So, we are running into that as well.

Dwindling Numbers Across U.S. Teacher Education Programs

Not all of the woes of the recruitment efforts of Black male teachers could be tied to the target school system. While there are countless examples of young Black males targeted,
educated and cultivated for athleticism, there is little value or emphasis placed upon the education of Black males. Declining enrollment numbers in teacher education programs among all demographic groups across the country has been a challenge. While recruiters would like a diverse teaching force, the landscape of the teaching profession has not made it an easy charge.

LRT 2: …around the country, we see it every year and we’ve seen it every year, the numbers are declining. There are some job fairs that we’ve worked three years ago where we would take four different colleagues to work this one job fair because [target school system] was so popular, and it was so many people in line that wanted to talk to us. And now—three—fast forward three years and we are working those same job fairs with one person by ourselves with no problem...So, we are seeing first-hand how the numbers of, you know, not only Black males, but just people in general going into the teaching profession are dwindling.

LRT 1: I think that some of the shortness of our lines now at recruitment fairs, for example, is not that they are not coming just to [target school system] table. We still have pretty strong presence, they’re not there at all to go to anyone’s tables. There’s just a shortage of participants because the enrollment numbers in college university Teacher Ed programs is dwindling across the country.

When I probed further, asking what factors were contributing to the shortage across the country and even in the target school system, the LEA recruiters responded,

LRT 2: Number one thing: money. The number one thing is pay. Our teachers aren’t being paid the way that they should be, and I think that’s something that our legislators are trying their best to work on. You have North Carolina where you’ve gotten rid of Master’s pay and you don’t have tenure anymore...And literally,
nowadays, I’m hearing kids that say they want to be a teacher, ad parents are saying oh, no.

Interview with College/University Recruitment Administration

Interview Question: What challenges do you face in the recruitment of Black males in your teacher preparation program?

The first research question asked college/university recruiter participants to describe the challenges they face in the recruitment of Black male teachers. After coding the interview transcripts, I recoded them three weeks later for reliability and validity. For the second research question, I identified three major themes among the recruiter interview data:

1. Identity and Isolation Experience
2. Political Climate
3. A Shortage of Black Men

Identity and Isolation Experience

The college/university recruiters expressed a keen awareness of the isolation and identity crux many Black male students experience in their education programs. A common theme that evolved from the research was that the college/university recruitment administrator witnessed first-hand the isolation experienced by Black male students. An exemplary quote,

CRT 2:  ... the college is predominantly white females, and I think there are a lot of students when they get here, they don’t necessarily feel comfortable. And I don’t blame them. So, I think that some students feel uncomfortable when they come here
and, of course, we do a lot of team-building activities and I think we have such a small college of education that in a lot of ways, that’s good because they had the individualized attention, but I also think that regardless of having ice breakers with them or having them join clubs they kind of feel left out.

Political Climate

Because public education is a federal and state institution, it is governed by the state and bound to federal and state laws and affected by said policies. Institutions of higher education are no different in this regard. So, when the state of North Carolina made the decision to eliminate the Teaching Fellows Program that had been in operation for years, it was devastating to many entities, including the school systems and colleges of education in North Carolina. Lauded for its help in incentivizing and diversifying the teaching force of North Carolina, with one decision, the allure and landscape of teaching was irrevocably altered.

CRT 1 (I 3): We used to have the Teaching Fellows program that was also a strong partnership for us and that ended kind of around 2014.

The recruiter later continued,

“It was super disheartening, and we took a huge hit in our numbers after that. And that’s one of the other reasons why we took a huge hit in our recruitment numbers because we lost Teaching Fellows, and that was a huge kind of selling point to get more students of color in our college. And so, once that was done away with, people started losing some of that, in their minds, incentive to wanting to go into the profession...once that was done away with, that was really hard for us to kind of bounce back in regards to our recruitment of students of color...I’m sure other
colleges took a huge hit as well.”

Sadly, that is not the only unfavorable change that has rocked North Carolina’s public school image. The media has been brutally honest about the decade-stagnant teacher pay—coupled with pay freezes, doing away with tenure, and elimination of pay for advanced degrees.

CRT 1: For example, we only have 92 students coming in this year... We usually have more students... we kind of did a downward slide in our students coming into the college, because, in my opinion, everything that was going on with the state in regards to education and teachers.

When I asked if the recruiter was referring to teacher pay, the recruiter stated,

CRT 1: Yes. Yes. And the reason I refer to that is because—so, I taught one of the intro education courses and talked about why students are choosing to go into the profession and what is it that they have concerns about. And all of the students, hands down, referred to, oh, teacher pay and, oh, we heard about teacher tenure...

Such as is confirmed below, the political climate in North Carolina public education has been anything but easy for college recruiters, not to mention College of Education recruiters. I interviewed two college/university recruiters and here is what the second recruiter had to say about the political climate and its impact on the retention of Black males.

CRT 2: Our political climate is making it very difficult for anyone to consider teaching in the state of North Carolina. So, kind of going past that and trying to work with students who have that drive and calling to teach is often what I pinpoint.

The college recruiter later added,
CRT 2: ...we have a lot of students who come in and think they want to do education and they maybe sit through our intro to education course and say, yeah, this really isn’t for me. Or they listen to their parents or their friends saying, well, this is what’s going on in the state of North Carolina with education, are you sure you want to do that?

A Shortage of Black Men

CRT 1: I think that even in my own research, when you have someone who is kid of modeling for you where you could be, it’s important, in particular if that person looks like you. And, so, I think that that’s one of our most effective tools. And obviously, I will tell you, we have a long way to go. We have a long way to go in recruiting Black males in our college. There’s just not that many, and it’s hard to do from what I see every year.

CRT 2: I think any help, any connections we could get, any ideas is always welcome. And, especially when recruiting minority students and males. It’s just our toughest demographic. We only have two African-American males entering this year. And I used to teach one of them, and I know he doesn’t want to stay in education. So, we’ll maybe have one student who will stick through this freshman year. And really disheartening, not only to me but for our community, I think.

The recruiter mentioned in the interview that, “the majority of the Black males in our college are in the TDE program which is technology, design and engineering education.”

Summary of Research Question One

Black males comprise of only 2 percent of the American teaching force. In an effort to examine the perspectives of Black male teachers answering the call to teach in North Carolina Public Schools, I sought to elicit answers to four research questions. To summarize,
the first research question was: “Why do Black males join the teaching profession?” As noted earlier, six major themes evolved from the data:

1. Relationship with a mentor
2. Desire to be a role model
3. Family value and emphasis on education
4. Feelings of social responsibility
5. Necessity
6. Pathway to a parallel career

Amidst the data, some sub-themes also emerged that were note-worthy in exploring why Black males joining the teaching profession:

1. Civil Rights
2. Black Female Influence
3. Identity

To explore the first research question, I also prepared and analyzed data that examined the thoughts and expressions of the LEA recruitment participants gleaned from their personal interview transcripts. Four interview questions were asked to discern from LEA participants what challenges they face in recruiting Black males to join the teaching profession. I identified three major themes:

1. A Shortage of Black Men
2. Testing Troubles
3. Dwindling Numbers across U.S. Teacher Education Programs

Finally, in probing the first research question, I examined the data from interviews
with college/university recruiters to extricate the challenges they face in the recruitment of Black males to enroll in their college of education. In doing so, I classified three themes:

1. Identity and Isolation Experience
2. Political Climate
3. A Shortage of Black Men

Research Question Two

Why do Black males remain in the teaching profession?

To explore the second research question, I prepared and analyzed data that examined the thoughts and expressions of the participants gleaned from their personal interview transcripts. The first interview question was asked to the teacher participants in order to discern from teacher participants what factors influence their decision to stay in the teaching profession. The second interview question (to be discussed later) asked LEA and college/university recruiter participants to reflect on any challenges they face in the retention of Black male teachers. After coding the interview transcripts, I recoded them three weeks later for reliability and validity. For the first research question, I identified four major themes:

1. Influence Youth
2. Sense of Duty
3. Too invested to leave
4. Actually, I’m leaving
Figure 2

Figure 2 provides an overview of the themes that emerged from the teacher, LEA and college/university recruiter participant responses to research question 2.
Table 5

Themes Research Question Two

Why Do Black Males Remain in the Teaching Profession?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Participants</th>
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<tr>
<td>A Sense of duty</td>
<td>3 of 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too invested to leave</td>
<td>3 of 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actually, I’m leaving</td>
<td>2 of 9</td>
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Interview Question 9: What factors, if any, keep you in the teaching profession?

Influence of youth

When Black male participants were asked about the determinants that factor into their decision to stay in the teaching field, they all have varying responses but one response, in particular, outweighed all the others: the influence of youth. The teachers keep the coming back day after day despite a dismal political climate and unfavorable working conditions. Here are some prime quotes that elucidate this finding:

BMT 2 (I 9): It sounds cheesy, but the kids. I’ve been teaching for 12 years now and see some of my former students become teachers. Two students graduated from me, last year, 2015, to become teachers, one is a history teacher, one is a business
teacher...So, that’s why I go to the kids, the opportunity that my friends didn’t have or didn’t take advantage of.

*BMT 4 (I 9):* I do it because I think I am making a difference.

*BMT 5 (I 9):* I actually miss my students in the summer. I get a little sad when they graduate from high school.

*BMT 6 (I 9):* The kids. Definitely. Even though they work the “you know what” out of you, but they keep—I know they keep me coming every day.

*BMT 7 (I 9):* I’m going to continue to work in education so that I can be an influence and help these young people out.

*BMT 9 (I 9):* If I don’t stay in the teaching profession, if I were to leave, for the kids who really, really, really need it, they won’t be exposed to people like me.

**A Sense of Duty**

While Black male teachers are mandated to serve as role models, as are all contracted public school teachers in North Carolina, the call to duty is more complex for Black males. Black male teachers often act in loco parentis, helping students, especially minority students, navigate life inside and beyond the classroom. Salient quotes that underscore this belief are,

*BMT 1 (I 9):* I believe education is a civil rights issue, so I stay in education because I do value education...I just cannot imagine what else one could do to give back so to speak.

*BMT 7 (I 9):* I still want to be an influence. I still want to be a figure of Black maleness in schools so that I can represent possibilities and I can guide young, Black minds and all that cliché stuff and all that people say. I believe in it, you know?...Part of the reason I think some people struggle is they don’t know how to navigate the
They don’t know how to navigate the education system. They don’t know how to navigate the social service system, and they don’t know how to navigate the judicial system. And we need people, Black people, in those positions to help people, others, navigate those systems. So, that’s what keeps me.

BMT 9 (I 9): If I don’t stay in the teaching profession, if I were to leave, for the kids who really, really, really need it, they won’t be exposed to people like me. Not saying that that has to be just my job and not saying that somebody else wouldn’t come in and do it, but a lot of times you fear, honestly, that if I did leave, they’re not hiring anymore Black teachers. They’re not hiring any Black males. I haven’t seen any in the interview process, so who would do it? So, it’s just one of those things. It’s just like you have to make that sacrifice to say, look, I really want to help. And if I leave, I feel like I’m letting student A down or student B down. And I don’t want to do that. SO, honestly, that’s what keeps me in it...

Too Invested to Leave

The decision to leave a career you love is never easy, but neither is staying in one in which you have grown weary. One Black male teacher participant with 18 years of teaching experience readily responded that he planned on retiring from teaching,

BMT 1 (I 9): I plan on retiring from the profession. I can’t see making a contribution in a better way or a more effective way.

Other participants divulged that they were simply too vested to leave—being tied to either education debt or to family obligations.

BMT 7 (I 9): What keeps me in the teaching profession? Well, it’s too late to start over. Well, I guess it’s never too late to start over, but I would hate to start over. I have college—I’ve got loans I’m still paying off, so it would be ridiculous to stop
teaching and then try to start something else. I’m way too far in debt right now.

BMT 8 (I 9): Well, I have to prepare for my kids’ college. I’ve got some youngsters. It’s just survival. I have to take care of my family, that’s the only thing.

Actually, I’m Leaving

A few of the Black male teacher participants expressed a love for teaching but due to limitations in teaching in North Carolina public schools have decided that they will move on to other careers. One participant cited that he was not getting paid for his doctorate degree because, as he was told, his Ph.D. in education is not directly aligned with what he was teaching. His response:

BMT 3 (I 9): I’m actually leaving. I have found another position. And I’m coming out of the classroom, but I’m still teaching education. I got a college job as a college administrator…

Another participant shared a sense of limitation in the area of decision-making power by being in the classroom. He has his sights set on administration, as illustrated by this response:

BMT 6 (I 9): I will be looking to eventually go into the admin role, like principal/assistant principal on down the line somewhere…I feel like as a principal, you have a little more range to implement things and really see things come to fruition. I know at my last school, we started a mentor program for African-American males where we met with them once every week and then we talked about issues of being a Black man in society today. And it was supported, but it really wasn’t supported…I feel like as a principal, there are certain things in schools that you can kind of open the door and say, okay, this is what we are going to do. I want everybody
to get on board about this and let’s move together. Let’s get this done, together.

Interview question posed to college/university recruitment administration: What challenges do you face in the retention of Black men, if any?

The second research question asked college/university recruiter participants to describe the challenges they face in the retention of Black male teachers. After coding the interview transcripts, I recoded them three weeks later for reliability and validity. For the second research question, I identified three major themes among the recruiter interview data:

1. Identity and Isolation Experience
2. Political Climate
3. A Shortage of Black Men

As you can see, the data revealed that the same challenges the college/university recruitment participants experience, as reported earlier (see Research Question One), in the recruitment of Black males, they also describe in the retention of Black males.

Table 6
College Recruiters: What challenges do you face in the retention of Black men, if any?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Participants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Identity and Isolation Experience</td>
<td>2 of 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Climate</td>
<td>2 of 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Shortage of Black Men</td>
<td>2 of 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Identity and Isolation Experience
The college/university recruiters expressed a keen awareness of the isolation and identity crux many Black male students experience in their education programs. A common theme that evolved from the research was that the college/university recruitment administrators witnessed first-hand the isolation experienced by Black male students.

CRT 1: I would think it’s hard work working in an environment where there’s very few people who may look like me to serve as an example and role model…with having to kind of hold the torch, I think, would be a little challenging. Like I said, I don’t know for a fact, but I could imagine if there’s very few wanting to have that support system, not to say that they do. But, if you are one in a few in a school, I could see how that could be a challenge in regards to your own identity on top of professionalism on top of everything else because there’s so many multiple layers that people of color have to face outside of the work environment.

CRT 2: Like I said before, the college is predominantly white females, and I think there are a lot of students when they get here, they don’t necessarily feel comfortable. And I don’t blame them. So, I think that some students feel uncomfortable when they come here and, of course, we do a lot of team-building activities and I think we have such a small college of education that in a lot of ways, that’s good because they had the individualized attention, but I also think that regardless of having ice breakers with them or having them join clubs they kind of feel left out.

Political Climate

Because public education is a federal and state institution, it is governed by the state and bound to federal and state laws and affected by said policies. Institutions of higher education are no different in this regard. So, when North Carolina made the decision to axe the Teaching Fellows Program that had been in operation for 25 years, it was devastating to
many entities, including the school systems and colleges of education in North Carolina. Lauded for its help in incentivizing and diversifying the teaching force of North Carolina, with one decision, the allure and landscape of teaching was irrevocably altered.

_CRT 1 (I 3): We used to have the Teaching Fellows program that was also a strong partnership for us and that ended kind of around 2014._

The recruiter later continued,

_“It was super disheartening, and we took a huge hit in our numbers after that. And that’s one of the other reasons why we took a huge hit in our recruitment numbers because we lost Teaching Fellows, and that was a huge kind of selling point to get more students of color in our college. And so, once that was done away with, people started losing some of that, in their minds, incentive to wanting to go into the profession...once that was done away with, that was really hard for us to kind of bounce back in regards to our recruitment of students of color...I’m sure other colleges took a huge hit as well.”_

Sadly, that is not the only unfavorable change that has rocked North Carolina’s public school image. Media has been brutally honest about the decade-stagnant teacher pay—coupled with pay freezes, doing away with tenure, and pay for advanced degrees.

_CRT 1: For example, we only have 92 students coming in this year...We usually have more students...we kind of did a downward slide in our students coming into the college, because, in my opinion, everything that was going on with the state in regards to education and teachers._

When I asked if the recruiter was referring to teacher pay, the recruiter stated,

_CRT 1: Yes. Yes. And the reason I refer to that is because—so, I taught one of the_
intro education courses and talked about why students are choosing to go into the profession and what is it that they have concerns about. And all of the students, hands down, referred to, oh, teacher pay and, oh, we heard about teacher tenure...

Such as is confirmed below, the political climate in North Carolina public education has been anything but easy for college recruiters, not to mention College of Education recruiters. I interviewed two college/university recruiters and here is what the second recruiter had to say about the political climate and its impact on the retention of Black males.

CRT 2: Our political climate is making it very difficult for anyone to consider teaching in the state of North Carolina. So, kind of going past that and trying to work with students who have that drive and calling to teach is often what I pinpoint.

The college recruiter later adds,

CRT 2: ...we have a lot of students who come in and think they want to do education and they maybe sit through our intro to education course and say, yeah, this really isn’t for me. Or they listen to their parents or their friends saying, well, his is what’s going on in the state of North Carolina with education, are you sure you want to do that?

A Shortage of Black Men

CRT 1: I think that even in my own research, when you have someone who is kid of modeling for you where you could be, it’s important, in particular if that person looks like you. And, so, I think that that’s one of our most effective tools. And obviously, I will tell you, we have a long way to go. We have a long way to go in recruiting Black males in our college. There’s just not that many, and it’s hard to do from what I see every year.

CRT 2: I think any help, any connections we could get, any ideas is always welcome.
And, especially when recruiting minority students and males. It’s just our toughest demographic. We only have two African-American males entering this year. And I used to teach one of them, and I know he doesn’t want to stay in education. So, we’ll maybe have one student who will stick through this freshman year. And really disheartening, not only to me but for our community, I think.

The recruiter mentioned in the interview that, “the majority of the Black males in our college are in the TDE program which is technology, design and engineering education.”

**Interview question posed to LEA recruitment administration: What challenges do you face in the retention of Black male teachers, if any?**

The second research question also asked LEA recruiter participants to describe the challenges they face in the retention of Black male teachers. After coding the interview transcripts, I recoded them three weeks later for reliability and validity. For the second research question, I identified three major themes among the LEA recruiter interview data:

1. A decrease in teacher compensation
2. A decrease in teacher respect
3. An increase in teacher accountability

Table 7
LEA Recruiters: *What challenges do you face in the retention of Black men, if any?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Participants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decreased Teacher Compensation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased Teacher Respect</td>
<td>2 of 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased Teacher Accountability</td>
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</table>

**Decreased Teacher Compensation and Respect**

The same prestige that accompanies working for a Fortune 500 company could be the same prestige that accompanies the pursuit of a career in education. But this is not the reality. Unlike corporate America, there are no commercials and publicity campaigns that reach far enough to establish a prestigious sentiment around educators. Those who choose to dedicate their lives to the education, empowerment and sustainability of others is less than glorified. The innate human nature wants to be recognized for the work done and efforts executed to make an impactful difference. Meanwhile, educators are among the lowest paid in comparison to other professions. These factors become the backdrop for low rates of retention and less resources. The teachers, the college/university recruiters, and the LEA recruiters all seem to be puzzled by the phenomenon—as teachers are being tasked with more responsibilities, they don’t seem to be compensated commensurately. On top of that the respect has gone down.

*LRT 1: I think it’s interesting that as salaries and the perceived respect and value for
teaching is going down, at the same time, the amount of work, the expectations, the accountability that are being placed on the shoulders of teachers is going up. So you kind of think of those as bars on a bar graph, they are moving in totally opposite directions.

LRT 2: But when someone is going to college and—I remember at one point in time when you parents may say, you can be what you want to be, and you can do what you want to do and kind of leave that up to that child to determine what it is that they wanted to do in life. And literally, nowadays, I’m hearing kids say that they want to be a teacher, and parents are saying, oh, no. You are not going to be a teacher. You are going to be a little more than that. So, teaching has gotten a very negative connotation around, I guess, the world when it comes to pay, and how teachers are underpaid and undervalued and things like that. So, we have to do something as a society to kid of turn that around and make it to be one of those areas that people are interested in going into.

Increased Teacher Accountability

While the respect for the teaching profession and the compensation for teachers are diminishing and at an embarrassing low level in North Carolina, the accountability for teachers is quite high. This poses a challenge for both college/university and LEA recruiters alike.

LRT1: And teachers—no good teacher wants to be unaccountable. They want to be accountable for the work they do, because it’s important work. They impact the lives of children. But, I do think it is reasonable for any professional to expect to be valued and compensated in a fair way for the work that you do.

The LEA recruiter went on to say,
To summarize, the second research question was: “Why do Black males remain in the teaching profession?” As noted earlier, five major themes evolved from the data:

1. The desire to be role models for Black youth
2. The influence of family values (on education)
3. Social responsibility
4. Out of necessity; and
5. As a parallel career pathway

To examine the second research question, I also asked LEA recruiter participants to describe the challenges they face in the retention of Black male teachers. For the second research question, I identified three major themes among the LEA recruiter interview data:
1. A decrease in teacher compensation
2. A decrease in teacher respect
3. An increase in teacher accountability

Finally, in probing the second research question, I asked college/university recruiter participants to describe the challenges they face in the retention of Black male teachers. For the second research question, I identified three major themes among the college/university recruiter interview data:

1. Identity and Isolation Experience
2. Political Climate
3. A Shortage of Black Men

**Research Question Three**

*What strategies do LEAs use to recruit Black males to the teaching profession?*

Interview questions specifically sought participant perceptions about strategies used by local education agencies to recruit Black males to teach in North Carolina public schools. I sought to also gain understanding from the LEA’s perspective to understand and compare their experiences with those of Black male teachers in the same large school system. Therefore, this section will reveal findings from perspectives of both the Black male teacher participants and the LEA recruiter participants for this study.

To explore the third research question, I first looked at data that examined the thoughts and expressions of the Black male teacher participants, taken from their personal interview transcripts. The teacher participants were asked, “What strategies are used by local
education agencies to recruit Black male to the teaching profession?”

In order to discern from the LEA recruiter participants what strategies are used by local education agencies to recruit Black men to the teaching profession, a second interview question asked LEA recruiter participants to reflect on their practices in recruiting Black males to the teaching profession. The LEA recruiter participants were asked the following interview questions to address research question three:

1. What strategies do you use to recruit Black males to teach in [target school system]?
2. How do you collaborate with colleges and universities to recruit Black males to teach in [target school system]?
3. How many Black males teach in [target school system]?

After coding the interview transcripts for both the Black male teacher participants and the LEA recruiter participants, I recoded them three weeks later for reliability and validity. For the third research question, I identified two major themes in the combined data:

1. Awareness that LEAs are not recruiting Black male teachers
2. Distinguish hiring from recruiting Black male teachers
Figure 3

Figure 3 provides an overview of the themes that emerged from participants in response to research question 3.
Table 8

What strategies do LEAs use to recruit Black males to the teaching profession?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness LEAs are not recruiting BMTs</td>
<td>✔ ✔ ✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinguish Hiring from Recruiting BMTs</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* BMT Black male teachers, LRT LEA Recruitment, CRT College/University Recruitment

Awareness that LEAs are not recruiting Black Male Teachers

I sought to gain insight into the recruitment strategies employed by the target school system to attract Black males to the teaching profession. I was enlightened to learn that the target school system does not specifically recruit Black male teachers to its teaching force. A few quotes taken from both the Black male teacher participants’ and the LEA participants’ data underscore this notion that Black male teacher recruitment is not an emphasis.

Black Male Teacher Participants

Interview question: What strategies are used by LEAs to recruit Black males to the teaching profession?

Imagine a world where talent pools were consistently nurtured and in search of best practices to nourish newly recruited professionals. A key action that recruiters take is nurturing talent communities. Unanimously, and rather quickly, the Black male teacher
interviewees—one by one—stated that they saw no strategies being used by their local education agency (target school system) to recruit Black males to the teaching profession.

The Black male teacher participants reflected on their own pathway to teaching. Some mentioned practices they currently see in recruitment efforts and others cited “rhetoric” and “lack of initiative” or the “need for incentives”. Here are a few exemplary quotes:

*BMT 1 (I 3): They don’t use any strategies to do that. There’s a lot of rhetoric, but in practice, you don’t see any strategies being employed to recruit Black male students."

*BMT 4 (I 3): Specifically? I don’t know of any initiatives specifically that try to attract Black males into the county.

*BMT 5 (I 3): I don’t see any. I’m not trying to be sarcastic or anything, I don’t see a lot of—in North Carolina, I really don’t see a lot of hard work being done to recruit African-American teachers. I see an effort to get new teachers, but not an effort to retain them, and I just don’t—if someone is trying, they’re doing—I’m not trying to be sarcastic, again, but if someone is trying, they’re not doing a great…Because I had to teach—I’ve taught in two counties in North Carolina and one was (name) county and, again, I don’t remember seeing any young African-American male teachers.

*BMT 6 (I 3): I’m not too sure what the strategies may be. I do know or I have not seen, most of the time when you see more of your Black males, you see them in your low poverty schools just because that is your high population of your Hispanic or Black. So, I guess that’s their way of saying, okay, this is where we need you. But as far as the strategies, I’m not really sure what they are using...

*BMT 9 (I 3): There’s not really a major push to, look, we’ve got a lot of Black boys around here kind of acting up. Let’s bring in some Black male teachers. I personally haven’t seen a really strong push to get more African-Americans into the classroom. I
could be wrong. I don’t know any programs that are going on, but I was not hired based on, hey, we need more Black males. I was hired under really just, like, okay. This guy’s here, he might be a good teacher. Let’s bring him in. That was more so the system that I was hired under, not under, hey, we need more Black males. If you come here, we’ll hire you.

While most cast doubt on the efforts of their LEA to recruit Black males to teach, two brought up the shortage of Black males.

*BMT 3*: I think they had a couple of job fairs and things of that nature. I don’t know if they are aggressively going out trying to diversify their school system, though. And that could be a kind of a two-fold type of thing, because there may not be enough Black males in education that want to actually teach or Black males that want to teach, so it’s kind of hard to recruit them. And I don’t know why a lot of times the systems don’t because a lot of our school systems are heavily populated with Black male students.

*BMT 7*: …there’s not a lot of African-American males. So, a lot of people when I was looking for positions in different counties, they were like, yeah, we need African-American males in the county…Besides, like, in hiring practices, I don’t see very many other things that they do in terms of getting more African-American males in the county.

**LEA Recruitment Participants**

*Interview question: What strategies are used by LEAs to recruit Black males to the teaching profession?*

The literature review addressed the need, urgency and importance of recruiting Black males to the teaching profession. The need for Black male teachers is no secret. Surprisingly,
the LEA recruiter interviewees—on one accord—stated that no strategies are being used by their local education agency to specifically recruit Black males to the teaching profession. The Black male teacher participants reflected on their current practices to recruit teachers in general but mentioned many times that their emphasis, and, therefore, their effort, is not on Black male teacher recruitment. Here are a few exemplary quotes:

*LRT 1:* Well, one of the things that we do, first and foremost in [target school system], we are actually looking for the best and brightest applicants period, okay?

*LRT 2:* So, you know, yes, are there some disparities in there with African-American males being in the classroom and things like that? Yes, it is. And the programs that we currently have in place aren’t necessarily directed at specifically Black males, but they are directed at getting ahold of interested applicants early in their careers and early in their mindsets and thinking so that we can kind of nurture them through the process, say, a high school senior who is interested in teaching all the way through a person that is a senior in college and doing their student teaching with us. Now in that, we are looking for—always we are looking for African-American males.

After I asked the recruiter to expound on the specific programs nurturing the African-American males from high school through the student teaching process, the recruiter responded with:

*LRT 2:* Right. And let me give it a little bit of a point of clarification. The programs that we have, again, aren’t necessarily directed at African-American males...there really isn’t a specific push towards African-American males, toward White females, toward White males, towards anything like that. But African-American males and anyone of any background or culture that is going through a teaching program that wants to be a teacher, we’re going to put them into the program if they want to be in
the program and treat them the same as anyone else.

This data is key in that it highlights the value difference explicitly placed on Black male teacher recruitment efforts. To date, White women comprise 80% of the American teaching force and the teaching force is not reflective of the diverse student body it serves. The “come to us” approach that the target school system is taking to the recruitment of Black male teachers is not working.

While the recruiters readily and repeatedly emphasized that they do not specifically recruit African-American males, they did share a program they espouse as a recruitment initiative. The program, called Future Teachers, is allowing the target school system to identify talent early.

LRT 1: ...our Future Teachers program, we’re identifying that talent early. Really, they are self-identifying in a lot of ways because our high school seniors who are planning to pursue careers in education, they are able to apply for participation in Future Teachers. They complete an application process and interview process as well. We have currently two cohorts; one has just been named about a week ago, two weeks ago. And in the cohorts, we are seeing diversity. Cohort 1, which they are now rising college sophomores, 37 percent of that group, so 7 out of 19, are students of color. Specifically, African-American males of that group, there are two African-American males who have been identified as Future Teachers and have contracts, jobs waiting for them upon graduation. Similarly, in Cohort 2, we’re about 35 percent students of color, and, again, there are two African-American males in Cohort 2 just like in Cohort 1. So, we are hopeful that by extending these types of opportunity to our own students that we are identifying the students, the future teachers, frankly, that are wanting to come back to the community from which they come and that they are going to be very vested in the work of the school district
because they are rooted here.

When I inquired about their collaborative efforts with the colleges and universities to recruit Black males to teach in target school system, the LEA recruiters shared the following three strategies:

1. Job fairs
2. AAEE (American Association for Employment in Education) Membership
3. Hosts student teachers and student observers from 30 different colleges, including HBCUs

I also inquired into the number of Black male teachers teaching in the target school system.

The number is unknown at this time.

**Distinguish Hiring from Recruiting Black Male Teachers**

*Black Male Teacher Participants*

I can without question lose count of the little league football teams and AAU basketball teams that are always in search of new talent. These programs are run by men of all ethnicities and teach valuable life skills. Currently, schools hire but do not recruit.

Recruiting involves getting to know a recruit and his potential, developing an understanding of his background and what factors affect his performance as well as a careful analysis of potential roadblocks. *Recruit* is defined this way: To engage in finding and attracting employees, new members, students, athletes, etc. (www.Dictionary.com). *Hire* is defined this way: To employ. (www.Dictionary.com).

A close look at the data in this study uncovered that the majority of the Black male teacher participants distinguished between hiring and recruiting. A few quotes taken from the
Black male teacher participants’ capture the essence of this dilemma.

**BMT 1 (I 3):** There’s a lot of rhetoric, but, in practice, you don’t see any strategies being employed to recruit Black males.

**BMT 2 (I 3):** I haven’t seen too many direct outreach programs, you know? It’s like they hope you apply and once you are in, they might find a way to keep you there. I know Durham Did a good job of that; [target school system], not so much.

**BMT 5 (I 3):** I see eight, nine, ten-year teachers, you know, just going in my mind right now, but I don’t see a lot of African-American teachers being recruited at all. And I’m not seeing any strategies.

**BMT 7 (I 3):** …the only thing I see is hiring practices. I’m not sure about recruiting practices.

**LEA Recruiter Participants**

As I explored the recruitment strategies employed by the target school system to attract Black males to the teaching profession, I discovered that the target school system does not specifically recruit Black male teachers to its teaching force. I also discovered that the target school system does not distinguish between hiring and recruiting practices. A few quotes taken from the LEA participants’ data underscore this hypothesis:

**LRT 1:** Now in that, we are looking for—always we are looking for African-American males. We are looking for diversity period. So, we are going and visiting our HBCUs. We are going to the difference job fairs in and around the country.

**LRT 2:** So, in that, if we come across and we see those African-American males that are there and they are of the quality that we are looking for in [target school system],
then by all means, we are going to be reaching out to them just as we would anyone else about available openings and positions that we have available.

LRT 1: Future Teachers is when we have identified students that are high school graduating seniors who have already been identified that they want to be a teacher, okay?

Summary of Research Question Three

To summarize, the third research question was: “What strategies do LEAs use to recruit Black males to the teaching profession?” As noted earlier, two major themes evolved from the data:

1. Awareness that LEAs are not Recruiting Black Male Teachers
2. Distinguish Hiring from Recruiting Black Male Teachers

Research Question Four

What strategies do colleges and universities use to recruit Black males to the teaching profession?

Opportunities to establish ore educators who are committed to the teaching profession and ready to mold new generations of young minds are offered by programs like Future Teachers of America. However, programs like these are not well-known or presented to the Back male student. Often, by the time a student has reached high school, he has already been through an age when he believes his ticket out of his circumstances is sports, not academia.

With this in mind, I sought to understand how Black male participants were recruited
into the teaching profession. I interviewed recruiters at the college/university and LEA levels. I also specifically sought out Black male teacher participants’ perspectives on strategies used by colleges and universities to recruit them to teach in North Carolina public schools. I purposed to gain an understanding of the recruitment strategies from the college and university perspective, and contrast them with the experiences of the Black male teacher participants in this study.

**Black Male Teacher Participants**

To examine the fourth research question, I systematized and analyzed data that examined the data from the Black male teacher participants, drawn from their personal interview transcripts. I asked the teacher participants the following four interview questions:

1. What did your Black male friends major in in college and why?
2. What was it like to be a Black male in your teacher preparatory program?
3. What was your training like?
4. What strategies are used by colleges and universities to recruit Black males?

In reviewing the interview transcripts and coding the responses, I recoded them three weeks later for reliability and validity. For the fourth research question, a careful audit revealed two major themes among the Black male teacher participant responses:

1. Feelings of Singularity
2. Black Men Are Not Being Aggressively Recruited to Teach
Figure 4

A snapshot of the themes that emerged from the participants in response to research question four.

Table 9

What was it like to be a Black male in your teacher preparation program? What strategies do colleges and universities use to recruit Black males to the teaching profession?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Participants</th>
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<tr>
<td>Black Male Teachers Not Being Recruited by Colleges/Universities</td>
<td>9 of 9</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Feelings of Singularity

*Interview Question: What was it like to be a Black male in your teacher preparation program?*

Of the nine teacher participants, six of them indicated that they felt alone in education—not only in their careers but also in their teacher preparatory programs. A few responses reflective of this view were,

*BMT 1 (I 7):* It was a singular experience. In other words, I really didn’t get a sense that—well, yes I did. Yeah I guess it’s singular. I felt unique is what was the main focal thrust of that…it was a singular experience, and there weren’t many other Black males in the program.

*BMT 3 (I 7):* It seems, I think, different or unique because I am a young, Black male so a lot of them were White females coming into the program. And it just seems like—it made me really realize that the African-American men are not going into this profession. And I was kind of surprised by—you know, you hear statistics and you read things but to actually see it, to be a witness to it and be a part of it was something else.

*BMT 5 (I 7):* I was—more times than not—I was the only male. And in most of those classes, and again scanning over the years, I can’t remember seeing any Black men.

*BMT 6 (I 7):* Well, I think in my group, I was the only one. So, it was a little awkward at first because I was like, am I doing the right thing? Like, I don’t see anyone in here that I could vent to, or what should I do? So, I basically—I will be honest, it was hard just knowing that I was the only one and that I had no one to look to, okay, what are we going to do. It was like I had to carry it on my own.

When I asked the teacher to expound on why he felt that way, he responded:
“I knew I had to hold myself to higher standards. I knew that by me being the only Black that they were going to look at me, what does he have to offer? What skills does he have that he can bring to the table? So, I knew I had to take it in and go above and beyond what was really called of me.

While most teacher participants expressed isolation because of their identities, one Black male teacher participant had a different reason. He expressed feeling isolated because of his chosen teacher preparation pathway—online learning.

BMT 4 (I 7): It was fine. I mean, like I said, it was online, but at the same time—you turn in lesson plans, you don’t really see or talk to—you rarely talk to a professor. You don’t see your classmates. You just turn in your work, you get a grade, and you just do the next assignment.

Another teacher participant attended an HBCU but still felt moments of isolation being in his teacher preparation program:

BMT 9 (I 7): I knew going in that there were not going to be a lot of Black males, so get to know the people who are around you and who you are with. And the women who I worked with were always very supportive, very helpful. So, being a Black male going in, you want for there to be other Black men. And in terms of my preparation, there were moments where I wished I was with other Black men who I could talk to.

Interview Question: What did your Black male friends major in in college, and why?

These feelings of isolation and singularity also coincide with the data amassed from this interview question inquiring about what their friends majored in while in college.
What did your Black male friends major in in college, and why?

Most of the Black male teacher participants reported that their friends majored in everything but teaching. The majority (34%) of their Black friends majored in engineering or computer science. Twenty-nine percent majored in business or finance. Seventeen percent majored in government, especially those from the Washington, DC area. Sixteen percent majored in either a medical field (8%) or in the social sciences (8%) and 4 percent (2 persons) majored in education—physical education.

Interestingly, two of the Black male teacher interviewees revealed telling experiences that could also explain some of the lack of education majors:

*BMT 7 (I 4):* ...my advisors never really gave me any—influenced me or motivated me to go into any particular. They were just like, you got to choose something, and I need you to choose something. So, they didn’t give me any questions there. Nothing.
They didn’t interview me to see what my likes and dislikes were. It was just I need to choose something so we can go from there. So, that was my experience.

BMT 7 (I 7): Well, I look at it like the boys or—not the boys, but the men that I’m talking about now who kind of got left behind. I think about our advisors and our counselors in high school. Like those counseling programs are so important, and if those counselors in high schools are not really guiding these students on a path to college, then there’s a chance they won’t go. Or just a career in general.

Black Male Teachers Not Being Recruited by Colleges and Universities

Interview Question: What strategies are used by local education agencies to recruit Black male to the teaching profession?

Black Male Teacher Participants

Of the nine teacher participants, all nine teacher participants responded that nothing was being done by LEAs to recruit Black male teachers to the teaching profession. Two mentioned job fairs as hiring strategies but not as recruiting strategies. A few responses reflective of this view were,

BMT 1: They don’t use any strategies to do that. There’s a lot of rhetoric, but, in practice, you don’t see any strategies being employed to recruit Black male teachers.

BMT 2: I haven’t seen too many direct outreach programs, you know? It’s like they hope you apply and once you are in, they might find a way to keep you there.

BMT 5: I don’t see any. I’m not trying to be sarcastic or anything. I don’t see a lot of—in North Carolina—I really don’t see a lot of hard work being done to recruit African American teachers. I see an effort to get new teachers, but not effort to retain them, and I just—if someone is trying, they’re doing—I’m not trying to be sarcastic,
again, but if someone is trying, they’re not doing great.

College/University Recruiter Participants

To examine the fourth research question, I also analyzed data that examined the data from the college/university recruiter participants, drawn from their personal interview transcripts. I asked the recruiter participants the following five interview questions:

1. What are the roles and responsibilities of a recruiter at [target university]?
2. What strategies do you use to recruit Black males to join the teaching profession?
3. How do you collaborate with LEAs to recruit Black males to the teaching profession?
4. How many Black males are in your teacher preparation program?
5. What challenges, if any, do you face in the recruitment of Black males into your teacher preparation program?

In reviewing the interview transcripts and coding the responses, I re-coded them three weeks later for reliability and validity. For the fourth research question, a careful audit revealed two major themes among the college/university recruiter participant responses:

1. Awareness that college/universities are not attracting Black males
2. Out-of-the-Box Initiatives and Efforts
Table 10

Major Themes RQ 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness college/universities are not attracting Black males</td>
<td>2 of 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-the-box initiatives and efforts</td>
<td>2 of 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Awareness that College/Universities are not Attracting Black males**

The college/university recruiters expressed an awareness that there was more work to do in their recruitment efforts citing they had “a long way to go”. The recruiters were keenly aware that their programs were not attracting Black males to join the teaching ranks. A consistent mention was the shortage of Black males, competing majors, identity conflicts, and the volatile political climate in North Carolina that has threatened the reputation of its teaching force with erosion of tenure, a stagnant pay scale, and the dissolution of the popular NC Teaching Fellows Program.

A few supporting examples are,

*CRT 1: And, obviously, I will tell you, we have a long way to go. We have a long way to go in recruiting Black males in our college. So, we have to be creative in our efforts to do so...*

*CRT 1: We lost Teaching Fellows, and that was a huge kind of selling point to get more students of color in our college. And, so, once that was done away with, people*
started losing some of that, in their minds, incentive to wanting to go into the profession.

**CRT 2:** Our political climate right now is making it very difficult for anyone to consider teaching in the state of North Carolina. So, kind of going past that and trying to work with students who have that drive and calling to teach is often what I pinpoint.

**CRT 2:** Our college of Education is predominantly White, so I think that African-American males and males specifically, it’s hard to come into a career field that is dominated and typically White women.

**CRT 2:** There’s just not enough population.

**Out-of-the-Box Initiatives and Efforts**

Though the college/university recruiting practices to date have not been very successful in recruiting Black males to the teaching profession, some of the reasons are out of their control—shortage of Black males, the political climate in North Carolina, and competition with other majors. However, this is not stopping the recruiters from trying. Some of the initiatives (above and beyond the teacher job fair) that the college/university recruiters disclosed in the study include: (a) diversity programming and (b) building rapport with the Black community. Exemplary quotes that underscore these findings are:

**CRT 1:** I developed B.U.I.L.D., and B.U.I.L.D. stands for Brothers United in Leadership Development. It’s a Summit to introduce male students of color, or so we kind of more so targeted African-American, Black, Latino, Hispanic males to the education profession in education as well as leadership development skills in career and college readiness...The recruitment effort for me was to allow our students, 9th
through 11th grade, to get interested in what we had to offer at target college of education but also to maybe consider a major in teacher education that they may not have considered before.

**CRT 1:** Another thing that we’ve done is—I’m very adamant about getting our students of color, in particular, our make students of color, to serve as ambassadors to this, to recruitment efforts.

**CRT 1:** We have an overnight multicultural student weekend of sorts...and the leaders in the college talk to them [students] about what we have to offer and why they chose [target university] and why they chose their majors in the College of Education.

After lamenting the loss of the Teaching Fellows Program in 2014, the recruiter shared that there are still some counties that offer scholarships for minority male students who go back to their county to teach for four years.

**CRT 1:** One of our students is—he is on a scholarship for a minority male scholarship from his county to come here, so he’s got to go back to his county and teach for, I think, four years afterwards. So, he’s on scholarship. So, there’s stuff that exists in other counties...

**CRT 2:** We build rapport with African-American males who are already teaching because a lot of times students will kind of look up to them.

**CRT 2:** I will often bring Ambassadors or students of color or both with me to recruit students.

**CRT 2:** I reach out to male only schools.

**CRT 2:** Relationships with civic organizations, Big Brothers, fraternities.
Summary of Research Question Four

To summarize, the fourth research question was: “What strategies do college and universities use to recruit Black males to the teaching profession?” As noted earlier, two major themes evolved from the teacher interview data:

1. Feelings of Singularity
2. Black Men Are Not Being Aggressively Recruited to Teach

Two major themes also evolved from the college/university recruiter interview data:

1. Awareness that College/Universities are not Attracting Black males
2. Out-of-the-Box Initiatives and Efforts

Emergent Themes

The purpose of this interpretive qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of Black male teachers answering the call to teach in North Carolina public schools. Throughout the course of the data analysis, four emerging themes were identified. The emerging themes were (a) desire to help youth, (b) carrying an unspoken burden, (c) hiring is not recruiting, and (d) monetary incentive. These four concepts were pegged as emerging themes because there were consistently and continually discussed by the participants in the study.

At some point during their interview, each participant referenced the idea of helping youth, carrying the unspoken burden, hiring not being the same as recruiting, and monetary incentive. The participants were able to express their thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of the Black males answering the call to teach in North Caroling public schools.
through these four emerging themes.

**Desire to help youth**

According to Day (2010), a strong desire to help others is one of the five characteristics required to become a teacher. The other four characteristics are an ability to disburse information in an understandable way, foster mental growth in students, be a life-long learner, and be a mentor.

The participants of the study consistently expressed their belief that to become a teacher and remain in the profession, one must possess a deep desire to help youth. The participants explained how teaching is a profession that provides an opportunity to serve as a role model for youth and many viewed it as a social responsibility. Eight out of nine teacher participants conveyed that serving youth was their motivation to become a teacher. Additionally, the notion of giving back to both their race influenced their decision to enter the teaching profession.

Provided below are the responses from the participants that elucidate the findings.

*BMT #2 (I 2):* I was a camp counselor for a whole summer, for three summers in high school. So, things like that...just seeing the impact that –and the relationship I had with the kids was great.

*BMT #4 (I 1):* I became a teacher to become a role model for others, for the students.

*BMT 5 (I 1):* I had two things I wanted to do or two loves in my life. I found out that I really love working with young people and that I really love history. And that just came easy, to become a history teacher.
BMT 7 (I 1): I did some internships working with the kids and working with some students in the town that I was going to college in, and I really enjoyed it.

BMT 9 (I 1): I enjoy being around the kids. And on top of all that, I started looking back over my life and saying when I was in school, I feel like a lot of things could have been different for me. And some of the rough patches that I did have over the years could have been different if I had a black male who would have pulled me back and said, like, what are you doing? Stop doing that. Stop hanging with that group, or stop giving your teacher a hard time. I didn’t really have that in school. I had one black male teacher that I can think of off the top of my head when I was in high school, and he wasn’t even one of my teacher. He was on the teacher who helped out with the behavior kids. So, and I wasn’t a major behavior problem, so I very rarely saw him. So, I went into the education originally looking to get a job, just to be honest, but then, later on, I realized that I need to be that change that I want to see within the world, I guess. I and I feel that I could be a lot more beneficial to a lot of black kids if I’m in the classroom.

Carrying an Unspoken Burden

The participants of the study expressed their thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of the Black males answering the call to teach in North Carolina and the idea of shouldering an unspoken burden was an overwhelming theme. Six or 67% of the 9 participants expressed how, while on the one hand they joined the teaching profession to help and inspire youth, they often feel type-cast as only disciplinarians and are frustrated with the monolithic experiences. Some exemplary quotes include:

BMT 6: I knew I had to hold myself to higher standards. I knew that by me being the only Black that they were doing to look at me, what does he have to offer? What skills does he have that he can bring to the table? So, I knew I had to take it and go over
and beyond what was really called of me.

*BMT 6:* ...they expect when they see a Black male—and my stature is pretty, I’m a pretty big guy. So, they see me, they expect, okay, this is going to be on point. This classroom management, oh, his teaching style is going to be this...they expected it to be easier for me to work with a high risk group because I was a Black male.

*BMT 7:* I didn’t even realize it at the time, but I just felt a burden as if I had something to prove. I felt like I had to go above and beyond my colleagues to just get a little bit of recognition...And there was a lot of experiences that I had as a Black man coming up in a Black community that they just couldn’t relate to.

*BMT 7:* I’m looked at as the cure for the Black boy at my school it seems...throughout the year, teachers that have problems with a student and they will immediately be like, Mr. (name), I got a student for you.

*BMT 7:* And even as I talk about being in those programs and how I felt that burden, even as a professional now I feel that burden sometimes. I’m feeling better about myself in a professional setting, but that burden is still there. I still feel like there’s some things—I’ve done a lot at my school and it often gets overlooked. And I still feel like people get acknowledged before I do because of who they are and because of what I look like. I still feel like some people don’t gravitate toward me like they gravitate toward other male teachers, because they don’t feel connected to me because I’m a Black guy.

*BMT 8:* Well, it’s not difficult, but it’s what you are thought of as a Black male teacher. A Black male teacher is only thought of as to be a good disciplinarian. Not one that’s considered the Teacher of the Year...When is he going to be considered an experienced teacher? The only thing I see is every time there’s a Black male, come, especially a big Black male, we’re going to bring him and he’s going to curb the behavior of those kids.
BMT 9: Mainly because you’ve got White teachers, for example, a White female teacher, she doesn’t feel like it’s her responsibility to have to look out for these White girls who are running around here. Or a White male teacher, he doesn’t feel like it’s his responsibility to look out for these White male students.

BMT 9: But as a minority I’m sure that my Hispanic teachers can say the same, my Asian teachers can say the same, I do feel like, yes, I have to be that role model.

**Hiring is not Recruiting**

Consistently woven in the data was the notion that recruiting was being confused with hiring. Nine or 100% of the 9 Black male teacher participants disclosed that they saw no recruiting strategies or practices taking place at either the LEA or college/university levels. There were many accounts of seeing hiring, but no recruiting.

When sports teams recruit, the efforts are visible and the teams do not wait for the player to come to them; they take action and they go get them. Be it by tradition or by design, the target school system and college take a more passive approach to recruitment of Black male teachers. In fact, the LEA recruiter participants revealed explicitly that the target school system does not specifically recruit Black males to its teaching force.

To attract teachers in general, the recruiters mainly held job fairs. The teacher participants deemed this “hiring” and not “recruiting”. The teacher participants believed recruiting should have incentives. Below are some sample quotes that support this notion.

*BMT 1:* They don’t use any strategies to do that. There’s a lot of rhetoric, but, in practice, you don’t see any strategies being employed to recruit Black male teachers.

*BMT 2:* I haven’t seen too many direct outreach programs, you know? It’s like they
hope you apply and once you are in, they might find a way to keep you there.

BMT 5: I don’t see any. I’m not trying to be sarcastic or anything. I don’t see a lot of—in North Carolina—I really don’t see a lot of hard work being done to recruit African American teachers. I see an effort to get new teachers, but not effort to retain them, and I just—if someone is trying, they’re doing—I’m not trying to be sarcastic, again, but if someone is trying, they’re not doing great.

Monetary Talks

Money was a consistent theme found throughout the study, cited by seven or 79% of 9 teacher participants (and cited by eleven or 85% of all 13 participants). From the pay freezes to the doing away with tenure to the decision to stop paying teachers for their advanced degree, North Carolina has put the teaching profession in an unfavorable light. Recruiters expressed that the target school system went from having packed lines at job fairs to being able to have one recruiter handle all the traffic. Not only did the recruiters at both the college and LEA levels describe money as a much-needed incentive for both teacher recruitment and retention, they described the lack of prestige and respect.

Some illustrative statements from the study are:

BMT 1: Right now, they are trying to cut back money and more stressors and...

BMT 3: I got my doctorate degree and I’m not getting paid for my doctorate degree.

BMT 4: ...the job doesn’t pay enough to draw Black male teachers unless you just want to do it.

BMT 5: He hates his job but he makes ten times more than I do. Literally, ten times more than I do.
BMT 7: I’ve got loans I’m still paying off…This is another issue with affordability and having to pay back loans is a deterrent for a lot of people.

BMT 8: I would also say there’s probably no room for negotiating whereas I can—and I hate it to have somebody in control of my pay rate...

BMT 8: We didn’t have a raise in the last five years prior to last year. So, I’m stuck at $30,000 five years. That’s ridiculous.

BMT 9: They look at jobs that make more money. They know teaching doesn’t make money. Because of that, I know I’m not going to be able to really support my family off of my teacher paychecks, so a lot of guys aren’t going to get into education.

LRT: Number one thing: Money. The number one thing is pay. Our teachers aren’t being paid the way they should be, and I think that’s something that our legislators are trying their best to work on. You have North Carolina where you’ve gotten rid of negotiating.

CRT: All of the students, hands down, referred to, oh, teacher pay and oh, we heard about teacher tenure...

Summary

The purpose of the interpretive qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of Black male teachers answering the call to teach in public schools in North Carolina. This chapter addressed the findings from the study. The nine Black male teacher-focused interview questions and the six additional LEA and college/university recruiter-related interview questions discussed in chapter 4 revealed the perceptions, thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes concerning the recruitment and retention of males in education. The data analysis revealed that 100% of the participants were convinced that no recruitment strategies were
happening in the target school system and the college/university system.

The findings revealed teacher participants’ motivations for entering and remaining in the teaching profession. Six themes were identified: (a) relationship with a mentor, (b) a desire to be a role model, (c) family traditions/value of education, (d) social responsibility, (e) necessity, and (f) pathways to a parallel career.

Although all of the themes above represent the shared expressed feelings of the teacher participants, when identifying the most dominant or difference-making theme in the recruitment and retention of Black males, a connection with their own mentors and a desire to give back to youth by being a role model were significant responses. Additionally, the findings suggest that family value placement on education and feelings of social responsibility are common factors for Black males joining the teaching ranks. It seems that all of the teacher participants had these as the core of their decision to pursue teaching careers.

Four significant emergent themes evolved from the data analysis in this study. The emerging themes were revealed as statements consistently mentioned by the participants. The emerging themes can be used to create generalizations about the phenomena. The four emerging themes were (a) desire to help youth, (b) carrying an unspoken burden, (c) hiring is not recruiting, and (d) monetary incentive.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings of this study in relation to the research reviewed in Chapter 2. The limitations faced in the research study are discussed as well as implications for practice and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The findings from this qualitative study affirm that Black male teachers are needed in the public schools of North Carolina and America. Beyond the pedagogy, the presence of Black male teachers in classrooms results in enhanced self-awareness, better understanding of cultural differences and similarities, greater empathy, and a new perspective of the role for the professional teacher. A theme that emerged from the research questions for most of the teacher participants was the desire to give back to youth and to answer the call to social responsibility.

This study and many before it, have shown that Black male students—and all students of all ethnicities—would benefit from having the presence of Black male teachers who pay an active role in their educational careers. Now, couple this with the data that shows that Black males who join the teaching ranks are often motivated by being a role model and serving youth. This has all the makings of a success story. This vital factor cannot be optional if we expect to yield results that we so desire from the generations of students to come. The fact remains that I am Black and my family is Black. I have never had a Black male teacher in my lifetime. The effects of profound and can be discouraging. Peel back the layers, and Black males and young males of color are being suspended at alarming rates (Delpit, 2006) and school systems are left to figure out why? Not only is the absence of Black male educators profound, but also damaging. If the very system that is established to cultivate our
minds does not find the necessity to ensure that equality is abundant, how then are our views of the world to reflect equity?

It is for this purpose that many of the participants in this study decided to become a teacher. They wanted to answer this call to social responsibility. However, many also described a burden in answering this call. This call entailed helping Black students to navigate systems and understand codes, a burden Black males’ counterparts may not experience in the same way. In this chapter, I will provide a discussion of the results and issues raised, implications for research, and implications for practice.

Summary of Major Findings

The purpose of the interpretive qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of Black male teachers answering the call to teach in North Carolina public schools. The nine Black male teacher-focused questions and the six additional LEA and college/university recruiter-related questions discussed in chapter 4 revealed the perceptions, thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes concerning the recruitment and retention of males in education. The data analysis revealed that 100% of the participants were convinced that no recruitment strategies were being employed by the target school system or the college/university system.

The 9 participants revealed the motivation for African-American males to enter the teaching profession would have to be a strong desire to serve students and help the youth. Other significant data included: a Black male teacher shortage, family traditions, pathways to coaching, civil right, feelings of isolation, and a sense that there was nowhere to go from teaching.

Four emerging themes evolved from the data analysis in this study. The emerging
themes were revealed as statements consistently mentioned by the participants. The emerging themes can be used to create generalizations about the phenomena. The four emerging themes were (a) desire to help youth, (b) carrying an unspoken burden, (c) hiring is not recruiting, and (d) monetary incentive.

**Discussion of Findings**

The findings are consistent with previously reported research of Black males teaching in public schools. The benefits of recruiting and retaining Black male teachers that I identified in this study were supported by previous studies mentioned in the review of literature section of this dissertation (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Delpit, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 1999). I will discuss the findings by the study’s research questions.

**Research Question One**

Why do Black males join the teaching profession? As noted in Chapter 4, through my qualitative analysis of the participants’ personal interviews, six major themes emerged from the data to answer the first research question:

1. Relationship with a mentor
2. Desire to be a role model
3. Family value and emphasis on education
4. Feelings of social responsibility
5. Financial necessity
6. Pathway to a parallel career ambition
The participants first described relationship with a mentor as the impetus for pursuing a career in teaching. While they described a bond with their mentors, they also voiced concern that there weren’t enough of them (Black male teachers) to mentor Black male students. A big take-away in examining the data from the interviews with the Black male teacher participants was the significance of the connections they had with their own mentors.

These mentors were comprised of teachers, coaches, and family members. The literature asserts that students need to be able to identify with persons that look like them (Delpit, 2006; Manson, 1999), which may be a reason why there are not many Black male teachers in the American educational system. Mentorship is extremely effective when the mentor can relate to the mentee in some capacity. Black males are often left without mentors in the educational sector because there is not an overabundance of Black male teachers available.

Accordingly, the literature underscores that teachers of color engage in the following practices: having high expectations of students of color; providing culturally relevant teaching; developing trusting relationships with students; confronting issues of racism through teaching; and serving as advocates and cultural brokers (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Delpit, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 1999; Yasso, 2005).

I also identified that the participants had a desire to be role models and that there was an emphasis on education in their upbringing. Teachers who are the most successful with Black students respect and value students’ culture and possess sophisticated
understandings of their own culture and its relationship to the construction and implementation of a liberatory approach (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995).

An important finding was the feeling of social responsibility expressed by three of the nine teacher participants, to be a presence in schools. Meyers (2004) posits that perhaps the most important attitude each person holds is his or her attitude about self. Delpit (2006) suggested that to combat the phenomenon concerning how cultural differences affect teachers of the dominant culture’s perceptions of non-White students that students must be taught the codes needed to participate fully in mainstream American life. Other less-mentioned themes included financial necessity due to the economy and a pathway to a parallel career.

**Research Question Two**

*Black Male Teacher Participants*

Why do Black males remain in the teaching profession? For the second research question, I identified four major themes among the teacher participants:

1. Influence Young Black males
2. Sense of Duty
3. Too invested to leave
4. Actually, I’m leaving

When Black male participants were asked about the determinants that factor into their decision to stay in the teaching field, they all have varying responses but one response, in
particular, outweighed all the others: the influence of youth. The impact of a diverse faculty not only benefits students of color, it benefits all students (Ahmad & Boser, 2014).

While Black male teachers are mandated to serve as role models, as are all contracted public school teachers in North Carolina, the call to duty is more complex for Black males. Black male teachers often act in loco parentis, helping students, especially minority students, to navigate life inside and beyond the classroom. The research backs the notion that students of color benefit from having positive role models and receiving more support (Dilworth, 1990).

Not all of the Black male teacher participants in this study planned on remaining in the teaching profession. Two of the nine participants have decided to leave the teaching profession altogether. The remaining three participants are staying in the profession out of necessity or because they have invested too much time in education to leave. Low salaries, low prestige, and low social value of the career make teaching less than desirable for minority teachers (Machado, 2013). A 2005 University of Pennsylvania study by Richard Ingersoll found that teachers of color left the profession twenty-four percent more often than white teachers did.

*College/University Recruitment Personnel*

In seeking to gain perspective on research question two from the college/university recruitment perspective, I uncovered the following themes:

1. Identity and isolation Experience
2. Political Climate

3. A Shortage of Black Men

Both of the recruiters expressed a keen awareness that Black male students experience isolation and an identity crux in their education preparatory programs. Using a Black Male Teacher Environment Survey administered by Arne Duncan to the teachers in Boston Public Schools, it was found that Black male teachers were more inclined to stay on the job if there were more Black male teachers in the school (LA School Report, 2013). This logic would seem plausible in teacher preparatory programs as well.

The two recruiter participants also pointed to the political climate in North Carolina as a huge barrier to Black male teacher recruitment. In a few short years, North Carolina has lost its Teaching Fellows Program, teacher tenure, and pay for advanced degrees. The NC Teaching Fellows program had a dedicated focus on recruiting people of color, and experts had hailed it as an important way to get more teachers of color into the nation’s classrooms (Fitzsimon, 2005).

Lastly, both recruiter participants reported a shortage of Black men in the teacher interest pool. Bereda and Chait (2011) suggest that states should do more to fund teacher-preparation programs. They also argue that the federal government can do more by creating financial aid programs for low-income students to help them to deal with the costs of teacher preparation.
For the second research question, I identified three major themes among the LEA recruiter interview data:

1. A decrease in teacher compensation
2. A decrease in teacher respect
3. An increase in teacher accountability

The LEA recruiters each pointed to more work, less pay, and lower esteem as the barriers to teacher retention within the large school system. While the respect for the teaching profession and the compensation for teachers are diminishing and at an embarrassing low level in the state of North Carolina, the accountability for teachers is quite high. This poses a challenge for both college/university and LEA recruiters alike. These themes are supported by the research (Machado, 2013; Teacher Diversity Revisited, 2014).

**Research Question Three**

What strategies do local education agencies (LEAs) use to recruit Black males to the teaching profession? For the third research question, I identified two major themes in the combined data:

1. Awareness that LEAs are not recruiting Black male teachers
2. Distinguishing hiring from recruiting Black male teachers

Not found in the literature review was the notion that Black male teachers are agitated
that colleges/universities LEAs are not recruiting Black male teachers to the profession, at least not according to what they deem “recruiting”. All nine teacher participants voiced concern that recruitment was rhetoric not backed by action. As confirmed by the LEA, I was enlightened to learn that the target school system does not specifically recruit Black male teachers to its teaching force. The review of literature consistently echoes the importance of recruiting Black male teachers (Center for American Progress, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Delpit, 2006; Machado, 2013; Manson, 1999; Yasso, 2005).

Nine of nine Black male teacher participants described the recruitment efforts of the LEA and college/universities as “hiring” and not “recruiting”. This brought to light an interesting perspective not covered in the review of research literature. The Black male teacher participants did not perceive job fairs and job postings as recruitment practices but, rather, as mere hiring practices that require no strategy.

**Research Question Four**

What strategies do colleges and universities use to recruit Black males to the teaching profession? As noted earlier, two major themes evolved from the teacher interview data:

1. Feelings of Singularity  
2. Black Men Not Being Aggressively Recruited to Teach

Two major themes also evolved from the college/university recruiter interview data:

1. Awareness that College/Universities are not Attracting Black males  
2. Out-of-the-Box Initiatives and Efforts
Again, the theme of singularity emerged in the data, even when interviewing the college/university and LEA recruitment personnel. The most abundant research evidence supporting the continued use of affirmative action in college admissions exists in the area of how individuals benefit from diversity. Studies show there are implications for teachers and students of color (American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, 1999; Banks, 1995; Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Dilworth, 1992; Irvine, 1998, 1999; Kirby et al., 1999).

None of the recruiters—college/university or LEA—offered feedback to contradict the sentiments of the Black male teacher participants: Black men are not being aggressively recruited to teach. This is supported by statistical data and is confirmed by the practitioners participating in this qualitative study.

Because Black males are the most likely students to be undecided at the start of their academic career (Dickenson, 2009), it would be advantageous for recruiters to aggressively recruit (engage) them. In South Carolina, the “Call Me Mister” program actively recruits Black males to its teacher preparatory program by offering incentives such as free tuition in exchange for teaching in the state. It is seeing great success with an approximate 71% retention rate. In a discourse on affirmative action, Hughes (2001) noted that while some organizations may promote a commitment to hiring minorities, they are unwilling to purposefully recruit, support, or facilitate minority members’ transition to a majority White organization (Mabokela & Madsen, 2002).

In addition to this awareness—among this study’s Black male teacher
participants, LEA recruiter participants and college/university recruiters alike—that Black males are not being purposely recruited, there was expressed by all recruiters an awareness that the education profession itself is not attracting teachers, let alone Black male teachers. Teacher working conditions—low wages and prestige coupled with increased accountability—is a recipe for lack-of-appeal. This resonates with the review of literature. Many outside and inside of education view the teaching profession as both low paying and low-prestige (“Why Teachers of Color Quit,” 2011).

To meet this challenge, college/university recruitment personnel are using some out-of-the-box efforts to recruit Black male teacher prospects: diversity programming and rapport-building with the Black community. This approach was supported by previous studies in the review of literature section of this study (Delpit, 2006). Delpit (2006) asserts that teachers and parents of color seldom are included in conversations about what is good for their children. Including the community could be a step in the right direction to engaging Black male teacher prospects.

**Implications for Research**

One of the major themes that emerged from this study was the acknowledgement that recruiting is not the same as hiring. It made me stop and think about recruiting practices in other professions and industries. I pondered why Black males are recruited from the significantly early years of life to engage in physical sports and related activities but very little emphasis is paced on locating Black males to engage academically. Hiring, on the other hand, simply consists of interviewing candidates that apply and determining which candidate
fits the role. Imagine if colleges and LEAs recruited educators in the same manner in which they recruited athletes. The disposition of Black men in education would look significantly different. At present, colleges and LEAs do not recruit; they hire. Recruiters should work with schools to nurture talent and constantly be in search of the best practices to nourish newly recruited teacher professionals. A key action that recruiters take is nurturing talent communities. In addition to the provision of hands-on experiences, recruiters could also be responsible for the collection and analysis of data regarding recruitment and talent pools. This information could also play a key factor in the underrepresentation of various ethnic groups receiving training in the education sector to meet the educational needs of students.

Figure 6

Summary of implications for research
While all of the participants believed nothing was being done to recruit them to teach, eight or 89% of the nine Black male teacher participants conveyed that serving youth was their motivation to become a teacher. Additionally, the notion of giving back to both their race and community influenced their decision to enter the teaching profession. This implication challenges researchers to explore the value of identifying teacher prospects in high school. With a staggeringly low number of Black male teachers, are Black male students expecting to become teachers? This study found that Black male teachers are not actively recruited or exposed to teaching as a career while in high school. More research is needed to investigate and evaluate the effectiveness of aggressive recruiting of Black male teachers as well as exposure at the high school level.

Meanwhile, LEAs need to work to keep retain the Black male teachers who are yet on board. Six or 67% of the 9 Black male teacher participants expressed how, while on the one hand they joined the teaching profession to help and inspire youth, they often feel type-cast as only disciplinarians and are frustrated with the monolithic experiences. This unspoken burden that Black male teachers working in school buildings feel needs to be further developed. I would urge future researchers to explore ways in which Black male teachers are tasked with “other duties as assigned”. It would be worthwhile to learn if Black male teachers, cross-categorically, are relegated to the role of disciplinarian and how it impacts their course load (level of difficulty) and perception as an academic leader.
Implications for Practice

Research on the perspectives of Black males answering the call to teach in North Carolina public schools remains underdeveloped, and yet it is a heavy topic with many implications for public policy, teacher recruitment practices, and school reform. This study enhanced the literature by confirming the results of previous studies on the gravity and paramountcy of the recruitment of Black male teachers and by giving more insight into what motivates Black males to join and remain in the teaching profession.

Figure 7
Summary of implications for practice

Results from this interpretive qualitative study identified barriers to attracting and retaining Black male teachers to the teaching profession, which can serve as a springboard
for further learning and meaning making. Particularly, college/university and LEA recruitment personnel may be better able to focus on a greater understanding of how to go about recruiting and attracting Black male teacher prospects. This study has shown that holding job fairs and maintaining memberships are not sufficient to result in positive recruitment outcomes by college/university and LEA recruitment personnel; rather, an engagement approach as is used in the sports industry is significant and can greatly influence minority recruitment numbers.

It is significant to acknowledge that there is a deficit, a problem, a disproportionality of Black male teachers in education and to iterate from a recruiter standpoint that nothing is being done to actively address it. Who should be held accountable for the lack of effort to even the playing field? Who should lead the charge to bring about a resolution to the problem? Who suffers most? There are no winners when we fail to approach systematic inequality within a system even when the system is structured to empower one group over another. The immediate loser in this case is the Black male student.

It does not stop with the student. It also negatively impacts the Black male educator. My experience has been that Black male educators are often left to seek resources and support on their own and usually such services are never discovered. The establishment of systems to increase the support provided immediately at the level of higher education could also mean retention for teachers at the point of recruitment.

Recruiters at the college, university and LEA levels must actively recruit by engaging the community. Business as usual—job fairs where they hope Black males teachers show up—simply is ineffective. If a proactive approach is not adopted immediately, the end result
can mean long-term damaging effects for whole school communities. This is especially true for Black students who are refused opportunities to learn from teachers with whom they share similar life experiences and can relate to. Furthermore, it will always be relevant and necessary to ensure that students of all races are able to interact with Black male educators who are positive role models to further dispel the often-negative narrative that mainstream media portrays.

The above implications challenge recruiters to rethink the value of engaging Black male teacher prospects and to take a deeper look at how their recruitment practices are working. If Black male teachers in the profession are not seeing teachers that look like them being recruited, they may begin to question their value in the profession. As reported in the literature review in Chapter 2, as much as things have changed, a look at history shows that not much has changed by way of inclusion (Delpit, 2006). As the literature suggests, LEAs and colleges/universities should keep in mind that “when students see teachers who share their racial or ethnic backgrounds, they often view schools as more welcoming places” (Boser, 2014, p. 1).

Another theme consistently found throughout the study, cited by 79% of the teacher participants (and cited by eleven or 85% of all 13 participants), was that money talks. From pay freezes to the doing away with tenure to the elimination of the NC Teaching Fellows Program, the state of North Carolina has put the teaching profession in an unfavorable light for prospective teachers. Recruiters lamented that in the past, having packed lines at job fairs was common, whereas now they need only assign one recruiter to handle all traffic at job fairs. In addition to purposefully recruiting Black males teachers LEA and college/university
recruiters, LEAs should work with colleges/universities and the community at large to
conceive of ways to incentivize the recruitment and retention of Black male teachers. But do
not stop at brainstorming; campaign for it. The prestige of teaching has waned over the
decades, but, through active marketing and financial incentives, the teaching profession can
regain its luster. The ever-present stigma of lack of success can be diminished with time and
money. The incentivizing of purposeful recruiting is not only necessary, it is overdue.

Conclusion

North Carolina’s response to teacher diversity is both simple and complex, yet a
diverse teaching force is dependent on the push for more awareness and more incentives. The
purpose of this interpretive qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of Black male
teachers answering the call to teach in North Carolina public schools to better inform LEAs
and colleges and universities on why, and how, they should recruit and retain Black male
teachers. The nine Black male teacher-focused questions and the six additional LEA and
college recruiter-related questions discussed in this study reveal the perceptions, thoughts,
beliefs, and attitudes concerning recruitment and retention of Black males in education. The
data revealed that 100% of the participants perceived no recruitment strategies were being
used by the target school system or the college/university system in North Carolina.

This study revealed that Black male teachers are motivated by a desire to help youth,
that they carry an unspoken burden, that we need to distinguish hiring from recruiting, and
that they believe recruitment and retention of Black male teachers should be incentivized.
The question now becomes, what is North Carolina going to do about it?
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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A: Participation Script Black Male Teachers
Hello Mr. _______________________.

I am a North Carolina State University doctoral student conducting a study on the perspectives of Black Males answering the call to teach in North Carolina Public Schools. To this end, I would like to request your participation in an interview. By participating in this interview you will be adding to the existing body of knowledge on this subject.

Our interview will take place on _________________ at __________________, or via phone__(____)__________ o _________________, in a quiet atmosphere.

I would greatly appreciate your participation in this endeavor.

Please contact me at (919) 559-2904 or kinamoore@gmail.com if you are interested and available. Directions will be emailed to you upon confirmation.

Thank you,

Shekina Moore
APPENDIX B. Participation Script – WCPSS Recruitment
Hello Mr./Mrs. ________________________.

I am a North Carolina State University doctoral student conducting a study on the perspectives of Black males answering the call to teach in North Carolina Public Schools. To this end, I would like to request your participation in an interview. By participating in this interview you will be adding to the existing body of knowledge on this subject.

Our interview will take place on ________________ at ________________, or via phone (____) - ______ on ________________, in a quiet atmosphere.

I would greatly appreciate your participation in this endeavor.

Please contact me at (919) 559-2904 or kinamoore@gmail.com if you are interested and available. Directions will be emailed to you upon confirmation.

Thank you,

Shekina Moore
APPENDIX C. Participation Script Recruitment Shaw University
Greetings Mr./Mrs. _______________________,

I am a North Carolina State University doctoral student conducting a study on the perspectives of Black Males answering the call to teach in North Carolina Public Schools. To this end, I would like to request your participation in an interview. By participating in this interview you will be adding to the existing body of knowledge on this subject.

Our interview will take place on _________________ at __________________, or via phone__(____) -________ on _____________________________, in a quiet atmosphere.

I would greatly appreciate your participation in this endeavor.

Please contact me at (919) 559-2904 or kinamoore@gmail.com if you are interested and available. Directions will be emailed to you upon confirmation.

Thank you,

Shekina M. Moore
Doctoral Candidate
North Carolina State University
Greetings Mr./Mrs. ________________________.

I am a North Carolina State University doctoral student conducting a study on Black males joining the teaching profession. To this end, I would like to request your participation in an interview. By participating in this interview you will be adding to the existing body of knowledge on this subject.

Our interview will take place on ______________ at __________________ or via phone__(____) __________ on _____________________________, in a quiet atmosphere.

I would greatly appreciate your participation in this endeavor.

Please contact me at (919) 559-2904 or kinamoore@gmail.com if you are interested and available. Directions will be emailed to you upon confirmation.

Thank you,

Shekina M. Moore
Doctoral Candidate
North Carolina State University
APPENDIX E. Interview Script & Questions Teachers
Black Male Teachers’ Perspectives on the Recruitment of Black Male Teachers

Principal Investigator: Shekina Moore Interviewee: ____________________________

Date: _____________________ Time: ___________________

Script

[Salutation]. Before we begin, is it okay to record this interview and to take some notes?

I would like to thank you for your participation in this research study about Black male teachers answering the call to teach in North Carolina public schools. I would like to share that I am a graduate student at North Carolina State University working toward a doctorate in Educational Leadership. In my research, I want to understand and explore the perspectives of Black males entering the teaching profession and their career pathway.

Your name* will not be identified in the report of my findings. As stated in your signed Informed Consent, you may stop the interview at any time and/or decline comment.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Questions for Interviews

1. Why did you become a teacher?

2. Why do Black males join the teaching profession?

3. What strategies are used by Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to recruit Black males to the teaching profession?

4. What strategies are used by colleges and universities to recruit Black males to the teaching profession?

5. Who inspired you?
6. What was your training like?

7. What was or is it like to be a Black male in your teacher preparation program?

8. What did your Black male friends major in in college? Why?

9. What factors, if any, keep you in the teaching profession?

_Pseudonyms will be given*_
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Do you have any questions before we begin?

Questions for Interviews

1. What are the roles and responsibilities of a recruiter?
2. What strategies do you use to recruit Black males to join the teaching profession?
3. How do you collaborate with Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to recruit Black males to the teaching profession?
4. How many Black males are in your teacher preparation program?
5. What challenges, if any, do you face in the recruitment of Black males into your teacher preparation program?
6. What challenges, if any, do you face in the recruitment of Black males into your teacher preparation program?

Pseudonyms will be given*
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Do you have any questions before we begin?

Questions for Interviews

1. What are the roles and responsibilities of the WCPSS Recruitment and Retention Department?

2. What strategies do you use to recruit Black males to teach in WCPSS?

3. How do you collaborate with colleges and universities to recruit Black males to teach in WCPSS?

4. How many Black males teach in WCPSS?

5. What challenges do you face in the recruitment of Black males into your school system?

6. What challenges do you face in the retention of Black male teachers?

*Pseudonyms will be given.