

Black Male Achievement Gap

We live in the land of opportunity, where children are told anything is possible. Parents in the United States share many of the same aspirations for their children, but there are invisible barriers that keep some children from progressing at the same rate as their peers. This is particularly true for African American boys, who are twice as likely as whites to be held back in elementary school, three times as likely to be suspended from school, and half as likely to graduate college.

This is known as the Black male achievement gap. Black males, even when given the same educational and economic resources as their peers of other races, are likely to fall short of their counterparts in virtually every measure of academic success. It is perhaps the single most pressing problem Black males face today. In an America that is increasingly realizing that it must revamp its education system to remain competitive in the global marketplace, the voice of the Black male is essential, yet a missing intellectual presence because of this gap in achievement.

Statistics: Blacks males are...

...more likely to attend schools that are under-resourced and performing poorly.

Currently, only 15 percent of Black students attend schools that are well-resourced and high performing, while 42 percent attend schools that are both under-resourced and performing poorly. In high poverty and minority schools, students are 70% more likely to have a non-certified teacher in a specific subject, with only 40% of schools offering Physics and 29% offering Calculus.

...less likely to obtain a college degree.

Only 16% of Black males hold a college degree, compared to 32% of White males.

...three times more likely to be suspended or expelled from school than their White peers, therefore missing valuable learning time in the classroom.

Black students, most often males, are punished with out-of-school suspension nearly three times more often than White students.

...2.5 times less likely to be enrolled in gifted and talented programs, even if their prior achievement reflects the ability to succeed.

Only 3 percent of Black male students are enrolled in gifted and talented programs.

...2.5 times more likely to be classified as mentally challenged by their schools.

Three percent of Black male students are classified in this manner, as compared to only 1.4 percent of White male students. Black male students make up 20 percent of all

students in the United States classified as mentally retarded, although they are only 9 percent of the student population.

...more likely to have under-prepared and ineffective teachers.

Research of minority-dominant schools shows that 28 percent of core academic teachers lack appropriate certification.

...less likely to graduate from high school in 4 years than their White peers.

Only 52% of Black males who entered high school in 2006 graduated in four years, compared with 78% of White non-Latino males and 58% of Latino males.

..twice more likely to drop out of high school than their White peers.

In 2009, 4.8% of Blacks dropped out of grades 10-12, compared with 2.4% for Whites.

1. The Schott Foundation. "National Opportunity to Learn Campaign. Federal Recommendations." schottfoundation.org/otl/otl-federal-recommendations-final.pdf
2. Toldson, Ivory and Chance Lewis. "Challenge the Status Quo"
3. Ibid.
4. The New York Times. "Black Students face more Discipline, Data Suggests." March 6, 2012 (data is from the Department of Education)
5. Black Alliance for Educational Options. <http://www.baeo.org/urgentneed.html>
6. The Future of Children at Princeton University. "Special Education for Students with Disabilities." <https://www.princeton.edu/futureofchildren/publications/journals/article/index.xml?journalid=57&articleid=337§ionid=2249>
7. Black Alliance for Educational Options. <http://www.baeo.org/urgentneed.html>
8. The Huffington Post. "High School Graduation Rate for Black Males Trails White Students." September 9, 2012. (data is from The Schott Foundation).
9. The Huffington Post. "High School Dropout Rates for Minority and Poor Students Disproportionately High." October 20, 2011 (data from National Center for Education Statistics)