Introduction

According to the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (2014), African American male students are suspended and expelled at higher rates than other ethnic group of male public school students in kindergarten through 12th grade. During the 2011-2012 school year, the Office of Civil Rights reported nationally 20% of African American male students received at least one out-of-school suspension compared with just 6% of Caucasian male students (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). During the 2013-2014 school year, the rate of suspensions for these student populations dropped, but remained disproportional. African American and Caucasian male students were suspended at a rate of 18% and 5% respectively (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Researchers note these disproportional rates of school discipline are decades-old phenomena.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2017) during the 2014-2015 school year, African American students were 16% of the public school population nationally, yet they were 15% of the total special education population. African American males, specifically, comprised approximately 12% of all students served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) while representing 8% of the total public school population (U.S. Department of Education, 2014; U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Objectives

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to

1. Explore the perceptions and experiences of African American males about how teachers addressed their academic, social or emotional needs in an urban school setting
2. Advance pedagogical practices aimed at the academic success of African American male students in general education classrooms.

Methods

- Up to three (3) one-on-one semi-structured interviews with African American men
- Up to three (3) one-on-one semi-structured interviews with teachers of African American male students
- Teacher Focus Groups

Inadequate teacher preparation for work with Black male students

Black male students disproportionately represented in school discipline and special education

Preliminary Findings

- Teachers received no formal pre-service preparation working with Black male students even as late as 2003 – Confirms the research literature
- Black males prefer teachers who are relatable, can relate content to their daily lives, who are Black and male

References

