Spring 5-4-2015

The Fire This Time: Assessing the Scalability of Supportive Service Programs for Young Men of Color, a case study

Ronald James-Terry Taylor

The Fire This Time: Assessing the Scalability of Supportive Service Programs for Young Men

of Color, a case study

Abstract

After spending the spring 2014 semester teaching at an urban high school in New York City, I began to question specifically what could be done to better support my students; specifically the young men and boys of color. By serving as a volunteer in the Empowering Males Leadership Class (EMLC) during the spring of 2014, I developed an interest in understanding (1) how the program was **effective** in servicing young men and boys of color and (2) how the interplay between federal programs and local **implementation** was characterized. This analysis is a hybrid of political science and policy **implementation** analysis, with the intentions to understand how supportive service programs intentioned for young men of color are influenced or shaped by the *My Brother's Keeper* Initiative. Even more so, this project goes on to assess how **effective** the EMLC's model is in helping some of the most underachieving students at the case study high school.

This project finds that while the EMLC is **effective** in creating strong social and emotional environments, it lacks the programmatic and structural ability to increase the academic standing of students. It is also concluded that in order to potentially improve the program to have stronger academic results, a series of wrap around supports are infused into the EMLC model. Regarding implementation, it is found that the program was able to implement within the school setting because of the presence of committed local workers, not a larger external force.

Assessing the Scalability of Supportive Service Programs for Young Men on Color
Syracuse University
Department of Political Science Distinction /Renee Crown University Honors Program
Capstone
April 2015

Introduction: This study reports the views of students (9 total target population; N=9) that are participants in the Empowering Males Leadership Class at the case study high school. The information presented will be used to: (1) critically assess the formation and sustainability of a mentorship program focused on the academic, social, and emotional needs of young men of color (predominantly African American) and (2) question to what extent "street level bureaucrats" can carry out federally formed initiatives.

Methods: This research project was primarily conducted using qualitative survey research. On three separate research "days" students at the case study high school were given surveys to complete evaluating their academic, social, and emotional supports through the Empowering Males Leadership Class. In addition to the survey research, interviews of faculty and staff at the case study high school were conducted to create a deeper understanding of each of these specific research areas and research interest intersections.

Acknowledged Limitations: This study sought to study the entire Empowering Males Leadership Class; however, at most six students attended class on time to participate in this study. Therefore, the sample size for the below results account for at most six students and in some cases five students. Also, for the sake of such a project – the results and conclusions found can only be applied to this specific group of students.

Findings:
Academic Survey Results
1. 4 of 6 students interviewed identified either the leader of the Empowering Males Leadership Class or a family member as a main source of support when it came to school work (2 students for each respectively) (n=6).
2. 3 of 6 students identified "playing basketball" as their goal after graduation (n=6).
3. 4 of 6 students in the Empowering Males Leadership Class said that teachers "barely" offer extra outside of schedule class time (n=6).
4. 4 of 6 students found that they have been offered "the proper tools to succeed in school" (n=6).
5. 3 of 6 students reported that they commit no hours to studying per week (n=6).
6. 4 of 5 students reported that they were "not sure" or "not" given the opportunity by the case study high school to prepare for their college or career aspirations (n=5).
7. 5 of 6 students reported that the Empowering Males Leadership Class helped them with their school work (n=6).
8. Only 2 of 6 students found the Empowering Males Leadership Class to be the most supportive place compared to other supportive services (n=6).

Social Survey Results
1. 3 out of 5 students said they feel "most supported" at home (n=5).
2. 3 out of 5 students said the way they feel most supported was by "constant family support" or "constant teacher support" (n=5).
3. 2 out of 5 students rated the supportive environment in the school at an "8" (n=5).
4. 3 out of 5 students noted that they were involved in either "basketball" or Saturday School" as their extracurricular activities (n=5).
5. 5 out of 5 students said that they "enjoyed attending" the school (n=5).
6. 4 out of 5 students said that they "felt they had friends or supporters" (n=5).
7. 4 out of 5 students said they "felt the Empowering Males Leadership Class enhanced the support they felt in school" (n=5).
8. 3 out of 5 students said that the "Empowering Males Leadership Class was supportive in addition to their friends and other supporters" (n=5).
9. 3 out of 5 students said that they thought the school's mission was to "produce successful students" (n=5).

Emotional Survey Results
1. 5 out of 5 students said "they have a place to express themselves in school" (n=5).
2. 3 out of 5 students said that they have "a place to express themselves at home" (n=5).
3. 3 out of 5 students said that they "feel safest to express themselves in either the Empowering Males Leadership Class" or "any space that will listen to them" (n=5).
4. 4 out of 5 students said that they "have the adequate space to go to during emotional difficulty" (n=5).
5. 4 out of 5 students said that they felt "teachers are not understanding of emotional difficulty" (n=5).
6. 5 out of 5 students said that "the Empowering Males Leadership Class" is a place where they feel safe to express themselves (n=5).
7. 4 out of 5 students said that "the Empowering Males Leadership Class cannot do anything more to support them" (n=5).

Conclusions: The Empowering Males Leadership Class (EMLC) has been found to be an effective mode of social and emotional supports; however, it lacks the structural support to be as supportive for the academic needs of students. Furthermore, it was found that the vehicle through which the program was implemented was through the use and application of local school leaders, known as "street level bureaucrats." These people believed in the work that the EMLC was engaging in and found ways to implement their goals with little to no guidance from federal outlines, such as *My Brother's Keeper* or other larger initiatives.

Table of Contents

Preface

In his acclaimed work, <u>The Fire Next Time</u>, American literary genius and African American activist James Baldwin, situates a conversation between himself and his namesake on the experiences of being an African American man in America. Throughout the text he emphasizes that his agency, his existence, and his future may be impacted by a series of external factors, but when all is said and done – he has the capacity to survive, and if he dares enough, he can strive. The value added from Baldwin's text is not so much a template of survival, but rather a commitment to understanding what methods support the actual means of survival.

In the same token, I have used this project as a vehicle for my own ambitions, desires, and hopes to impact the field of African American male development and ideation, particularly as it relates to education and the quality of programming meant to support, enable, and empower the opportunities of young men of color. Black men can. This text is situated in such a time in the United States, where even as I type these words a Black man was gunned down in South Carolina by a police officer, who then later tried to place a tazer on the slain body to insinuate a threat. This project is my attempt to enter into a conversation where few scholars interact, in order to understand, to unpack, and to challenge the notions and frameworks of African American men. Today, I seek to debunk the myths, provide a frame, and most importantly reframe a narrative. Black men are capable, Black men are intelligent, Black men are enough.

During the spring of 2014, I along with four other Syracuse University students in the Public Affairs Undergraduate program of the Maxwell School completed an internship in New York City, serving as 12th grade government and politics teaching interns. Throughout this experience, we were tasked with discovering innovative ways to teach government, creating lessons and materials to impact our students, and accepting that the work we would engage in for

six months would not be the cure to urban education problems; rather, it was just a beginning. This experience is what allowed me to realize the opportunity in working with the Empowering Males Leadership Class during my time in New York. This class, which is composed of a section of the school's "most underperforming men of color" was an initiative formed to acknowledge and correct the tendencies that some of these students were engaging in. The idea behind this class was to offer students a specialized space that focused on study skills, character development, and leadership enhancement in order to have the greatest impact on their academic and professional profiles within the school. The program, which received no financial support from the school and was more so the articulation of concern by faculty members, sought to provide students with an alternative to their environment and condition.

Throughout the spring of 2014, I spent time within the class serving as a teaching assistant; developing lesson plans and helping the host teacher use research based mechanisms to understand how best to engage with young men of color in this setting. Through this experience, this thesis project was conceptualized. The spring of 2014, became an observational period of time where I spent the majority of my experience watching how the class fell into place, how it functioned, and most importantly how it actually grew and developed. This period called, phase I, serves as the content building section of this thesis project and provided me with the critical knowledge I needed to understand how to best understand the need for this program and its impact.

The following project, phase II, is the embodiment of how I went on to study and understand how this specific program was **effective**, and how it needed to be developed. Furthermore, I had to question on a larger scale why was it that programs such as this were

implemented in such a space, such as the case study high school, and the challenges associated

with situating such projects.

Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible without the commitment and contribution of the young men of the Empowering Males Leadership Class, AP Reed, and the HSLAPS family. I am eternally grateful to you all for your strong and ongoing work, your continued dedication and of course your unending support. I want to extend a special thank you my Capstone Committee (Profs. Quinn Mulroy, Sarah Pralle, and Timothy Eatman) and Distinction Thesis Class of the Department of Political Science for the constant criticism and motivation to be better.

Advice to Future Honors Students

Be authentic, stay true to your interests, and remember that this is your chance to give voice to something that is much greater than you. I chose to be a voice for black males, when in academia, their voices are lost and oftentimes disregarded in space.

Chapter 1

Introduction

<u>**Section I**</u>: <u>The Need for this research</u>

The African American student, and more specifically the African American male is experiencing a *crisis*. A multi-layered, multi-generation cascade of missed opportunity, untapped potential, and crippling living conditions, forecasts, and realities form a predicament that positions African American students at the bottom, or near bottom, when considering academic opportunity. From educational opportunity to life prospects, every aspect of achievement is under question. Starting at the earliest of stages, African American students start 'behind' their white counterparts. At about age four (4), 28% of black children were proficient at letter recognition and 55% were proficient at number and shape recognition, compared to 37% and 73% of white students respectively ("A Strong Start", 2011, p. 3). Furthermore, when less than one-quarter of African American males are at or above grade level in reading, mathematics, history, and science, is coupled with fewer than 3% of African American males performing at advanced levels in the same courses, concerns about the educational preparation of these students comes into question (Black Male (d), 2014, p. 49). Additionally, during the 2009-10 academic year, only 52% of African American males graduated from high school in the United States in four years ("Urgency of Now", 2012, pp. 6-7).

Given these barriers to educational opportunity, the plight of African American males exists in a delicate balance between their life prospects and their life aspirations. As of 2001, one in six African American males were imprisoned in the United States. It is projected that if these trends continue one in three African American males will be incarcerated at some point in their lifetime (NAACP Criminal Justice Report, 2013, p. 1). Given this reality, there has been a concerted effort among scholars, communities, and government to produce informative research, **effective** strategies, and critical concepts that seek to address two concerns: (1) explanations for the persistent underachievement of African

American males in the U.S. and society and (2) potential interventions that can help improve the educational aspirations and life chances of African American males (Black Male (d), 2014, pp. 48-49).

In February 2014, President Barack H. Obama unveiled the *My Brother's Keeper Initiative*; an executive initiative focused on "addressing the persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color and to ensure that all young people reach their fullest potential" (*My Brother's Keeper Task Force Report*, 2014, p. 1). The Initiative is a joint effort between the federal government, corporations, foundations, and communities to accelerate an identified six milestones as identified in the *My Brother's Keeper 90-Day Task Force Report*. This report identifies these six milestones as critical points for boys and young men of color: (1) Getting a healthy start and entering school ready to learn, (2) reading at grade level by third grade, (3) graduating from high school college and career ready, (4) completing post-secondary education or training, (5) successfully entering the workforce, and (6) reducing violence and providing a second chance. The Administration asserts that these six critical areas of improvement will not only counter the negative trends seen in the educational and life outcomes of young men of color, but once confronted will help move them towards better opportunities.

For each milestone, a series of recommendations were put forward as pathways to ameliorate the issues within the said milestones. For the common citizen to be involved in the work of improving the educational and life outputs of young men of color, the Administration made an official call to provide young men of color with well-trained and **effective** mentors (*My Brother's Keeper Task Force Report*, 2014, pp. 11-12). This "call to mentoring," is a majorly online platform, through which a citizen may sign up, go through standard background checks and preparation, and then be partnered with a mentoring organization in their area. In *The Mentoring Effect: Young People's Perspectives on the Outcomes and Availability of Mentorship*, produced by the MENTOR: National Mentoring Partnership, it was found that 76% of "at-risk" young adults who had a mentor aspire to enroll in and graduate from college versus 56% of at-risk youth who had no mentor ("The Mentoring Effect, 2014, p. 3). Mentoring, in this context, has been seen as a way to provide at-risk youth with the opportunity to achieve more and push beyond their circumstances.

Section II: Frame and Basis for Research Interest

  The My Brother's Keeper Initiative is not a federally funded program. It has been allocated $200 million from non-profit and philanthropic organizations until 2019, ("The Take on My Brother's Keeper, 2014, p. 2), for the efforts of improving the educational and life prospects of young men and boys of color ("My Brother's Keeper", 2014, pp. 1-2). The funds are intentioned to support the **implementation** of the initiative and to support mentoring initiatives across the country that are producing results in ameliorating the negative experiences of young men and boys of color. However, this amount of money is not extensive enough to accommodate the needs of young men of color in the entire nation. The Initiative does not have any federal mandate that enforces drives the work it is trying to accomplish ("The Take on My Brother's Keeper, 2014, p. 2). Here one of the overarching conflicts in this research project is unveiled – the efficacy of a somewhat 'toothless policy.' In other words, because there is no recognizable federal strength, whether through Congress or even an executive order, thus the work falls on municipal and local actors to implement, sustain, and develop this work.

  To further understand the relationships between federal policy **implementation** and the agency of local institution to carry out the goals of those federal policies; this project spent substantial time analyzing the works of Michael Lipsky, who describes this transitioning of power to municipal actors as "street level bureaucrats. " "Street level bureaucrats" are public service workers who interact directly with citizens in the course of their jobs, and who have substantial discretion in the execution of their work (Lipsky, 2010, p. 3). Through these "street level bureaucrats," most initiatives that parallel *My Brother's Keeper*, have developed. For example, the Young Men's Initiative and Expanded Success Initiatives in New York City are both attempts by the New York City Department of Education and philanthropic organizations (that developed before *My Brother's Keeper*) to enable schools and community organizations to service and support young men of color ("Expanded Success Initiative," 2011, p. 2).

More specific models have also developed with the Eagle Academies, founded by Geoffrey Canada, that are intentioned to retain, support, and challenge low income African American and Latino Males by providing a single sex, intentionally focused environment (David Banks, personal communication, April 3, 2014). Specifically focusing on the case study high school being used for this thesis project, despite not having support financially or through research and practical observation, the Empowering Males Leadership Class developed. Within this phenomenon, mentorship has continued to be a central focus to developing young men's initiatives; however, the conversation has shifted to question if partnering a student with a mentor will somehow yield a positive result or whether more nuanced methods of mentor placement are more **effective**. As evidenced in *The Mentoring Effect: Young People's Perspectives on the Outcomes and Availability of Mentorship*, **effective** mentoring that is long lasting, value focused, and balanced between formal and informal relationships have positive influences on the social, emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of youth ("The Mentoring Effect," 2014, p. 4). The scene set here indicates that this project needed to investigate how (1) policy would be **effective** and (2) how said policy is implemented in differing municipalities and whether policy makers lose control of this process when a private-public partnership is arranged.

Research Question/Statement of Investigation

To engage in this ongoing conversation, this thesis project uses a case study of a high school in New York City (called case study high school) to:

1. Question to what extent the case study urban local high school can implement vaguely defined and unfunded federal initiatives, and in this case, carry out the goals of the My Brother's Keeper Initiative.

2. Within this same discourse, this project seeks to understand how a federal initiative with broad guidelines is applied on the local level, and through what means.

<u>Why The Case Study High School?</u>

During the spring of 2014, as denoted in the preface of this project, I worked with students in the Empowering Males Leadership Class at the case study high school. During this phase of the project, I spent a considerable amount of time observing the school and understanding the practices of the Empowering Males Leadership Class (EMLC). The EMLC is a specialized class period designated for the most underachieving men of color in grade 9 at the case study high school. Originally piloted in the fall of 2013, the program in now entering its second year of piloting with the same cohort of nine students who are now in grade 10. The class is focused on redirecting and repositioning these young men to move from "at risk" to likely to succeed. While observing this program, I realized that due to the degree of federal and state attention on black male development, this program was forming at a time where resources and development outside of informal examples in specific areas across the country, were hard to find. In essence, the excitement for this project came as I realized this was a developing program that had high stakes: it was trying to re-direct students who were being designated as "uneducable."

For the purposes of this project, academic, social, and emotional supports have specific working definitions. These three focus areas have been chosen strategically to focus on the points of interest highlighted in both current research and the My Brother's Keeper 90 Day Task Force report, specifically within the recommendations to support young men of color. In the *Succeeding in the City Report*, produced by the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education's Center for Race and Equity, it is found that young men of color were motivated to stay and do well in school in order to change their realities and do better for themselves and families ("Succeeding in the City," 2014, p. 19). These sentiments also correlated with a drive for post-secondary options and collegiate education. School environments that fostered a college culture by creating the space that demanded much of students while also offering support encouraged the students to think about college prospects from the earliest of high school development ("Succeeding in the City," 2014, pp. 21-22). Questioning the academic supports offered to the students in the case study high school for this report will inform what motivates or prevents

young men of color in the focus group in their studies. In light of the *Succeeding in the City Report*, **Academic supports** are to be understood as the services the high school offers students to successfully move toward their high school diploma and beyond. This includes preparation and training of teachers, after school programming to help students succeed in coursework, and college awareness/post-secondary options preparation initiatives, all of which were used as evaluation tools in the *Succeeding in the City* report.

As within academic supports, the components are essential to understanding how to best conceptualize what those supports are made of. Within social supports, there is significantly more layering to the issues that need to be addressed. Primarily, social supports deal with the interplay between the way in which a person is socialized within a society and the way in which they react to that socialization. Before one can even define social supports in this context, the logic or reasoning in which black males are socialized must be understood. In Howard's *Black Male (d)*, black male socialization is placed under question through a historical lens. By referencing first back to WEB DuBois' *The Soul of Black Folk*, he questions, "How does it feel to be a problem?" (Howard, 2014, p. 12). Although the question originates in DuBois' work in the early 1900s, the contemporary concept questions to what extent black males are seen as problems and less as people. By problematizing black male agency, DuBois is able to initiate a conversation on the way in which black males in America are even made to look at themselves: problems. Given the context established through DuBois' thesis, **social supports** are to be understood as the environmental factors such as extracurricular activities, school pride, and acknowledgement of a school mission and vision that is widely accepted. In some models of mentorship the emphasis for the social support for students originates from a concept of grit. The understanding is that a student who focuses on the task at hand and works diligently will succeed ("Why students need more than grit," 2014, Noguera). Noguera offers that in order to understand student growth and development, the focus should move from grit to a*gency*. Beginning with school socialization, this thesis project will specifically seek to understand how the young men of color within the EMLC feel about their social settings and their abilities to succeed within the context of the EMLC and the school in general.

Finally, **emotional supports** are to be understood as the intangible factors such as social work support and mental health services that intentionally create environments that can give students open spaces to express their identities and struggles with those identities. As indicated in the Helping Traumatized Children Learn Report produced by the Massachusetts Advocates for Children: Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative, emotional trauma of any degree can influence the way, in which a student learns and functions within school settings. In order to account for these traumatic experiences, the Advocates suggest that school wide infrastructure and culture, staff training, linkages with mental health services, academic instruction methods for traumatized children, nonacademic strategies, and school policies, procedures, and protocols offer an opportunity to better serve students ("Helping Traumatized Children Learn," 2014, p. 7). "This specific section of this project will analyze to what extent is the case study high school and the EMLC is a 'trauma sensitive' space that takes into account the potentially traumatic experiences they've they have encountered.

Given these three factors of evaluation, it is hypothesized that the school will not be able to scale an **effective** supportive service program to the degree of being **effective** according to the guidelines outlined from *My Brother's Keeper* recommendations, unless it has: (1) programmatic support (through staff), (2) evidence and research based approaches to mentorship, and (3) an asset-based (opposed to deficit-based) school culture that reinforces principles throughout the school environment. For clarification, **effectiveness** will be measured based on how well the school meets the social, emotional, and academic needs of the young men of color it serves. This hypothesis is primarily driven by the work of Dr. Harper in the *Succeeding in the City* report and reinforced in a presentation on black male education at the Children's Defense Fund in the summer of 2014, in which outlines suggests that successful programs tended to: (1) engage young men of color as experts on their experience, (2) operate in an evidence based and reflective model, and (3) had collective support from administrators, students,

and faculty (Shaun Harper, personal communication, August 2, 2014). These frames in unison, help to answer the first question for this study centered around **effectiveness**; however, in order to understand **implementation** this project borrows on two major schools of thought the first from Michael Lipsky in his work The Critical Role of Street Level Bureaucrats and the second from Samuel Huntington's Political Modernization: America vs. Europe. Both of these texts are used to understand specifically how **implementation** works on a general level in the United States and how the Empowering Males Leadership Class plays into those models. Both are elaborated on in greater detail in the literature review of this project.

Research Design, Methodology, and Logic

Phase I: This project was designed to combine the observational research conducted during the spring of 2014 at a high school in New York City with a mixed qualitative and quantitative approach that occurred during the fall of 2014. Research and analysis conducted during spring 2014 has been termed as "Phase I" whereas the research to be conducted during the fall of 2014 is considered "Phase II." Once again, during Phase I served as a teaching assistant in the EMLC, initially aiding in lesson planning and design, to figure new ways to support and motivate the young men in the class. Within this space, I established a relationship with both the students and Assistant Principal to ensure that we were each on one accord and understood one another's motives. As the semester went on, I spent a great deal of time with the students to learn about their backgrounds, their current limitations, and why they were not in the most optimal place academically. This informal relationship building gave me the access and ability to then use Phase I as a sort of "consciousness building," through which I gained an understanding of what it meant to be a student specifically in the EMLC.

Phase I consisted of a total of seven major assessments that were conducted to better understand specifically how the class operated. Using the Empowering Males Leadership Class, this project Phase I specifically focused on exploring how the school supported and served these young men with what would be considered 'wrap around services'. Wrap around services, in this context, are best understood as

services that approach the complete needs of students from their social and emotional needs to their academic and professional development (KIPP Framework for Excellent Teaching, 2010, p. 3). The basis for Phase I focused on (1) conditions of the school, (2) the presence of mentorship outlets and programming, (3) **the effectiveness** of those programs, (4) student's perception of their value within the school, (5) teacher buy in, (6) connectivity among all aspects of each student's life and (7) student perceptions of these programs. These focus areas were strategically chosen to assess the case study high school and compare those observations to Dr. Harper's presentation at the Children's Defense Fund.

Each of these focus areas provided the opportunity to learn about the specific needs of students academically, socially, and emotionally. Phase I is an integral piece to understand scalability of supportive service programs. Scalability, in this sense, specifically seeks to understand the process by which a program, trend, or practice grows and develops, in spite of various boundaries and obstacles. Phase I made it clear that "street level bureaucrats" in the case study high school were able (and unable) to produce and manage the pilot program, in this case, the Empowering Males Leadership Class; however, it did not give enough insight into the **effectiveness** of the program. In addition, the assessments clarified what the school is currently capable of producing for young men of color with very little support from external forces. This observational period not only informs what the **implementation** of the Empowering Males Leadership Class was guided and informed by, but also leaves ample room to question how the work of the EMLC was carried out and why.

In conclusion, Phase I left me with several questions that made Phase II a needed step to this thesis project:

1. If the measures called for in initiatives, such as *My Brother's Keeper (MBK)* are not supported by outside funding or resources -- what motivates a school or community to engage in the work?

2. Are unmonitored, unsupported programs capable of producing the results that initiatives such as MBK call for?

Phase II: To answer the above questions, Phase II of this thesis project had two orientations. First, by doing an in depth interview with the Assistant Principal (pseudonym) ***implementation*** of the EMLC was outlined. Second, Phase II focused three key focus areas: academic, social, and emotional supports offered to young men of color in the case study high school that are enrolled in the Empowering Males Leadership Class. During three specific 'research days' the school as well as the Empowering Males Leadership Class were evaluated through survey research that was quantified along with observations and informational interviews. This string of analytical observation and surveying allowed me to understand specifically how ***effective*** this program was. Each of these items have been strategically selected to compare to research based evaluation methods found in: Dr. Shaun Harper's *Succeeding in the City Report*, the *KIPP Framework for Excellent Teaching*, Dr. Ivory Toldson's *Breaking Barriers Report, This is Not a Test by* Jose Vilson, and the outline of social support provided by Dr. Pedro Noguera.

Phase II offered a more specific look at the conditions of support the case study school offers, the perceptions students involved in this research project have on those conditions, and services offered to those students. By developing a qualitative approach through interviews and observations, this research was able to specifically identify what aspects of support (academic, social, and emotional) are successful within the EMLC and which factors are not.

Overall Objectives of Study _ _ _

This project seeks to:

1. **engage** in the larger research conversation on the **implementation** of federal initiatives on the local level

2. **build** knowledge on the ability of the case study high school to build, sustain, and operate a supportive service (mentorship) program for young men of color, while also questioning how government initiatives can be implemented through "street level bureaucrats."

3. **critically analyze** what supports are **effective** in serving this demographic of students and what supports are ineffective

In conjunction to these objectives, this thesis project will also seek to be constructive for the case study high school. The findings for this report will be used as recommendations for the case study high school and the EMLC to continue their development.

Overall, this thesis project is geared frame for the high school, varying growth opportunities in order to produce a program that supports young men of color. In a time where nationally the success of this demographic is under great question, this project seeks to explore these research interests in order to understand the difficulties, limits, and challenges to local **implementation** of vague and unfunded federal initiatives.

Section III: Literature Review

The focus for this thesis project questions to what extent local high schools can implement vaguely defined and unfunded federal initiatives, and in this case, carry out the goals of the My Brother's Keeper Initiative and sustain and support the academic, social, and emotional needs of young men of color, specifically through the Empowering Males Leadership Class (a mentorship/supportive service pilot program). In order to address this question two general degrees of research must be established: (1) understanding the components of an *effective* supportive service program specifically catered toward African American males using academic, social, and emotional factors as a focus and (2) an understanding of the relationship between local entities and federal initiatives when considering the process by which programs are *implemented*. In this section of the project, the major voices of literature that establish conversations on the two degrees of my research are identified and used to build an understanding within my specific research question.

Implementation: Understanding the capacity of institutions to carry out federal initiative

Before a conversation can begin on the degree of **effectiveness** programs outlined from the federal government have within municipalities, the degree to which these programs are implemented must first occur. When thinking about **implementation**, it is not enough to look at MBK in isolation; in fact that would be too simple for this research project, rather MBK must be analyzed within the full range of American political practice. In his work Political Modernization: America vs. Europe, Samuel P.

Huntington, outlines that "political modernization calls for the rationalization of authority: the replacement of a larger number of traditional, religious, familial, and ethnic political authorities by a *single, secular, national political authority*. This change implies that government is the product of man, not of nature…" (Huntington, 1966, p. 378). More specifically, political modernization calls for the differentiation of new political functions and the development of specialized structures to perform those functions, particularly around administrative actions (Huntington, 1966, pp. 378-79). Although this is a macro-level understanding of government and more specifically the understanding of governing bodies, it describes what *My Brother's Keeper* (MBK) is **not** doing. MBK is an articulation of the modern political ideology – it is an initiative that calls for local municipalities to step up and facilitate the workings of government opposed to government playing a central role in facilitating those workings. In short, Huntington argues the majority of the developed world operates in relation to a strong central government; however, in the American state the strength of that centrality is weak. The relevance of Huntington's work is that it gives a working model of understanding governance and how governance occurs here in the United States and where it also fails. The question that Huntington's text raises for this project, is: to what degree do we see centralization in the **implementation** of policy in the United States? For the purposes of my interests, Huntington and I acknowledge that American policy **implementation** is not centralized, especially in the case of MBK. However, the way in which **implementation** is physically facilitated in the decentralized American model remains of interest.

The Critical Role of Street Level Bureaucrats transitions attention away from the institutions that govern society and places the emphasis on how the mandates from those institutions are physically carried out and maintained. In Lipsky's approach, he asserts that "public service workers who interact directly with citizens in the course of their jobs, and who have substantial discretion in the execution of their work are called street-level bureaucrats" (Lipsky, 1980, pp. 3-4). Street level bureaucrats, to his designation can range from teachers to any other form of public servant. The significance of these people is made most clear as Lipsky explains the delineation within political controversies regarding public service.

"First, debates about the proper scope and focus of governmental services are essentially debates over the scope and function of public employees. Second, street-level bureaucrats, have considerable impact on people's lives. This impact may be of several kinds. They socialize citizens to expectations of government services and a place in the political community. They determine the eligibility of citizens for government benefits and sanctions. They oversee the treatment (the service) citizens receive in those programs. Thus, in a sense street-level bureaucrats implicitly mediate aspects of the constitutional relationship of citizens to the state. In short, they hold the keys to a dimension of citizenship" (Lipsky, 1980, p, 4).

The context that Lipsky establishes, questions how or by what means is the relationship established that calls for the street-level bureaucrat to act on behalf of another entity, such as the federal government. This relationship can be rationalized through a model known as the Principal-Agent Theory. This theory suggest that, an "agent" is able to make decisions that impact, or act on behalf of, another person or entity known as the "principal." In theory, the principal sets up an incentive for the agent to implement a particular program or initiative. However, the caveat within this relationship is that agents and principals alike operate out of self-interest, which could either benefit or harm the policy that the principal wanted to have carried out. In the case of this thesis project, we see that the agent (street level bureaucrats that organize the Empowering Males Leadership Class), have decided to act entrepreneurially and have developed a program that may meet similar goals as MBK, but the approach does not align with the exact model of the federal government.

Using this framework to take a step further, the need for intermediary public servants or street level bureaucrats to step in and serve as facilitators of public programs from larger governmental bodies, leaves one to question: why? What motivates these public servants to want to be of service and to carry out these majorly underfunded and under supported programs? As previously mentioned, the role of a street-level bureaucrat places one in power to control the degree one experiences citizenship in differing

forms. The responsibility to take on this work is not only taxing, but also places a degree of moral weight on the individual responsible.

Implementation: Why the Empowering Males Leadership Class?

The Empowering Males Leadership Class, is a pilot program launched by the case study high school to address the needs of young men of color who were suffering academically at the beginning of their high school careers. The class blends a series of informal and formal tactics, such as discussion and reading, respectively to create an environment that **changes the context** in which the young men are educated. In order to understand **implementation** of this program, I had the opportunity to interview with Assistant Principal to get an understanding of how the mechanisms of the program are carried out.

- **Question 1: Why did you decide to start this program (EMLC), although there was no support financially or staff wise for you?** *"I decided to start my advisory class because I came to case study HS wanting to do something new; something that wasn't in place before. Plus the need for support of adolescent males of color is abundantly evident."*

As evidenced above in the Assistant Principal's response, the desire to begin something at the high school was driven by a concern for students, in this case young men. The opportunity also provided a new chance to begin a program that would hopefully have positive results on the students that were being serviced.

- **Question 2. Did Obama's My Brother's Keeper Initiative motivate you in developing out this program?** *"No. I saw the need, and I attended a number of professional development opportunities with the Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color (COSEBOC), as well as the Eagle Academy Foundation's (professional development) PD offerings in the past. These helped drive my desire for supporting males of color."*

Interestingly, although the time and space that the Empowering Males Leadership Class developed in was proximate to the birth of MBK, it is clear that the program was built more specifically because of a general need seen by the faculty at the case study high school. What is more compelling here is also the

access of outside resources, within the New York Metro area, that aided in **implementation** of the EMLC. Here the Principal-Agent Theory re-enters the picture, because the EMLC although not a brainchild of the MBK initiative fulfills similar goals to what MBK calls for. Moving forward, it would be interesting to see how the program shapes or reacts because of the culture produced by MBK within Black male achievement and education.

- **Question 3. What have been the specific struggles you've endured to date, with the EMLC? With the school?** *"One consistent challenge has been imparting the knowledge in my boys that they are more than capable of achieving anything they put their minds to. Another is post-secondary and career planning; they struggle with looking beyond today. Within the school, our advisory classes need more consistency.* ***Because some leadership classes are not as structured as mine, my boys struggle with the "fairness" factor in terms of their grade for the class. "Why do we have to do this, when other classes do not?"***

In this specific occasion, **implementation** conflicts come into clear play. As the EMLC is a specialized, pilot program the characteristics of the class are not carried out and are not maintained across classrooms and across curriculum. When thinking about the longevity of the program or at least facilitating its goals into the lives of the students it serves, it seems that the lack of consistency presents a barricade to the **implementation** of the EMLC.

- **Question 4. Who are your thought partners or supporters in this work? "***You and your colleagues (Syracuse University Teaching Interns, through the Policy Studies Department) have been a huge support, and I thank you for that. In addition to our work with Syracuse University (i.e. Maxwell, SUMMA) the school also has an existing partnership with Zurich Insurance Corp. Employees have been tutoring my boys during their lunch period on Tuesday afternoons in preparation for their Algebra Regents exams in June. Other than that, I have been on my own; everything is designed/planned*

from my previous personal and professional experiences, as well as some of the

academic, social/emotional, and extracurricular needs our males of color have."

Majorly, **implementation** is contingent upon resources, as indicated previously in Lipsky's work. To take this thought a step further, it is important to also acknowledge that the resources presented to the EMLC are majorly outside partnerships and programs and not so much as in-house advantages. This draws the larger conclusion that the **implementation** of this specific program is dependent on the thought, development patterns, and insight of outside partnerships. I am not suggesting that the EMLC is dependent on outside partners for all aspects of development; but the program is made possible by the continued efforts of external sources.

As **implementation** has been shown to be a mixed product of structural capacity from the federal government and the interplay of municipal actors carrying out the goals of federal initiatives, with their own personal motives attached; the next question leads to **effectiveness.** In this case, I am concerned about how **effective** a program like the EMLC can be in its goal toward supporting young men of color.

Effectiveness: Components of an effective supportive service program for African American males

When thinking about mentoring, it is important to also acknowledge what limitations might exist among the group of people in question. Specifically, how might social conditions or attributes interplay with the **effectiveness** of a particular program. In his acclaimed work, The Souls of Black Folk, WEB DuBois introduces two critical concepts that serve as a framework when studying black male education. The first is that of being a "problem." DuBois states, "…The real question, how does it feel to be a problem? I answer seldom a word. And yet, being a problem is a strange experience, peculiar even for one who has never been anything else" (Dubois, 1903, pp. 7-8). Understanding the *black body* as a *problem*, as an initial framework leads DuBois to then question the influences of both internal and external factors on African American perception. By establishing the black body and the black race as a problem DuBois draws attention to the fact that systemic restraints as well as internal beliefs contribute to the experiences of a people. In this case, DuBois frames the bifurcated existence of African Americans as 'double consciousness.' "It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always

looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness, an American and a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two reconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (DuBois, 1903, p. 9). When thinking about mentorship programs at their basis, specifically in the African American experience, a degree of 'reframing the narrative' or changing a popular and oftentimes problematic narrative around the abilities of African Americans takes central root. Using DuBois as a philosophical foundation for this thesis, an understanding of the need for mentorship to address the 'crisis' in black male education is helpful, especially when considering how programs effectively produce results.

In my opinion, DuBois offers one of the essential pillars of this thesis project. In order to actually understand the full breadth of a program, the factors that can serve as detriments to it must be considered. The thesis asserted by DuBois clearly indicates that if there is an expectation for students to be developed in a meaningful way, there must be an understanding of the social and societal mechanisms that are in place that influence them. I agree that this is essential, but also suggest that when deciding the degree to which a program effectively services men of color the context must not be controlled for. The conditions, in which one is raised and socialized are crucial pieces to understanding the person and must always be acknowledged.

Effectiveness: Mentoring

In February of 2014, the Obama Administration's *My Brother's Keeper* initiative set out to achieve three major goals to ensure opportunity for young men and boys of color is accelerated: (1) assess the impact of Federal policies of general applicability to develop proposals that will enhance positive outcomes and eliminate or reduce negative ones; (2) develop a plan for an Administration-wide website and portal to make available data relevant to the broader community about successful programs and practices, and relevant contextual and outcome statistics; and (3) develop outreach strategies and coordinating with other stakeholders to highlight opportunities and challenges (Task Force Report, 2014, p. 14). The third goal is the main focus for this thesis. The Administration has made the physical

connection between strategy and stakeholder through the concept of using mentoring programs and practices (My Brother's Keeper, 2014, p.1). These goals from the institutional level help to frame what the conversation around mentoring is shaped by; however, the conversation is contextualized by major voices that suggest that mentoring is a strategic relationship with multiple layers.

Although this thesis project focuses on secondary education, the basis for understanding supportive service programs on a collegiate level offers a model for other organizations. In <u>Institutional Efforts to Improve Black Male Student Achievement: A Standards-Based Approach</u>, Dr. Shaun Harper and John Kuykendall outline specific steps or criteria that are essential to institutional approaches to providing these supportive environments for African American men. These eight standards are: (1) inequities are transparent and data are used to guide institutional activities, (2) black [undergraduate] men are meaningfully engaged as collaborators and viewed as experts in designing, implementing, and assessing campus initiatives, (3) actions are guided by a written strategy document that is collaboratively developed by various institutional stakeholders ranging from undergraduate students to college president, (4) Learning, academic achievement, student development, and improved degree attainment rates are prioritized over social programming, (5) initiatives are grounded in published research on college men and masculinities in general and on black male undergraduates in particular, (6) efforts are enhanced on insights from black male student achievers, (7) institutional agents engage in honest conversations about racism and its harmful effects on black male student outcomes, and (8) at every level, institutional agents are held accountable for improving black male student retention, academic success, engagement, and graduation rates.

This 8-pronged approach to forming **effective** programs in unison with an understanding of the limitations and benefits of mentorship, inform this thesis project. Where Harper and Kuykendall outline a specific structure that is proven to be effective, The National Mentoring Partnership provides a qualitative overview of mentoring programs and their benefits. For my purposes, this framework offers the opportunity to specifically identify ways in which the supportive service programming for young men of color can be constantly enhanced. This thesis project will present in several ways, that the EMLC is not a

structured program to Dr. Harper's standards; which in turn indicate that it is not as research based or data driven as more successful programming. If the EMLC is not evidence based in this regard, I then question if mentoring is even the most effective strategy in dealing with the students that the EMLC services.

To build a relevance around the value of mentoring and to understand if the EMLC is serving its purpose, which is to increase the academic standing of students enrolled, it is necessary to understand both the concept of mentoring in students' lives and what an effective program entails.

In The Mentoring Effect: Young People's Perspectives on the Outcomes and Availability of Mentoring, produced by iMentor: the National Mentoring Partnership, three areas of "insight" are presented. Insight Area One: Mentoring's Connection to Aspirations and Outcomes, highlights the positive effect of mentoring relationships on young people while also building a degree of need for mentoring. The report highlights that (1) youth who had mentors report setting higher educational goals and are more likely to attend college than those without mentors, (2) youth who had mentors, particularly those "at-risk," are more likely to report engaging in productive and beneficial activities than youth without a mentor, (3) the longer the mentoring relationship lasts, the greater the value for young people (The Mentoring Effect, 2014, pp. 2-3). Insight Area Two: The Value of Mentors outlines that (1) informal and structural relationships [with a mentor] can provide complementary benefits and (2) Mentees desire to serve as mentors, indicating both an endorsement of mentoring and a proof point that mentees are empowered to contribute to the world around them (The Mentoring Effect, 2014, p. 4). Finally, Insight Area Three: The Availability of Mentors, highlights the depravity of mentors for young people. For example, the report states that one-third of young people do not have a mentor of some sort. Specifically, this statistic breaks down into 16 million youth in the United States without a mentor, of which 9 million are considered "at-risk" (The Mentoring Effect, 2014, pp. 4-5). Coupled with the framework from Harper and Kuykendall, the demonstration of the positive impacts of mentoring on young people has been outlined. Initially, one might conclude that these structural guides present effective methods; however, the efficacy and operationalization of those methods constantly remain of interest.

One case example that shows the interplay between the practice of the mentoring and usefulness is seen with Project RAISE. In Using Community Adults as Advocates or Mentors for At-Risk Middle School Students: A Two-Year Evaluation of Project RAISE, James McPartland and Saundra Murray present a compelling case study on this phenomenon regarding operationalization and effectiveness of mentorship initiatives, even those with structure. In their analysis, the authors present that Project RAISE, a "multifaceted approach featuring outside adults as school based advocates and one-on-one mentors for at risk students at seven middle schools" (McPartland, J. & Murray, S., 1991, p. 568). Over the two-year case study period it was found that the program did improve student attendance and report card grades in English; however, promotion rates and standardized tests scores were not improved due to the program. Furthermore, the results found were isolated to three of the seven schools, which also gave insight into the need or presences of one-to-one mentoring relationships. It was found, in this study, that the RAISE model was much more **effective** when one-on-one mentoring has been strongly implemented (McPartland, J. & Murray, S., 1991, p. 568). Using the text's observations of the relationships formed, the framework presented defines the relationships as: (1) primary: where were characterized by a high degree of attachment, trust, importance, and enjoyment; (2) secondary: which exhibit the same characteristics as those found in primary relationships, and (3) no significant relationships: which were pairings that were marked by distrust and distance (McPartland, J. & Murray, S., 1991, p. 570).

Finally, the utility of the RAISE Project can be informed significantly by the degree of its operationalization. The project specifically was sponsored by two churches (one predominantly African American and one predominantly White), two large businesses (both predominantly white), two universities (one predominantly African American and one predominantly White), and one fraternity (predominantly black). RAISE, set its specific goals were to improve students' self esteem and school related behavior and progress, and to reduce high-risk behaviors such as substance abuse and teenage pregnancy. Structurally, the program maintained a full time director and support staff who provided overall program development and administration for the set of seven sponsors; paid school based advocated for each of those sponsors, and volunteer one-on-one mentors for each student. RAISE'

funding stream was predominantly funded by two major local foundations and by annual contributions from the seven sponsor organizations (McPartland, J. & Murray, S., 1991, pp. 571-72).

The current conversation in this thesis vacillates between **implementation** strategy and effectiveness on a micro-level. From this point forward this thesis project will assess both of these general areas by analyzing how the EMLC implements strategies from larger bodies of governance and how effective those strategies are. For the remainder of this project, the academic, social, and emotional supports will be assessed for their effectiveness in producing the desired results of the EMLC. Within each of these chapters, a series of conclusions will also be presented indicating major findings. Once again, this thesis is questioning both the degree to which local actors can implement federal initiatives (and their characteristics) as well as how effective the EMLC is.

Chapter 2

Academic Supportive Services

<u>Context Building</u>

Dr. Pedro Noguera in <u>The Trouble with Black Boys: The Role of and Influence of Environmental and Cultural Factors on Academic Performance of African American Males</u>, outlines specifically how cultural experiences inform environment and influence the educational experiences of young men of color. Within his text he takes a stance advancing that the academic performance of African American males can be improved by devising strategies that counter the effects of harmful environmental and cultural forces (Noguera, 2003, pp. 433-34). Noguera continues in this text to assert that addressing the "crisis" in black male education is not completely done through creating programs to provide some degree of support or an end to unfair educational policies or practices. Rather, black males often adopt behaviors that make them complicit in their own failure ought process as an essential framework. When considering academic supports, then it is imperative to see in what ways can structural barriers be decompressed and reassessed.

The case study high school used for this project, is located in lower Manhattan, New York. In order to understand the conditions of the school on the outside level, the New York State Report Cards produced by the Department of Education of New York present a profile that can be used as a platform for this academic assessment. The case study high school has a total student population of 685. Of that population, 5% identified as Asian, 26% identified as African American, 62% identified as Hispanic, and 5% identified as White (High School Quality Snapshot, 2013-14). 6% of the school population was English Language Learners and 21% of the school's population was identified as special needs. Taking a moment to also look at school environment measures, student attendance rested at about 80%, while teacher attendance was approximately 96%.

During the 2012-13 academic year, the case study high school had an overall rating of a "B," which is determined from three measures: (1) instruction that prepares students for college and career, (2)

school organization and management, and (3) the quality of the learning environment (New York State

Report Cards, p. 1, 2012-13). On a yearly progress measure the school received a "C" which was mainly

formed by the amount of credits accumulated and the rate at which students passed New York State

Regents exams. Furthermore, the school was awarded an overall performance grade of a "B" which was

formed majorly by graduation rates and the weighted diplomas offered to students. Transitioning to a

more academic focus, 35% of students successfully completed college preparatory coursework, compared

to the 46% New York City average (High School Quality Snapshot, 2013-14). Within the same academic

time span, the case study high school also only graduated 16% of its students as "college ready," which

was only half of the New York City average of 32% (High School Quality Snapshot, 2013-14). In terms

of the Empowering Males Leadership Class, the academic profiles of the students involved can be seen in

the figure below:

Academic Standing of Students in the Empowering Males Leadership Class
N=8*

A	B	C	D	E	F
Student	2013-14 (%)	1st MP (%)	2nd MP (%)	3rd MP (%)	Fall 2014 Average (%)
A	73.61	75.88	87	85	76.97
B	73.47	72.52	74.28	69	71.41
C	78.76	69.56	72.32	71	75.83
D	75.38	66.2	69.56	60	70.63
E	76.84	65.29	69.08	70	74.15
F	71.91	67.25	68.68	74	70.37
G	73.36	59.8	63.46	75	72.68
H	59.05	52.01	60.72	56	58.43

Source: Academic profiles of students in the Empowering Males Leadership Class at case study high school, 2014.
*= N is actually 9, however, the ninth student was discontinued in the EMLC and therefore was removed from this graphic.

As seen in the academic profile of the students engaged in the Empowering Males

Leadership Class, the majority of the students began with a grade point average in the D- to F

range, in the beginning of the fall term of this academic year. By current definition, these

students are academically in danger of dropping out of school or falling behind tremendously in credit recovery. This builds the need for academic support to reverse these current situations.

In addition, the value in seeing the grade distribution from last academic year to present allows the reader to determine if the students have increased in academic performance or have fallen. One would expect that if the EMLC is effective, grades would generally improve overtime; however, the opposite appears to be happening. Generally, the students in the Empowering Males Leadership Class have all fallen since last academic year, with the exception of student A. What is unique with student A, is that he is the only student that was accepted to an outside mentoring program entitled: "Syracuse University Mentor-Mentee Alliance." This program partners him with a professional that is a graduate of Syracuse University and allows him to participate in various immersion experiences. Although this is a great opportunity, it is not clear whether or not Student A is doing better than his counterparts as a direct result from this program.

In speaking with two school officials, who will be denoted as Principal and Guidance Counselor, the value of the Empowering Males Leadership Class in addressing the academic needs of the students was defined as: (1) offering a recognition of the environmental needs required for academic success and (2) a means to accelerate the academic achievements of the students. According to Principal, "…the Empowering Males Leadership Class, in my view, has the capacity to re-focus the academic potential of these young men. It shows them what they need to do, to get to where they want to go" (Principal, December 12, 2014, personal communication). As the Principal has a high standard in the capacity of this program, the Guidance Counselor provided a more programmatic understanding of the academic needs of the school and how the students might be influences. "The students at this school have a lot of need,

especially when thinking about their next steps. Most of the students I work with do not have the support to apply for college and other essential needs on time, they mostly spend their time recovering credits just to graduate on time with little to no plan – a cycle that does no one any good" (Guidance Counselor, November 12, 2014, personal communication).

In short, how could the environment be enhanced or reshaped to effectively produce the results that were needed to accelerate the success of the young men in the Empowering Males Leadership Class. Although the school had made efforts with its standards, expectations, and points of engagement (i.e. the guidance department) the need for a reinforcing program became evident. To further support this assertion, Don Sawyer, PhD offers an interesting conversation on the agency of school in a black male's development in, I Ain't Do Nothing: The Social and Academic Experiences of Black Males in a Dismantled School. Primarily, Sawyer argues, "…That life's trajectory is greatly impacted by the type of school a student attends. The schooling environment is a major player in student development" (Sawyer, 2013, p. 34). That being said, when thinking about academic supports for young men of color – this study must question what that academic support physically does and what environment it produces for the young men engaged in the Empowering Males Leadership Class. Is the Empowering Males Leadership Class producing the proper academic environment to inspire success?

Academic supports are to be understood as the services the high school offers students to successfully move toward their high school diploma and beyond. To operationalize this definition of academic support, the survey produced was divided into three focus areas: (1) personal responsibility, (2) environmental factors, (3) preparation for both students and teachers. For the purposes of academic supportive services, the main focus of this project questioned what factors contribute to increased or decreased academic success. Questions posed to respondents were specifically framed to understand from

where they perceived academic success originates and how it can be fostered. The main objective and hoped outcome for this phase of the study was to unlock an understanding of what specific factors contributed to the success or failure among the students in their academic settings. Below are the quantitative outputs from the survey questions as well as some analysis:

Survey Findings

Finding: 66% percent of students interviewed identified either the leader of the Empowering Males Leadership Class or a family member as a main source of support when it came to school work.

Question 1: When it comes to schoolwork, by whom do you feel the most supported? Why?
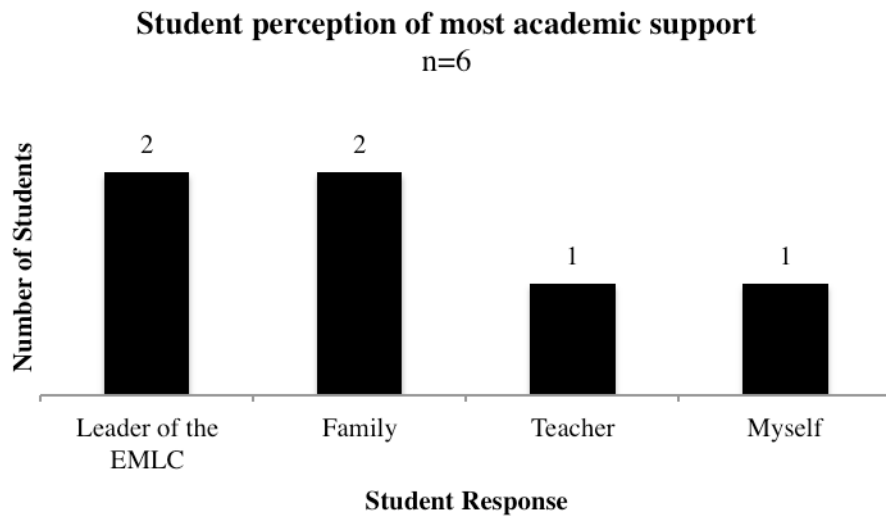
Student perception of most academic support
n=6

Source: Assessing the Scalability of Supportive Service Programs for African American Males, Ronald Taylor, Political Science Distinction Thesis/Honors Capstone, 2014.

From this initial finding it can be concluded that the majority of the students found some degree of support within the environments created in their home life or experiences in the Empowering Males Leadership Class that led them to trust these spaces when it came into academic work. Within this thesis project, the home and experiences that the students report in

the Empowering Males Leadership Class were constantly brought into the survey and interview materials to gauge to what extent they influence the experiences of the students in different settings. On a larger scale, being that a third of the students found support directly from the Empowering Males Leadership Class, it is clear that the space itself is creating some degree of importance or emphasis on academics.

When interviewed, students responded that the Empowering Males Leadership Class provides a source of academic support because it offers: (1) structure, (2) accountable people who held the students accountable, and (3) allowed for students to meet outside of class time (by mandate) with their teachers to ensure that they were on track with their academic needs and goals. Paralleling this insight with the work of Howard in Black Male(d) and the emphasis on personal responsibility, it was these findings demonstrate that the efficacy of the Empowering Males Leadership Class (in this instance) was found to emanate from the degree of structure and accountability structures that exist. Below in question 5, a parallel is presented that revisits the question of personal responsibility for students.

**Finding**: 50% of students reported that they commit no hours to studying per week.

Question 5: How often do you study for your classes (each week)?
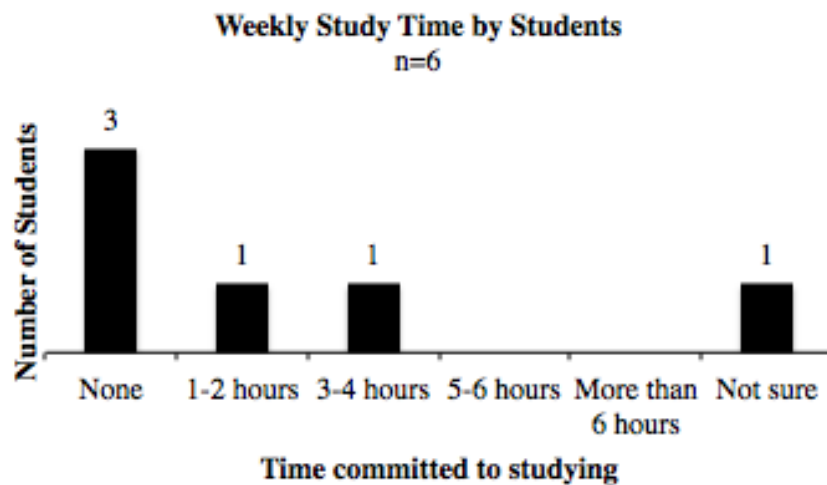
Weekly Study Time by Students
n=6

Time committed to studying

Finding: 50% of students identified "playing basketball" as their goal after graduation.

Question 2: What are your goals or hopes for college or your career after you graduate?
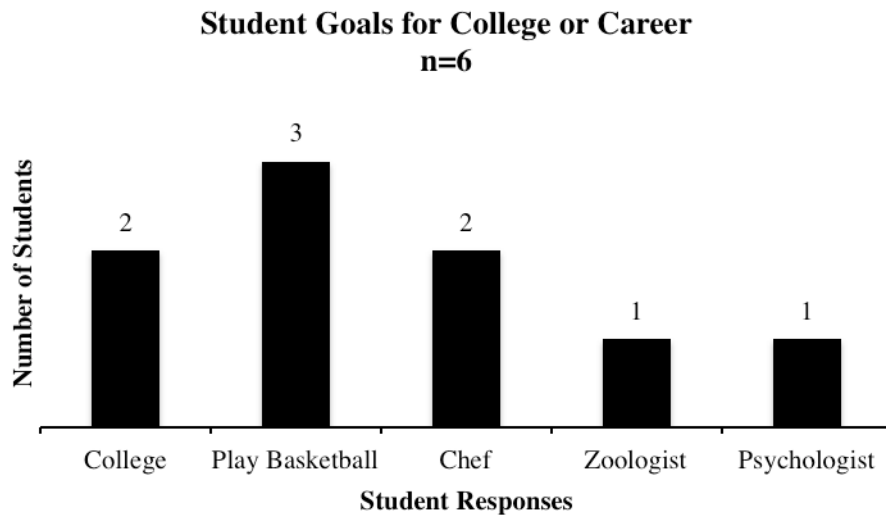
Student Goals for College or Career
n=6

In this question, the objective was to understand what goals the students had set for themselves as well as the feasibility of those goals given the current surroundings and opportunities. As this thesis project is concerned with the efficacy of the Empowering Males Leadership Class to provide academic, social, and emotional support to young men and boys of color, this question allows for the research to question specifically how does the Empowering Males Leadership Class find ways to support the goals of the students it interacts with. Interestingly, the majority of students did not indicate that college was their initial goal post-graduation. Referring back to the literature on mentoring, it is crucial to remember that

mentoring has the capacity to encourage students to think of higher education as a goal. As indicated above the majority of students saw athletics as a form of well-being, opposed to seeking to advanced degrees. As this mentoring program is geared primarily toward getting "at risk" students back on track academically, it is interesting that college or some form of educational degree was not a common or strongly anticipated narrative. When interviewed, students presented that when establishing their goals and career aspirations, the school environment also played roles into their decisions. For example, when asked if the case study high school prepares them for their goals students responded:

- "No, because, the thing is that the teachers in the school don't teach, I don't think they will help me in the long run."

- "No because I don't think I will be cut out for my school's [college aspiration] basketball team from what I heard."

- "I feel as though the school doesn't because they aren't hard on sports as much."

From these responses, it is clear that students feel that the school environment doesn't provide the proper tools or enabling factors to reach their goals. From an academic support standpoint, a larger question to raise is: if the goals of the students aren't supported in some capacity by their educational environment, does their education lose value? Although rhetorical in nature, this question allows for a conversation on the educational environment young men of color are subjected to. This is a crucial question in the conversation on academic success, as it offers an opportunity to engage in dialogue on the intersection of race and gender, in this case with schooling. In The Effects of School Context, Structure, and Experiences on African American Males in Middle and High School, Davis & Jordan outline clearly in the exposition of their work that "Educational experiences often serve as antecedents to many of the social and

economic ills students face later in life. Thus, inequities in schooling experiences have

potentially broad consequences for students' future educational attainment, employment, and

family relations" (Davis & Jordan, 1994, p. 570). This statement reinforces that although student

goals and perceptions of the academic environment of the case study high school are in question,

they are intersectionally linked to a series of other contexts that will influence their social,

economic, and educational futures. If nothing more, this helps to solidify that the need for a

sound academic environment has the capacity to influence much of the trajectory that the

beneficiaries of the Empowering Males Leadership Class can endure.

Finding: 4 of 6 students in the Empowering Males Leadership Class said that teachers "barely"

offer extra outside of schedule class time.

Question 3: On a scale of 1-10, 1 meaning barely and 10 being frequently, how often do your teachers

offer extra help for you outside of class time?
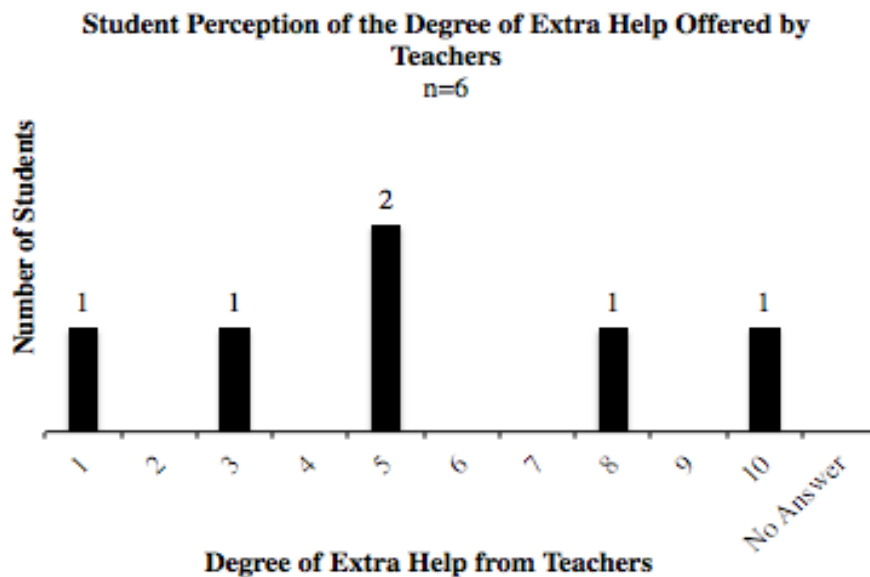
Source: Assessing the Scalability of Supportive Service Programs for African American Males, Ronald Taylor, Political Science Distinction Thesis/Honors Capstone, 2014.

This finding offers an interesting insight into resourcefulness. As it is outlined in Howard's work, personal responsibility is important; however, when it comes to having access to teachers that are able and willing to offer services outside of scheduled class time, which this demographic would be in need of, there seems to be a deficit. A relationship between student accountability and teacher's degree engagement, raises the question: who is responsible? Or even more broadly, what is responsibility? Using this ideological question as a background, the challenges that students reported within their academic work might explain why certain feelings of a poor school environment for their goals exist.
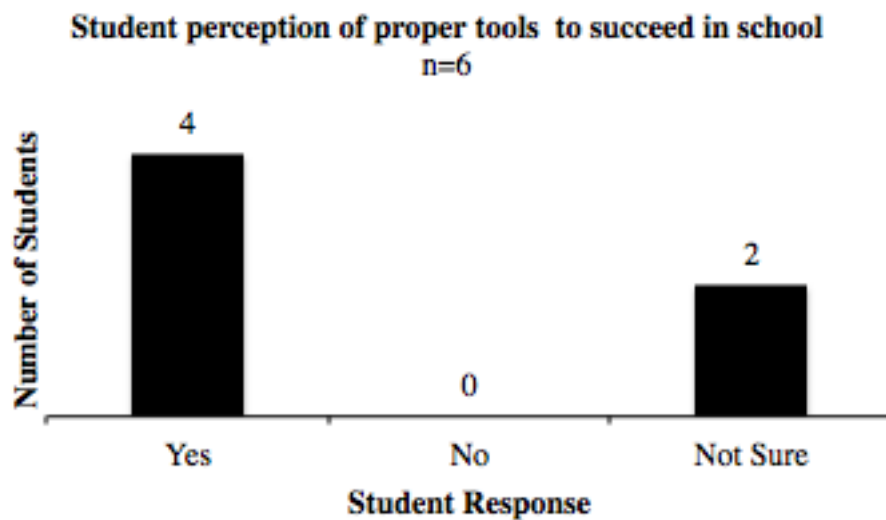
- "Challenges I face are doing homework. Most of the time I complete homework, but sometimes I slack off."

- "My challenges I face is to keep my grades 85 or better."

Both of the challenges identified show a combined lack of personal responsibilities as well as a learning deficiency when maintaining organization and structure. As this is one of the focuses of the Empowering Males Leadership Class, it would be advantageous to track the development of these behaviors through other support surveys to see how other environments and approaches might be giving the students the skill set. Even more broadly, how could the combined efforts of teachers in collaboration with the Empowering Males Leadership Class, reinforce efforts to correct the challenges that exist. In an interview with an assistant principal, an outline of what limitations existed with facilitating the connections between teachers and the Empowering Males Leadership Class established to address the larger question of **implementation** when multiple classrooms do not subscribe to the EMLC's culture. The assistant principal responded: "What happens in the class [Empowering Males Leadership Class] is good, but the same practices are not done in other classes. That's the challenge. How do I train

teachers to take what we do here and build on it in their classrooms?" (Assistant Principal,

October 12, 2014, personal communication). This schism, is where the work of this project hopes

to offer some insight.

Finding: 4 of 6 students found that they have been offered " the proper tools to succeed in school."

Question 4: Do you feel that you have been provided with the proper tools to succeed in school?

Student perception of proper tools to succeed in school
n=6

[Bar chart showing Number of Students (y-axis) vs Student Response (x-axis). Yes = 4, No = 0, Not Sure = 2]
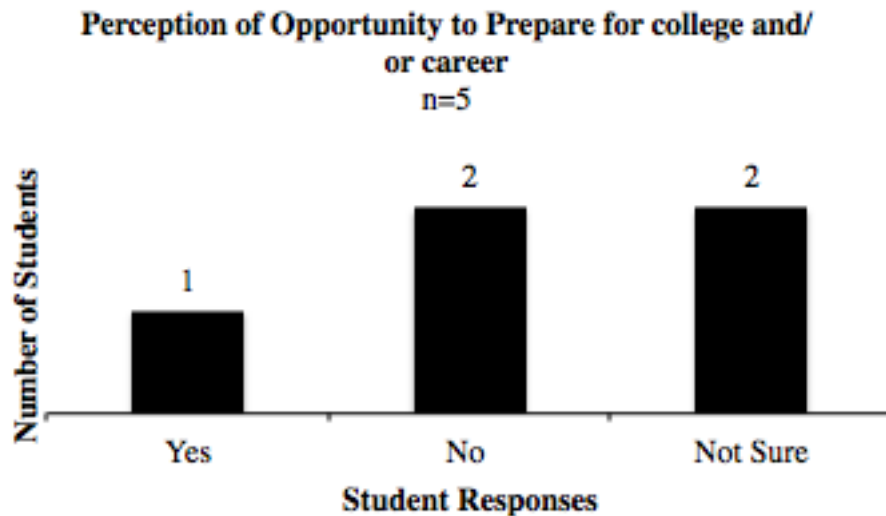
Source: Assessing the Scalability of Supportive Service Programs for African American Males, Ronald Taylor, Political Science Distinction Thesis/Honors Capstone, 2014.

This finding is interesting in comparison to some of the previous findings in that it shows that the

students do see that they have a degree of support to succeed in school; however, there seems to be a

disconnect in using that support or the tools they have to meet their educational potential. To further

understand this dynamic, students were asked to identify whom they went to for help when they were

having difficulties in class. Four of six students responded the teacher, while the remaining two identified

friends or other classmates or they solely depend on themselves. It is worth nothing that these support

structures are clearly present, but specifically why they serve as a resource. Students responded that they

used the persons they identified because " he [teacher] helps me," "because he [teacher] is respectful,"

"Because they [classmates] are smart," "they [classmates] are the ones who teach me the subject." These

responses show that the students went particularly to these people because the assets they offered were understanding and resources in a 'safe manner.' There was a degree of trust that was established between the students and their supporting party that made them comfortable with working with the person in that particular capacity.

Finding: 4 of 5 students reported that they were "not sure" or "not" given the opportunity by the case study high school to prepare for their college or career aspirations.

Question 6: Do you feel that your school offers you the opportunity to prepare for college or your career choices?

Perception of Opportunity to Prepare for college and/ or career
n=5

Source: Assessing the Scalability of Supportive Service Programs for African American Males, Ronald Taylor, Political Science Distinction Thesis/Honors Capstone, 2014.
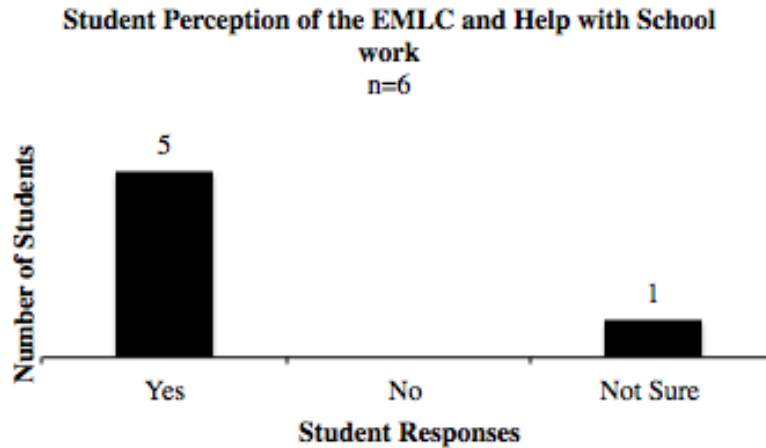
Referencing Question 2, it was seen that the majority of students wanted to participate in a sport post graduation and the majority of students listed some form of long-term alternative career path. In Question 6, it is evident that the preparation for particular goals was not

supported, specifically because the opportunity to prepare for these aspirations was not present or available in the school. When students were asked to present what they felt was this lack of opportunity, the majority of the responses included some degree of not feeling they were competitive enough, whether based on a personal inhibition or the lack of exposure students received through their time at the case study high school.

When thinking about academic success, particularly in this environment, it is crucial to also assess how the students perceive their agency to some degree. As outlined by Shaun Harper in his presentation to the Children's Defense Fund: Young Men of Color and College Readiness Conference, " Engaging young men of color as experts on their experiences and more importantly active players in their experiences, is central to understanding their personal development academically" (Dr. Shaun Harper, personal communication, July 2014). At this point in the research it is clear that some degree of agency must come into play when considering how to most effectively enable students in their academic settings.

Finding: 5 of 6 students reported that the Empowering Males Leadership Class helped them with their schoolwork.
Question 7: Does the Empowering Males Leadership Class help you with your schoolwork?

Student Perception of the EMLC and Help with School work
n=6

Number of Students

5

1

Yes   No   Not Sure

Student Responses

Concluding Thoughts and Implications

Academic supportive services, to re-visit the foundational purpose of this section, are meant to assess what support and resources students receive to successfully move them to their diploma and beyond.

- **The Empowering Males Leadership Class is understood as a major source of academic support.** With 66% of students identifying the Empowering Males Leadership class or a family member as academic support and 5 of 6 of the students reporting that the class helped them with their schoolwork, it is evident that the class is important to the academic supportive environments for the young men. In this specific context it is important to note that this is a physical space where students feel open to receive help for their academic shortcomings. When thinking about optimizing such experiences it is imperative that these spaces are

continued to be formed and supported as a space in which students can, and will be given, assistance and close partnership in achieving their academic goals.

- **Other areas of academic support within the school seemed to be lacking.** Students consistently labeled teachers as being unsupportive to student extracurricular academic needs. Although afterschool and extra-help are time commitments teachers offer on their own accord, students who feel that they don't get the needed outside support suffer.

> "The single most repeated comment about ways to change schools that could offer improved outcomes for Black males was the need for better teachers, asserts Howard in <u>Black Male(d).</u> Almost half of the participants [in the study] made some reference to the ways that teachers could make schools more inviting, or less inviting, places to be as learners. In addition, participants made references to the type of attitudes, direct and indirect comments, as well as overall inability of teachers to make learning an interesting endeavor (Howard, 2014, pp. 93-94).

Although teachers and their ability to create spaces where learning is engaging and interesting is contingent upon many factors, the ability or inability to produce the environment for students to feel comfortable is important when considering prospects of success for young men of color.

- **A lack in taking ownership of one's education was prevalent among the students in the Empowering Males Leadership Class.** As evidenced in Question 5, 50% of the students in the class committed no time to studying. When asked during interview specifically why they did not study, the students replied:

"I don't see a point," I tried but I can't do some classes, so I stop," and "I

probably can just re-take the class for credit, so I'm good." Given that these

students have their reasons for not studying, that are each valuable, it is still

concerning that despite the space that exists within the Empowering Males

Leadership Class, the students still felt that way.

With these three major concluding thoughts from an analysis and observation of the

Empowering Males Leadership Class, it is recommended that in order to produce a more capable

mentoring initiative, that keeps the same goals set by the *My Brother's Keeper* Task Force, the

Empowering Males Leadership Class ought to employ these several strategies to address the

thoughts presented: (1) provide the opportunity for teachers, academic supportive programs, and

the class to share strategies to best serve young men of color and (2) introduce accountability

structures to make sure that students are not only educated on ways to hold themselves

accountable, but also repercussions be introduced externally of the classroom to make sure that

students understand the need and the ever pressing importance of maintaining their grades and

academic standing.

On Effectiveness and Implementation

Looking at this program, solely from an academic support stance, it is clear that the

program is effective in providing students the resources or connections to do well; however, it is

not clear whether or not the program itself is effective in increasing the academic potential of

students or increasing their outcomes for higher academic success. On the other hand, referring

back to MBK's desire to provide students with access to resources to increase their academic

potential, it is clear that the EMLC is seeking to provide resources but the overall impact of those

resources are hard to realize when there is not continuity across all classes in the high school.

Chapter 3

Social Supportive Services

<u>Context Building</u>

As the section on academic supportive services focused on the ways, in which the Empowering Males Leadership Class could increase the academic production of its students and optimize the educational experiences of young men of color, the social supportive services section focuses on the importance and critical capital found in social environments for young men of color. Whereas the academic section focused on solely empirical understandings of academic environment and potential, this section uses student perceptions as a base to understand the school's environment.

In order to begin understanding the social support young men of color are presented with, one must first understand the paradigms of social condition that exist. "How do we know that race plays a factor in examining the disenfranchisement of African American males? It goes without saying that important issues such as class, gender, home, and community environments, parental education, and involvement, disabilities, ethnicity, and culture all play important roles in access to education in this country" (Howard, 2014, p. 51). Using Howard's insight as a critical lens, it is clear that social conditions are formed by a series of signifiers or environments that have specific influences on people, in this case young men of color. Howard uses race as a specific platform because of its intersectional impacts on socialization and its "explosive and most difficult dilemma" as it applies to the United States (West, 1994, p. 1). Giving race this intentional and important platform is strategically important because the conversation on race has been deemed to a certain point unimportant by major historical and social narratives. A frustration, Howard suggests, is found in students of color because they are essentially told that

parts of their identity and expression is not valid of thoughtful discussion and debate. When thinking about these degrees of socialization, specifically how they develop, it is important to understand the cyclical nature by which socialization occurs.

In The Cycle of Socialization, Harro explains that socialization begins essentially before one is born and carries on through their entire life. Beginning with the first socialization, individuals are socialized by "parents, relatives, teachers, people they love and trust, shapers of expectations, norms, etc." (Harro, 2000, p. 16). From this initial instance of socialization, institutions then take root in this formative process. Schools, churches law enforcement, media, language, business, etc. all work in a fractal network to reinforce and perpetuate particular forms of social identity and expectation depending on the social location (where one interacts socially) of an individual. What is most important regarding this cyclical process is the result that it produces. Individuals can emerge with feelings of anger, dissonance, self-hatred, violence among other characteristics (Harro, 2000, pp. 16, 23). These results, when shifted to understand the context of African American males, can produce a problematic reality, especially when considering educational institutions. If a school that is meant to support students of color, perpetuates an *oppressive* regime or model the students themselves are socialized to be oppressed. In other words, oppressive environments beget oppressed people. In This is Not a Test: A New Narrative on Race, Class, and Education, Vilson provides a prime example of this oppressive socialization model in action.

> "The state of Arizona instituted a set of directives against certain segments of educational curricula in the state. This bill followed the already tenuous relationship between the state government and the underrepresented people of the

state of Arizona. Media reports about the bill called it a "ban on ethnic studies,"

which was deeply misleading. In fact, the ramifications went much further…"

(Vilson, 2014, pp. 154-55).

As evidenced by Vilson, the socialization of oppression is evident in that this House Bill from the state of Arizona, presents clear biases and even a subscription to the dominant social ideology that exists in the United States. The Bill specifically placed a cultural "relevance" on more Euro-centric or American ideals and dismissed the value of minority focused studies. In some cases, this legislation even outlaws students from getting specific and oftentimes unknown information regarding their culture or heritage from formal classroom settings.

When considering the purpose of Vilson's presentation, it is important to remember that in order to understand social supports, socialization and the makings of the social context one is studying is important; if not central to this section of the analysis.

Social supports, for the purposes of this paper, are to be understood specifically as the methods and modes employed for the students and/or by the students to produce the most comfortable and healthy atmosphere for the students. It is the intention that these supportive environments or characteristics will determine if the Empowering Males Leadership Class is in all actuality produces an environment that supports social safety. With this context around education and the socialization models integrated within it established, the survey materials are positioned to make more sense.

Survey Findings

Assessments of Home Communities and Environments

Finding: 60% of students said they feel "most supported" at home (n=5).

Question 1: Where do you find the most support? Circle one
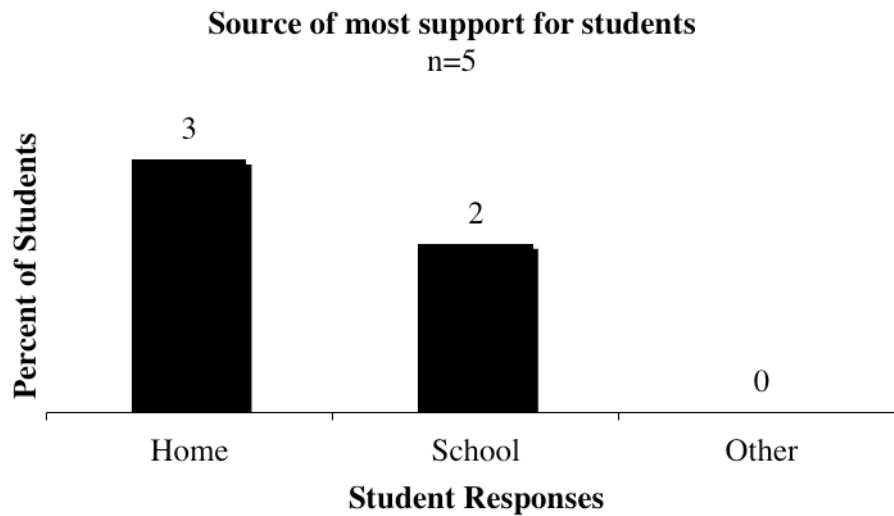
Source of most support for students
n=5

When considering support, on a social level, it is important to remember that this analysis is focused on the conditions produced by the case study high school in relation to the environment the students live in. Interestingly students mentioned that home is where they felt most supported, compared to school. When reconsidering the thesis of this project, this finding indicates that in order to implement any form of social supportive service for students, the qualities that make the home more supportive than the school environment are worth exploring. Furthermore, any program implemented will not be effective within this setting unless it adapts some of the characteristics that give students the same feeling they receive when they are home. In interview, I asked the students to explain why they felt that the home was more supportive than school, the answers are seen below:

1. "School is just tense. They don't really listen here."

2. "I don't know, I just feel more free at home."

3. "School isn't for me, they don't get me here…they find ways to make me made, shits crazy…I just like home" (Students, personal communication, November 12, 2014).

Clearly school had become a sight of tension or a sight where little release was available for students. To borrow from Harro's text once again, the social location of school seemed to produce a socialization mechanism that produced resentment and disdain for the institution of school. To better understand this limitation, it is important to explore the specific ways in which students feel supported.

Finding: 60% of students said the way they feel most supported was by "constant family support" or "constant teacher support" (n=5).

Question 2: In what ways do you feel supported at the place you indicated in question #1? Be explicit and please provide examples.
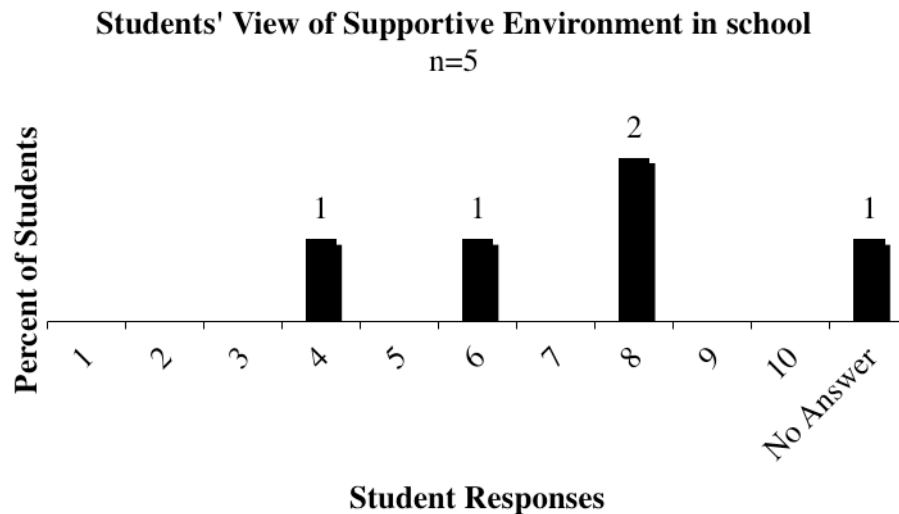
Ways Students Feel Supported
n=5
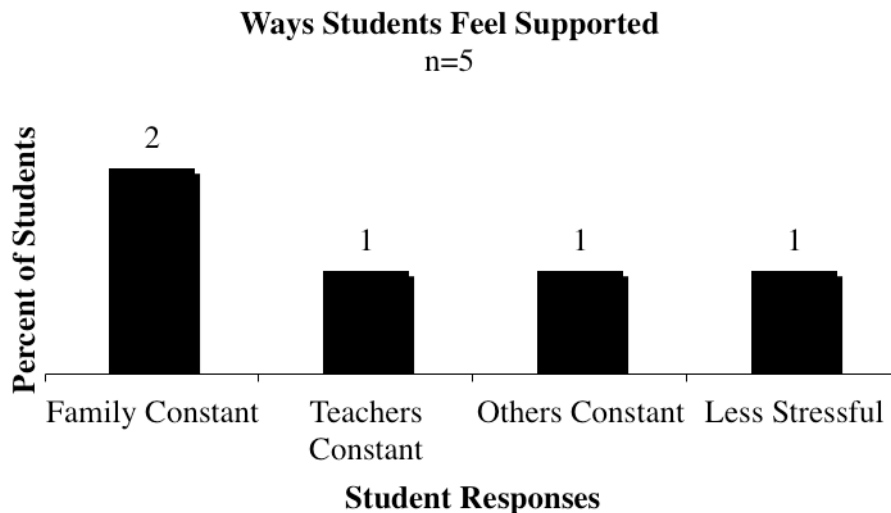
Source: Assessing the Scalability of Supportive Service Programs for African American Males, Ronald Taylor, Political Science Distinction Thesis/Honors Capstone, 2014.

Once asking students to reveal more about the ways they feel supported in light of their perceptions of school, the majority reported that family was a major source of support. This is

not necessarily surprising, but more specifically it sheds insights on the degree of social support

that might be relevant to the students. If the family is the core of social support, then the question

that then arises is: where can "family" like support be found within the case study high school?

Finding: 40% of students rated the supportive environment in the school at an "8" (n=5).

Question 3: On a scale of 1-10, being the lowest and 10 being the highest, how would you rank the supportive environment of this school? Circle one.

Students' View of Supportive Environment in school
n=5

Given that the school environment seemed to be in question and the main point of

question is where can students find their sense of family, it was important to understand

specifically where students saw the most support for their needs and to what extent. Interestingly,

the school maintained a relatively high ranking among the students. Despite previous statements

that school was not supportive for socialization, the students still saw some potential in the

school. To delineate this result, the most logical next step was to question whether the EMLC

was the root of that safety and comfort.

Moving Towards finding Family

Finding: 60% of students noted that they were involved in either "basketball" or "Saturday School" as their extracurricular activities.

Question 4: List any extracurricular activities you participate in at school or in the community.

Student Extracurricular Activities
n=5
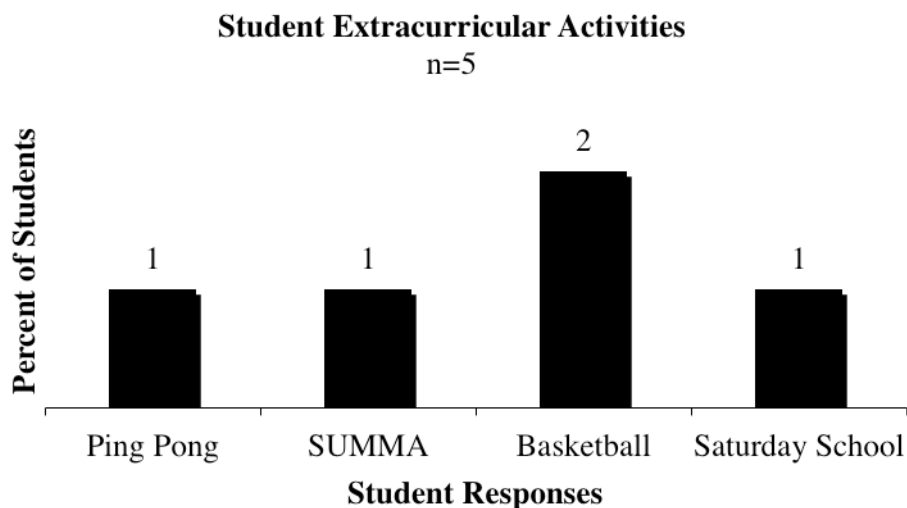
The afterschool interests of the students may seem like an awkward place to start moving toward defining family; but it actually provides insight into who the young men are and how they are best engaged. Harper outlines in, Succeeding in the City that in order to fully understand and engage with young men of color, despite classification, they must be understood as experts on their experiences (Harper, 2012, p. 5). Using this framework as a guiding principle, the students that engage in the EMLC are experts on their socialization encounters and are most familiar with how those encounters make them feel and cause them to think or operate. Being that the majority of the students spent their time in basketball or Saturday School, we can begin to understand that
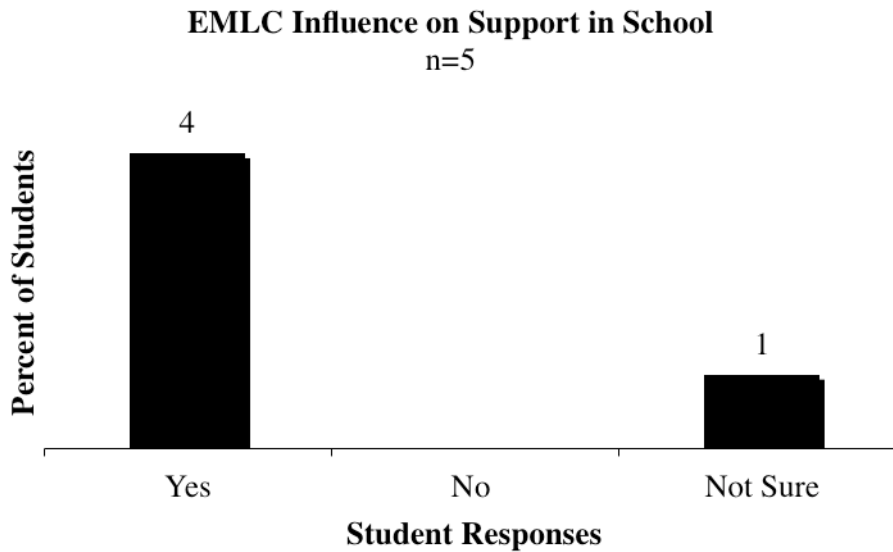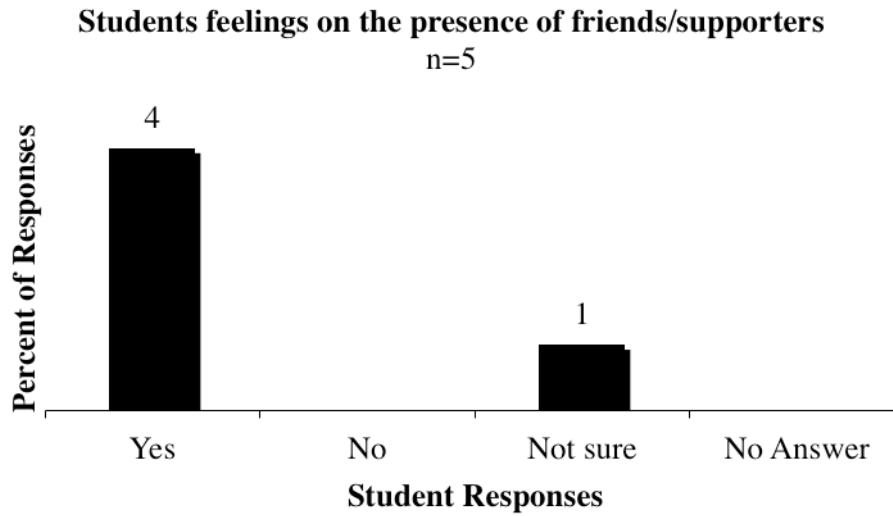
they socialization takes place in distinct areas. Basketball, for example, offers the young men with the opportunity to spend time cooperating with other young people toward the common goal of winning a game, whether that is a "pick up" game or an organized team fashion. This sport offers companionship and in many informal ways offers the students the chance to feel like they are a part of a network or family. Even in spaces such as Saturday School, which is meant to recover lost credit due to failure or missed class the students have a community. Community is the central focus of this section of the analysis in that where there is community, there is power for these young men. Especially when seeking to understand social conditions, the more community that is present for the students the better in understanding their social identities.

Moving from Family to Understanding the Nature of Support
With areas of community identified the next most logical point of question and interest is to outline specifically what students think of their friends and supporters as well as the intersection of the Empowering Males Leadership Class (EMLC). Below two graphics depicting this inquiry is given. What is particularly interesting to note is that students jointly felt that they had friends and supporters in their school. This finding is reinforced by the fact that students also felt that the EMLC had a positive influence on the degree of support they felt within their school setting. Here the students indicate that in all actuality, the EMLC makes them more akin to the case study high school although initially they felt that the school was not supportive.

Finding(s):

1. 4 of 5 students said that they "felt they had friends or supporters" (n=5).
2. 4 of 5 students said they "felt the Empowering Males Leadership Class enhanced the support they felt in school" (n=5).

Students feelings on the presence of friends/supporters
n=5

4

1

Percent of Responses

Yes   No   Not sure   No Answer

Student Responses

EMLC Influence on Support in School
n=5

4

1

Percent of Students

Yes   No   Not Sure

Student Responses

Source: Assessing the Scalability of Supportive Service Programs for African American Males, Ronald Taylor, Political Science Distinction Thesis/Honors Capstone, 2014.

It has been demonstrated that the EMLC serves two functional purposes, the first being a place for the students to be socially comfortable and supported even when they do not feel the school is the most supportive environment, secondarily it serves as a motivating factor to ensure that the students have a space in the school to feel supported as they must get an education. The above

graphics indicate that the environment, or safety of the environment is strong enough to make students feel comfortable. Specifically looking at the degree of effectiveness, this characteristic shows that students are positioned in an ideal environment to be developed, so one might assume that this program is majorly effective. In interview, the Assistant Principal was asked to outline his specific goals for making sure the EMLC was a socially safe space: "The EMLC is supposed to serve as a place where the students can make mistakes and feel comfortable in doing so. It is a place where they are to be comfortable in their limitations, so that we can figure out how to make an improvement and give them a better prospect on their futures" (Assistant Principal, November 12, 2014, personal communication). These outlines give a specific understanding of the **implementation** opportunities with the EMLC. If the EMLC creates an environment that is "fail safe" then students are motivated to be authentic within the space, thus making the goals of the program very feasible.

Given this interpretation, it is clear that both the students and the faculty want the EMLC to be as supportive as possible to the social needs of the students. In essence, it should serve as an additional support measure to the support students already find naturally.

<u>**Concluding Thoughts and Implications**</u>

Social supports at the basal level, are once again meant to create environments that add to or embellish a student's experience within their academic setting. From the vantage point of this thesis project, it is clear that social supports are rooted in the relationship between student safety and feelings of support. From this section, it is concluded that:

1. **In order for the school to be supportive, inclusive, family oriented environments must be replicated.** In graphics, 1, 5, and 6 it is seen that students primarily find support among their home environments. However, when

considering the school these same students only felt supported when in spaces that give them the same qualities such as intimacy and active listening. For the Empowering Males Leadership Class to continually improve this model and become more **effective** it ought to continue creating the space needed to facilitate these forms of support.

2. **In order for the school to implement social supports more effectively, there needs to be a "wrap around" model of services.** Throughout the majority of this section of the report, it has been made clear that the most effective measures of support are seen when multiple layers of a student's life intersect. For example, when students were exposed to spaces that were inclusive they were more akin to learning from those programs. Isolating needs of students, but also making sure all members of a community are aware of their needs makes the **implementation** of a program much more effective. The issue within the case study high school is that the students clearly see that all aspects of the school do not buy into the program and are therefore less motivated by the tenets of the Empowering Males Leadership Class.

<div align="center">**Chapter Four**</div>

<div align="center">**Emotional Supportive Services**</div>

Building Context

The Need for Emotionally "Competent" Spaces

In this segment of the analysis, **emotional supports** are defined specifically as the spaces that are created to provide students with the support to deal with their social experiences, and more specifically the experiences that influence their mental well-being. The following is an attempt to develop a working understanding of how emotional contexts are developed in the black male context: When considering the emotional supports for students of color, in this case young men, it is important to understand the layers of emotional supportive services that exist for students. According to Principal Tom of the Bronx Center for Science and Mathematics, "...creating an emotionally safe space allows our students to thrive, but not just thrive -- to do their utmost best to achieve their goals. I shower our students with love, not for any other reason than to make sure they know that they are supported here" (Principal Tom, personal communication, May 16, 2014).

Bronx Center, a premiere public school in the South Bronx of New York City, has made it possible to provide one of the best educations in the City, maintain partnerships with Dartmouth College and Syracuse University, and produce the most students of color with AP Credits in advanced science and math among the public institutions in the city (Principal Tom, personal communication, May 16, 2014). Using this example as a point of reference establishes a conversation on how emotional supports might play a role in providing the proper ground for student development. However, what happens when Black males, in particular, are exposed to an educational environment that is not conducive to their development? Dr. Pedro Noguera of New

York University in <u>The Trouble with Black Boys: and other reflections on Race, Equity, and the Future of Public Education</u>, outlines the experiences of black males on a social scale and how those social experiences lead to emotional existences.

> "The dichotomous nature of the lens through which black males are perceived poses a tremendous problem for ordinary men and boys. The vast majority of black males are not star athletes nor glamorous entertainers; neither are they hoodlums or gangsters. Yet, the images and stereotypes of Black males that permeate American Society compel all black men and boys to deal with characterizations and images that are propagated in the media and with the perceptions that lurk within imaginations...unlike men and women from other racial and ethnic groups, black males are rarely seen as individuals in possession of a full range of attributes and flaws, strengths, and weaknesses" (Noguera, 2009, xiii).

Noguera raises an initial point that outlines that black males are socialized to contend with specific micro-aggresions that can in turn limit their experiences. In essence, he also raises the point that young men of color in this context are not offered the same opportunity as their peers to have the "opportunity" to be full range individuals. They are limited to a specific mold of their agency, that they play no role in developing or maintaining.

For the purposes of this analysis, when considering emotional supports it is equally important to also understand the power of "contexts." Contexts, in this sense, borrow from Nealon and Giroux's <u>Theory Toolbox,</u> which defines context as the individual descriptors that contribute to how "you" make sense of the world (Nealon & Giroux, n.d., p. 27). The location and the type of location that students are immersed in drive the degree to which they will have a certain experience. Emotionally, this study is more concerned about how these contexts merge together or fail to merge together to provide the

best contexts for students. Vilson provides a personal anecdote in his text that offers insight into the context of the environment a student is educated in as well as the ability to physically alter contexts, in his case the "homeroom" class he was assigned:

> "One time I kept the kids after school because they kept uttering the N-word. Rosa Parks had died the day before, and I got so furious at hearing the word that I decided to hold a tutorial on why I feel the way I do about it. I shut the door and wrote the word "nigger" on the board. Silence. "Now you listen to me. We didn't fight for you to sit here where you can get an opportunity to do better for yourselves and your communities for you to use this language around each other." It's one of the standard diatribes we concerned folk have. I didn't know where it came from, but I was glad I had it ready to go. What amazed me was that, soon after, the whole school learned from this lesson" (Vilson, 2014, p. 81).

This excerpt in its most raw form shows that emotional spaces and contexts can be altered to achieve a particular result. Keeping in mind that this was a home room experience, where Vilson had developed a degree of trust and repoire with his students. This passage demonstrates that in certain environments, emotional support systems can serve as the grounds for critical assessment and development. This phenomenon drives a particular aspect of the hopes for this analysis as well. This example, still however; rests on a degree of social context.

Dr. Umar Johnson, in <u>Psycho-Academic Holocaust: The Special Education & ADHD Wars Against Black Boys,</u> introduces a conversation on Emotional & Behavioral Disturbance (EBD) classifications among African American males. He asserts that this label is one of the most stigmatizing on African American males primarily because it is the only special education diagnosis that speaks directly to emotions and behaviors. The parallel he establishes is that EBD is coined as a narrative that results from a "black boy's inability to build and maintain relationships with his teachers and peers. It also includes abnormal behaviors exhibited in school, fears associated with school, and sadness/depressed mood related to the school setting" (Johnson, 2013, p. 23). These sections of emotional understanding offer, dual advantages. Primarily, the emotional well-being of students will indicate how
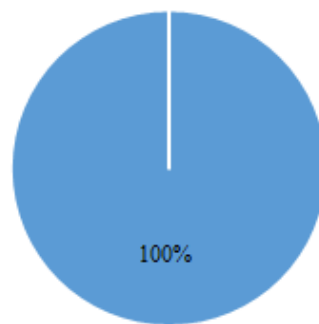
Understanding Student Environments

Question 1: Do you feel that you have a place to express your self in school? Circle one.

Finding: 5 out of 5 students said "they have a place to express themselves in school"(n=5).

Students who feel they have place to express themselves in school

n=5

100%

Source: Assessing the Scalability of Supportive Service Programs for African American Males, Ronald Taylor, Political Science Distinction Thesis/Honors Capstone, 2014.

At face value one might assert that having a space to express oneself in school is a broad and far reaching place to begin when seeking to understand the emotional experiences of young men of color. However, this specific question allows for a point of reference when thinking about what factors might detract or add or influence the degree of support, emotionally, students receive in their school environment versus others. When thinking about **implementation**, the degree to which students feel emotionally supported determines how effectively the EMLC can service their needs. For the sake of this report, when considering emotional supports it is crucial to remember that the degree to which these supports exist is contingent upon the setting they

exist in. If the environment does not support the development of these support systems, they will fail.

In deeper detail, **implementation** in this regard, needs to be understood as being intersectional. Explaining **implementation** as being intersectional, allows one to understand how **implementation** is linked to varying factors such as (1) student conceptualization of safety, (2) school capability of administering emotionally supportive services, and (3) institutional understanding and buy in of the program.

In the below diagram, it is seen that students expressed that they felt the EMLC was a safe space for them to express themselves. This is essential, when thinking about implementation because the student's receptiveness to a program will determine the degree to which it is successful put into place, thus reinforcing that implementation is intersectional.

Question 6

Finding: 5 out of 5 students said that "the Empowering Males Leadership Class" is a place where they feel safe to express themselves (n=5).

Students feelings on the EMLC as a safe space to express themselves
n=5

No
0%

Yes
100%

■ Yes ■ No
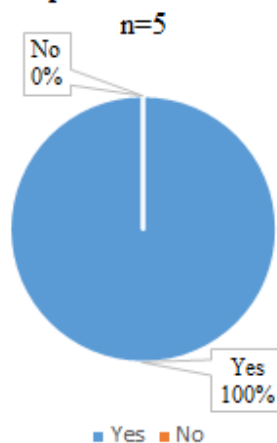
Furthermore, this same diagram indicates an important finding about the structure of the EMLC itself. The program has been able to construct an environment that not only supports the development of the young men involved, but also has created the need space to make them each feel accepted.

Below, question four elaborates on this point in even greater detail. Emotional supports question the degrees of safety that may or may not exist, as well. Safety, is not to be understood as being linear or simplistic, but should be understood as being the degree to which a student feels that his or her experiences are accepted and respected in a particular space. As seen in Question 4, the majority of students felt as though they had some form of space to go to during emotional difficulty. The establishment of this space makes it clear that support systems exist within the school and EMLC, and have the capacity to be marginally supportive to this select group of students.

Question 4

Finding: 4 out of 5 students said that they "have the adequate space to go to during emotional difficulty" (n=5).

Students who feel they have adequate space to go to
during emotional difficulty
n=5

- Yes ■ No

Taking a moment to reference back to effectiveness, it is important to remember the model of effective engagement that was outlined in an earlier section of this report. As Dr. Shaun Harper outlined in his address to the Children's Defense Fund in 2014, in order to effectively develop and engage with young men of color, Harper suggested that one must "engage men of color as experts on their experiences" (Shaun Harper, personal communication, July 2014). Considering that the young men in the EMLC come from an academic experience where they have been deemed "in danger," the EMLC's largest case for effective program implementation rests not on how well it is able to acknowledge student deficits, but how it works to provide students with atmospheres that counter those deficits. The diagram below shows a block in this "anti-deficit" frame, as the majority of the students felt as though their teachers did not understand how to interact with them in times of emotional struggle.

Question 5

Finding: 4 out of 5 students said that they felt "teachers are not understanding of emotional difficulty" (n=5).

Students feelings on teachers understanding emotional difficulty
n=5
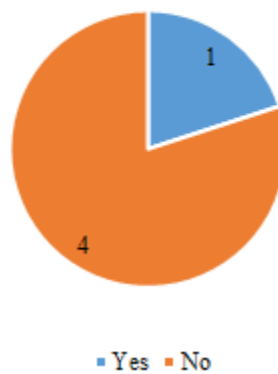
■ Yes ■ No

Source: *Assessing the Scalability of Supportive Service Programs for African American Males, Ronald Taylor, Political Science Distinction Thesis/Honors Capstone, 2014.*

Concluding Thoughts and Implications

The Empowering Males Leadership Class is equally an example of locally implemented practices having a moderate influence on intangible aspects of a child's education, as it is also a sign of how effective models of mentoring initiative development can work in school contexts. From these understandings, only one major conclusion is made regarding the emotional support of this program.

1. **The EMLC is moving towards an asset based model of implementation, but lacks the structural support within the school to insulate these progressions**. The EMLC does a great deal of work to frame the students as assets and not deficits, but it lacks the ability to get teachers to express buy in or commitment for these programs. If this program seeks to be effective, greater staff buy in is needed.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

When thinking about the prospects of African American Male development, within this context, it is important to remember the linkages between institutions and the people that they service. On one level it has been clear that when federal programming, such as the *My Brother's Keeper Initiative* is created with little support financially or legislatively, the responsibility falls on local actors (street level bureaucrats) to facilitate the work of said initiatives. This question of responsibility equally impacts the degree to which a program can be effective. Is it the responsibility of the local actor to implement and facilitate a program or a cause that he or she may be poorly prepared for. In the same token, this dynamic impacts the federal system in its entirety here in the United States. The marriage between the government and state power reinforces a constant tango on resources, power, trade, and in this case education. These methodical debates and encounters may help better organize power, but they might be fragmenting the agency of the United States in more ways then one.

For the EMLC, the tango previously mentioned affects the students and personnel in unique ways that may not seem direct at first sight. *My Brother's Keeper* may not have impacted the development of the program specifically, but given the nature of the work and the conditions and expectations set by the Initiative the EMLC is influenced indirectly by systemic and thought factors around black male development. With this understanding, this report sought to understand: (1) how effectively the EMLC administered support academically, socially, and emotionally and (2) how was it implemented, given it has little framing to do so. According to this research, both observed and conducted, the Empowering Males Leadership Class is found to be effective in supporting the social and emotional needs of the students because of its ability to create constructive spaces, but only marginally effective increasing the academic standing of the students within the program.

Given the youth of this program and as it is a pilot study, these findings should be considered as helpful in the framing process to increase the rigor and resourcefulness of the program. In greater detail,

this project is just an initial glimpse at what the program has been able to accomplish in the span of two academic years (academic years 2013-14 and 2014-15). Although the program is new the hope for this report is that it will be able to help restructure and guide the EMLC to develop and become an even better service platform for students.

In the future this project, in order to be enhanced, would need to consider using a larger sample to make more conclusions on the influence of small scale programs on the lives and activities of young men and boys of color; while simultaneously considering what the needs of each are in a general context. However, still some larger questions exist for both my own thoughts and the thought pattern and future of this research. When considering implementation, policy makers in addition to other actors are involved in the implementation process. But still, what motivates an actor (such as the Assistant Principal) to want to be interested in developing a program such as the EMLC, with little to no support and guidance in the structure for such a program. In addition, could this case study be seen as a means to circumvent power and ideals in order to implement a particular style of programming to support young men of color. All of these questions are situated in the larger conversation on the histology of social context that surrounds the impact of programs that seek to help students of color.

This project also motivates one to consider, what is the purpose of implementing soft policies and how might MBK be seen as a symbolic policy and less of an actual action. This may come as discouraging, but it is important to realize how even programs such as this actually motivate the production of situations such as the EMLC. Yet and still as programs develop out of this model, the causal logic implied that placing certain resources, arbitrarily among students will produce a result causes great dissonance. In essence, this project confronts and problematizes many of the "how" questions, but moving forward it would be beneficial to begin questioning the "who" behind programs such as this.

The truest measure of this program will rest upon two years from now when these students begin to graduate high school. If these young men have truly been empowered, it will be clear at the end of their high school career what direction or series of directions they will be lead into.

Sources Cited and Consulted

Bruce, M., & Bridgeland, J. (2014). The mentoring effect: Young people's perspectives on the outcomes and availability of mentoring. *Civic Enterprises with Peter D. Hart Research Associates*.

Bjornstad, C., Karlovits, K., Kraus, T., Owusu-Daaku, K., Schrader, S., & Shoemaker, P. (2013). Schools, Neighborhoods, and Student Outcomes in Dubuque, Iowa.

Davis, J. E., & Jordan, W. J. (1994). The effects of school context, structure, and experiences on African American males in middle and high school. *Journal of Negro Education*, 570-587.

Educational Testing Services. (2011). A strong start: Positioning young black boys for education success. Retrieved Novemeber 10, 2014 from

http://www.ets.org/s/achievement_gap/conferences/strong_start/overview.html

Harper, S. R., & Kuykendall, J. A. (2012). Institutional efforts to improve Black male student achievement: A standards-based approach. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, *44*(2), 23-29.

Harro, B. (2000). The cycle of socialization. *Readings for diversity and social justice*, 15-21.

Holzman, M., Jackson, J., & Beaudry, A. (2012). The urgency of now: The Schott 50 state report on public education and black males. *The Schott Foundation*.

Howard, T. C. (2013). *Black male (d): Peril and promise in the education of African American males*. Teachers College Press.

Huntington, S. P. (1966). Political Modernization: America vs. Europe. *World Politics*, *18*(3), 378-414.

Johnson, U. (2013). *The psycho-academic holocaust: The special education and adhd wars against black boys*. Prince of Pan-Africanism Publishing.

Knowledge is Power Program. (2013). *The kipp framework for excellent teaching*. KIPP Infinity Charter

School.

Lipsky, M. (2010). *Street-Level Bureaucracy, 30th Ann. Ed.: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Service*. Russell Sage Foundation.

Massachusetts Advocates for Children. (2014). Helping traumatized children learn: A report and policy agenda. Retrieved August 22, 2014 from, http://traumasensitiveschools.org/tlpi-publications/download-a-free-copy-of-helping-traumatized-children-learn/

McPartland, J. M., & Nettles, S. M. (1991). Using community adults as advocates or mentors for at-risk middle school students: A two-year evaluation of Project RAISE. *American journal of education*, 568-586.

My Brother's Keeper Task Force. (2014). My brother's keeper task force report to the president. Retrieved, May 31, 2014 from https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/053014_mbk_report.pdf

Nealon, J., & Giroux, S. S. (2011). *The theory toolbox: Critical concepts for the humanities, arts, & social sciences*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Noguera, P. A. (2003). *The trouble with Black boys: The role and influence of environmental and cultural factors on the academic performance of African American males*. Urban education, 38(4), 431-459.

New York State School Report Cards. (2015). *The New York State School Report Cards for the High School for Leadership and Public Service*. Retrieved, November 10, 2014, from https://reportcards.nysed.gov/files/2011-12/RC-2012-310200011425.pdf

Obama, B. H. (2014). My Brother's Keeper. *Speech Presented at the White House*.

Sawyer, D. (2013). I Ain't Do Nothing: The Social and Academic Experiences of Black Males in a Dismantled School.

Shaun, R. (2014). Succeeding in the city: A report from the New York City Black and Latino male high school achievement study.

Toldson, I. A. (2011). BREAKING BARRIERS 2. *Plotting the path away from*

juvenile detention and toward academic success for school-age African

American males. Washington, DC: Congressional Black Caucus

Foundation.

United States Department of Education. (2014). Office of civil rights data collection, snapshot discipline.

Retrieved November 10, 2014, from http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/crdc-

discipline-snapshot.pdf

Vilson, J. (2014). *This is not a test: A new narrative on race, class, and education*. Haymarket Books.

West, C. (1993). *Race matters*. Vintage.

Zweifler, R., & De Beers, J. (2002). Children Left behind: How Zero Tolerance

Impacts Our Most Vulnerable Youth, The. *Mich. J. Race & L.*, *8*, 191.

Appendices

Appendix I: Codebook

CODE BOOK
Assessing the scalability of supportive service programs for young men of color
Ronald Taylor
Syracuse University

ACADEMIC CODE	SOCIAL CODE	EMOTIONAL CODE

ID	PROMPT	CODE
A (SCHSUPP)	When it comes to school-work, by whom do you feel the most supported? Why?	OPEN ENDED RESPONSE (reported in body of work)
B (GRADGOALS)	What are your goals or hopes for college or your career after you graduate?	OPEN ENDED RESPONSE (reported in body of work)
C(SCHPREP)	Do you feel that your school prepares you for these goals? If so, how? If not, why?	OPEN ENDED RESPONSE (reported in body of work)
D (TEACHXTRA)	On a scale of 1-10, 1 meaning barely and 10 being frequently, how often do your teachers offer extra help for you outside of class time? Circle one.	Low: 1-4 = 1 Moderate: 5-6 = 2 High: 7-10 = 3
E (HARDTIM)	When you are having a hardtime in class, where or to whom do you go to for help?	OPEN ENDED RESPONSE (reported in body of work)
F (WHYHARDTIM)	Why do you go to this place or person for help?	OPEN ENDED RESPONSE (reported in body of work)
G (SCHTOOL)	Do you feel that you have been provided with the proper tools to succeed in school? Circle your answer.	Yes =1 No = 2 Not Sure = 3 No Answer = 99
H (SCHTOOLEX)	Explain your answer.	OPEN ENDED RESPONSE (reported in body of work)
I (STUDYWEEK)	How often do you study for your classes (each week)? Circle your response.	None =1 1-2 hours =2 3-4 hours =3 5-6 hours =4 More than six hours

		=5 Not sure =6 No Answer = 99
J(CAREEROPP)	Do you feel that your school offers you the opportunity to prepare for college or your career choices? Circle your responses.	Yes =1 No =2 Not sure =3 No answer =99
K(EMLCAC)	Does the Empowering Males Leadership Class help you with your schoolwork? Circle your response.	Yes =1 No =2 Not Sure =3 No Answer =99
L(WHYEMLCAC)	How does the EMLC help you with your schoolwork?	Yes =1 No =2 Not sure =3 No answer =99
M(RNKACSUPP)	Given the below support programs here at this school, rank the EMLC compared to the others on how supportive you feel it is to your academic success. Rank the following with 1 being the highest and 5 being the lowest.	The Guidance Department =1 Teachers =2 School Administrators =3 The Social Workers = 4 EMLC = 5
N(EXRNKACSUPP)	Explain your answer below.	OPEN ENDED RESPONSE (reported in body of work)
O(SOCMOST)	Where do you find the most support? Circle one.	Home=1 School=2 Other=3
P(WAYSOC)	In what ways do you feel supported at the place you indicated in question #1? Be explicit and please provide examples.	OPEN ENDED RESPONSE (reported in body of work)
Q(RANKSUPP)	On a scale of 1-10, being the lowest and 10 being the highest, how would you rank the supportive environment of this school? Circle one.	Low: 1-4 = 1 Moderate: 5-6 = 2 High: 7-10 = 3
R(EXTRACURR)	List any extracurricular activities you participate in either here at school or in the community.	OPEN ENDED RESPONSE (reported in body of work)

S(ENJOYSCL)	Do you enjoy attending this school? Circle. one.	Yes=1 No=2 Not sure=3 No Answer=99

T(FRIENDSCH)	Do you feel that you have friends or supporters here in school that encourages you to do well in school and stay out of harmful activities?	Yes=1 No=2 Not sure=3 No Answer=99
U(EMLCSOC)	Has the Empowering Males Leadership Class also provided you support in addition to your supporters and friends?	Yes=1 No=2 Not sure=3 No Answer=99
V(CATEMLC)	How would you categorize the EMLC?	Main source of support=1 Support in addition to friends and supports=2 Provides no additional support=3 No answer=99
W(MISSSOC)	In your own words, what do you think the mission statement of this school is? Write your answer.	OPEN ENDED RESPONSE (reported in body of work)
X(EXPRESCH)	Do you feel that you have a place to express yourself in school? Circle one.	Yes =1 No =2 Not sure =3 No Answer = 99
Y (EXPRESHO)	Do you feel that you have a place to express yourself at home? Circle one.	Yes =1 No =2 Not sure =3 No Answer = 99
Z (WHEREXP)	Where in school do you find it safest to express yourself?	OPEN ENDED RESPONSE (reported in body of work)
AA (ADEQSPAC)	Do you feel that you have the adequate spaces and places to go to if you are having a tough time emotionally? Circle one.	Yes =1 No =2 Not sure =3 No answer=99
BB (TEACHTTIM)	Do your teachers take time to understand why you might be having a bad day or a rough time emotionally? Circle one.	Yes= 1 No = 2 Not sure =3 No answer =99

CC (EMLCSAFE)	Is the Empowering Males Leadership Class a place where you feel safe to express yourself? Circle one.	Yes =1 No = 2 No Answer = 99
DD (EMLCBETT)	Do you feel that the Empowering Males Leadership Class could do a better job of emotionally supporting you? Circle one.	Yes= 1 No = 2 No Answer = 99
EE (EXPEMLCBETT)	If so, how does the Empowering Males Leadership Class support you? How does it not support you?	OPEN ENDED RESPONSE (reported in body of work)

Appendix II: Policy Proposal
Conclusion: Accelerating Opportunity, a policy proposal

The Empowering Males Leadership Class (EMLC) is the brainchild between large federal initiative outlines and local policy action and activity. On one hand, the EMLC is a success in that it harnesses the social and emotional needs for students, while providing the structure and accountability models to produce academic excellence. On the other, the program also shows the limitations of local municipal entities taking on the mandates of robust federal initiatives with regard to scale and dependability of the results. The EMLC may give insights into specifically what benefits the students in the controlled space, but it does not offer enough to understand how federal policies might interplay on the local level generally when considering the acceleration of opportunity for young men and boys of color. Therefore, in this final section of analysis, the objective is to use the prior sections and their insights to develop a proposal of how the Empowering Males Leadership Class (EMLC) might consider ways in which it can perpetuate growth in light of the federal conversation sparked by the My Brother's Keeper Initiative. This proposal is not meant to be an "end all be all," rather it is intentioned to serve as an attempt to focus attention on what aspects of the program can be enhanced based on the findings from this analysis.

Developmental Proposal for the Empowering Males Leadership Class (EMLC)

TO: The High School for Leadership and Public Service [attn.: AP Jaivelle Reed]

FROM: Ronald Taylor, student, Syracuse University

SUBJECT: Proposal to accelerate efforts of the EMLC

 Problem Statement: Within the Empowering Males Leadership Class, too few of the students are achieving academic success. As identified in this analysis some correlation tends to rest in the training, or lack thereof, of students to be accountable for their work as well as the level of engagement with teachers and administrators. As also evidenced within chapter 3, students who are not exposed to resources that show them ulterior realities tend to not understand their capacity to produce to their fullest potential. As a result some students within the class seem to do well while others struggle to higher degrees. Additionally, as evidenced in the poor attendance seen throughout this study, students lose motivation or interest in attending classes; thus delaying their degrees.

Proposed Policy: The High School for Leadership and Public Service is to implement a pilot expansion program centering the Empowering Males Leadership Class, in order to combine student needs, with administrative and school community buy in. The concept is an adaptation from the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) Framework for Excellent Teaching, specifically in that it seeks to marry classroom teaching, classroom culture, and emotional structures. This thinking is isolated in order to encourage a school-centric teaching model for the young men in the Empowering Males Leadership Class, opposed to a classroom-centric model (KFET, 2014, pp. 3-6). To contextualize this model of student enrichment, more in depth **KFET** uses a five pronged approach that seeks to: (1) expand teaching and interactions outside of the classroom, to

integrate the whole school, (2) expand instruction model from Pre-Kindergarten to grade 16 to ensure student success, (3) integrate "joy" for the classroom and for education as a tenant, (4) create the platform for innovation and sharing of ideas among faculty and students and (5) influence teaching for a specific direction, not just for a track or route influenced by curriculum (KFET, 2014, pp. 2-3). This framework increases the degree of inclusivity among teachers and students, thus raising the degree of interaction available between students and teachers alike. This expansion program would use standard professional development Wednesdays (on a bi-weekly basis) at the high school to provide a "thinktank" space for the students in the EMLC, specific teachers that work with these students and administration to gauge the development of each student personally and assess progress and contraction. Within each of the sessions students, faculty, and staff would meet with the intention to: (1) critically assess the academic profile of students over the past two weeks; looking specifically where the student is struggling and where the students is doing well, (2) carefully outline where the students need to improve within the classroom and why, (3) set **SMART** (Specific, Manageable, Accountable, Realistic, and Time Oriented) goals for the coming month, (4) review previous **SMART** goals to see what may have developed and what has not, and (5) give students and teachers the opportunity to voice any issues that they might have with one another using the **CARES** or (cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self discipline) framework developed at Camp Atwater for Young Men. This policy shift is adapted from several institutions within the New York City Metro Area, specifically the KIPP Infinity Charter Middle School, the Eagle Academy for Young Men, and the Bronx Center for Science and Mathematics. Each of these institutions have differentiated themselves, specifically in the ways in which they engage with young men of

color. Using the observations made during Phase I of this study, their strategies have been collectively applied.

Benchmarks: Over the next two academic years (2015-16, 2016-17), it is expected that the mean academic profile of the students will increase by approximately 5%. This benchmark is set intentionally to account for the adjustment factor in the organization of the EMLC as well as the growth that will be required of the teachers. Assuming immediate **implementation**, it is expected that the first year will experience little to no development, with more growth expected in the second year of the **implementation** of the cross sectional model.

Political Feasibility: This program is expected to be moderately feasible within the high school. The main "interest groups" that are needed are: (1) teachers, (2) students, and (3) school administrators. Among teachers, it might be relatively difficult to implement this policy as it will require professional development time that they value to be re-directed for a small subset of their student population. In the same token, students may resist the changes intentionally because it moves the safe space established within the EMLC into a larger context with more people involved. Finally administration may be the easiest group of people to work with in this regard because they are the interest group that established this program, specifically Assistant Principal Reed. It is expected that the administration will be more willing to re-structure the program in order to increase its yield and to inspire more engagement from students and school faculty alike.

Assigned Number:
Grade:
Age:
Race/Ethnicity:

Academic Support Survey
<u>Directions:</u> Answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Take your time and think through each question.

1. **When it comes to school work, where do you feel the most supported? Why?**
_____
_____
_____
_____

2.   **What are your dreams or hopes for college or career after you graduate?**
_____
_____
_____

 2b. **Do you feel that this school prepares you for that dream? If so, how? If not, why?**
_____
_____
_____
_____

3.   **What challenges do you face in school when it comes to academics?**
_____
_____
_____

4.   **On a scale of 1-10, 1 meaning barely and 10 being frequently, how often do your teachers offer extra help for you outside of class time? Circle your response.**

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   No Answer

5.   **When you are having a hard time in a class, where do you go for help?**
_____
_____

 5b. **Why do you go to this place or person for help?**
_____
_____
_____

6.   **Do you feel that you can be successful in school? Circle your answer.**

                    Yes   No   Not Sure.

6b.   **Explain your answer:**

_____
_____
_____
_____

7.   **How often do you study for your classes (each week)? Circle your response.**

None.   1-2 hours   3-4 hours   5-6 hours   More than 6 hours   Not sure.

8.   **Do you feel that your school offers you the opportunity to prepare for college or your career choices? Circle your response.**

Yes   No   Not Sure.

9.   **Does the Empowering Males Leadership Class help you with your school work? Circle your response.**

Yes   No   Not Sure.

9b.   **How does the Empowering Males Leadership Class help you with your school work?**

_____
_____
_____

Assigned Number:
Grade:
Age:
Race/Ethnicity:

Social Support Survey
Directions: Answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Take your time and think through each question.

1. **Where do you find the most support? Circle one.**
a.   Home
b.   School
c.   Other _____ (if other, where?)

2.   Why do you feel supported at the place you indicated in question #1?
_____
_____
_____
_____

3.   On a scale of 1-10, 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, how would you rank the environment of this school? Circle one.

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   No Answer

4.   List any extracurricular activities you participate in either here at school or in the community.
_____
_____
_____
_____

5.   Do you enjoy attending this school? Circle one.
a.   Yes.
b.   No.

6.   Do you feel that you have friends or groups of supporters here in school that encourage you to do positive things?
a.   Yes.
b.   No.

7.   Has the Empowering Males Leadership Class provided you with the same support as your group of supporters or friends?
a.   Yes.
b.   No.

8.   In your own words, what do you think the mission statement of this school is? Write your answer.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Assigned Number:
Grade:
Age:
Race/Ethnicity:

Emotional Support Survey
<u>Directions</u>: Answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Take your time and think through each question.
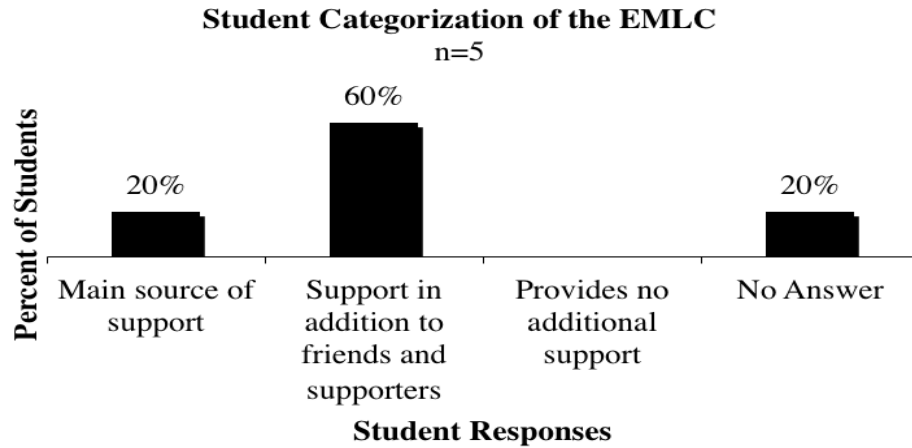
1. **Do you feel that you have a place to express your self in school? Circle one.**
a.   Yes.
b.   No.

2. **Do you feel that you have a place to express your self at home? Circle one.**
.   Yes.
a.   No.

3. **Where in school do you find it safest to express your self?**

    _____

    _____

4. **Do you feel that you have the adequate spaces and places to go to if you are having a rough time emotionally? Circle One.**
.   Yes.
a.   No.

5. **Do your teachers take time to understand why you might be having a bad day or a rough time emotionally? Circle One.**
.   Yes.
a.   No.

6. **Is the Empowering Males Leadership Class a place where you where you feel safe to express yourself? Circle One.**
.   Yes.
a.   No.

7. **Do you feel that the Empowering Males Leadership Class could do a better job of emotionally supporting you? Circle One.**
.   Yes.
a.   No.

8. **If so, how does the Empowering Males Leadership Class support you? How does it not support you?**

_____

_____

_____

Critical Capacity of the Empowering Males Leadership Class (external graphic)

Finding: 60% of students said that the "Empowering Males Leadership Class was supportive in addition to their friends and other supporters" (n=5).

Student Categorization of the EMLC
n=5

60%

Percent of Students

20%   20%

Main source of   Support in   Provides no   No Answer
support   addition to   additional
                     friends and   support
                     supporters

Student Responses