



Essential Conversations

Black Girls' Perceptions About Education,
Educators & the American Dream

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We R.E.I.G.N Inc

Outcomes

- Explore the intersectional experiences of being Black & girl while attending school in a large urban school district.
- Discuss the issues impacting outcomes for Black girls
- Generate ideas for supporting Black girls using the tenets of Black Feminist Thought & Restorative Practice



“Education is the civil rights issues of our day” - Condoleezza Rice



Issues Impacting Black Girls

- Invisibility (Rollock, 2007)
- Academic Attainment (Smith-Evans, George, Graves, Kaugmann, & Frolich, 2014)
- Discipline Disparity (Morris, 2015)
- Adultification (Epstein, 2017)



Black Girl Stats and Facts

- 5.5 x more likely to be suspended than their white counterparts
- 2/3 of women in jail are women of color (44% are Black).
- Under represented at top universities
- Lag behind on all indicators of academic success when compared to their white counterparts; including high school graduation
- Across all grades 4, 8, 12 African Am. girls represent the largest % of girls performing at the Below Basic level in math & reading
- Lowest grade point averages, lowest classwork grades, lowest SAT and ACT scores.

Black Girl Stats and Facts

- Black girls are seen as less in need of support, empathy, and more adult like.

Black Girls' Perceptions of the Role of Public Education in their Pursuit of the American Dream: A Phenomenological Study

- What perceptions do Black girls attending schools in large urban cities have about the American Dream?
- What school experiences do Black girls identify as essential to supporting their ability to access the American Dream?
- How do Black girls perceive the role of school/education in relationship to their pursuit of the American Dream?
- How do Black girls perceive the benefits of education with regard to their future lives and their own definition of the American Dream?
- Who do Black girls believe have the greatest influence on their access to the American Dream?

Findings

Question #1 Beliefs	Question #2 Experiences	Question #3 Role	Question #4 Benefits	Question #5 Supports
<p>Freedom the opportunity to select your own path in life & Success – financial security, achieving personal goals, access to post high school education</p>	<p>Negative stereotyping is common – Support is based on the school you attend.</p>	<p>Go beyond the curriculum. Academic and social-emotional supports and programming are necessary, but inconsistently , distributed across school type.</p>	<p>Preparation for the future – beyond college preparation – Access to programming</p>	<p>Self-Reliance and Hard work, Education; Mentors Family</p>



Summary

Participants describe schools as places where they are stereotyped as loud, ratchet, lacking social skills and having a lack of respect for education. They describe interactions with teachers and school staff that make the school setting a hostile environment where it is difficult to learn and lack of both academic and social and emotional supports. These interactions disrupt critical relationship development, which is essential to the processes of teaching and learning, and foster hostile social environments. The result of this disruption in relationship development is the assumption on part of Black girls that teachers are disinterested and unbothered by their success or failure. They recognize that stereotypes lead to low expectations.



The Experience

School Obstacles to the American Dream

Staff

School

Stereotypes/Stereotyping

Lack of Programs

Discouragement

Lack of Support

Discrimination

Bullying by other
students

Low Expectations

Lack of Support

Bullying



What can schools do?

Restorative Practice: A process whereby those most directly affected by wrongdoing come together to determine what needs to be done to repair the harm and prevent a recurrence



What...So what...Now What?

Restorative Practice	Black Feminist Thought
Social Discipline Window (Do with)	Social Justice Movement
Fair Process (Engagement, Explanation, Expectation Clarity)	Knowledge for the sake of knowledge is not enough – tied to lived experiences and aim to better those experiences
Free Expression of Feelings	Creating self defined stand points
Relational (Restorative) Questions	Dialogical Learning – provide arguments based on validity claims and not power claims

Café Conversations

<http://www.liberatingstructures.com/10-discovery-action-dialogue/>

- Round 1: Each person, with the talking object, shares their thoughts, feelings or doing about the topic (1 min per person)
- Round 2: Each person, with the talking object, shares thoughts and feelings after having listened to everyone else (1 min per person)
- Round 3: Open conversation
- Round 4: Each member shares “Takeaways” (5 minutes)



**Rooting, Empowering, Inspiring A Girl's Nation
R.E.I.G.N.**

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