A Phenomenological Case Study of Seventh-Grade African American Male Students at the Africentric School in Columbus, Ohio

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This dissertation titled
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Abstract

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A Phenomenological Case Study of Seventh-Grade African American Male Students at the Africentric School in Columbus, Ohio

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The purpose of this dissertation was to examine the experiences of African American seventh-grade male students in an Afrocentric school located in Columbus, Ohio. This school’s curriculum was based on the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at from an African-centered perspective. The researcher investigated how these principles influenced the self-concept of African American seventh-grade male students based on the principles of Nguzo Saba, self-esteem based on the principles of Ma’at, and how both sets of principles influenced racial identity development. It was presumed that these principles assisted African American students in becoming well-rounded and grounded in their ancestral history, culture, values, and traditions, thus developing a positive sense of self.

Although there had been numerous studies in the field of Afrocentric education, there was a lack of research that had examined the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at together, which served as a foundation for Afrocentric education, or its influence on African American students, particularly adolescent male students.

This was a qualitative research approach, specifically, a phenomenological case study, which was limited in scope to African American seventh-grade male students. The researcher employed qualitative methods of documentation and school observation.
These included two focus groups of African American seventh-grade male students and interviews with their teachers, the school’s principals, council of elders/committee members, and parents. There were three streams of classes: all males, all females, males and females; observations focused on the stream of all-male classes. Data were collected over a nine-month period.

The data collected were analyzed in comparison to literature reviewed. The study used Cross’ 1971 racial-identity model and Delgado and Stefancic’s 2001 critical-race theory as the frameworks. The purpose was to examine the particular stage to which participants usually related in determining “Black Conscious” awareness. The results detailed how exposure to the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at, from an African-centered perspective, along with the adoption of “the village concept,” had an influence on African American seventh-grade male student’s self-concept, self-esteem, and racial-identity development.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

Francis E. Godwyll

Associate Professor of Educational Studies
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother Georgia M. Rayford for showing me how to be a strong, resilient, and persevering African American woman. I love you very much and am proud to have you as my mother. This is also dedicated to those who did not live to see me excel to this point in my life, but encouraged me before transitioning from this Earth: first and foremost my beloved son Geoffrey L. Rayford (1983-1998), becoming a scholar of African American adolescent males’, self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development based on an Afrocentric education is in your memory, love you and miss you very much. To Professor Albert Salvato, Dr. Leo Kryzkowski, Dr. Collins Annin, and Erica J. Holloman, thank you for the kind words, encouragement, and support before transitioning I miss you all.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction of the Study

The purpose of this study was to obtain an understanding of how African American students, particularly seventh-grade males’, self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development were influenced by an Afrocentric education, including the immersion in the seven principles of Nguzo Saba and the seven principles of Ma’at.

These two sets of seven principles each were as follows, with those of Nguzo Saba listed in Swahili first, then in English.

The seven principles of Nguzo Saba are defined by the Columbus Africentric Early College as:

1. **Umoja (Unity)** “To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race.”

2. **Kujichagulia (Self-Determination)** “To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves.”

3. **Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility)** “To build and maintain our community together and make our brother’s and sister’s problems our problems and to solve them together.”

4. **Ujama (Cooperative Economics)** “To build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and to profit from them together.”

5. **Nia (Purpose)** “To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.”

6. **Kuumba (Creativity)** “To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.”

7. **Imani (Faith)** “To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our struggles.”
The seven principles of Ma‘at are defined in The Columbus Africentric Early College handbook as:

1. Balance, “I will work to achieve equality among my school, home and social life.”
2. Harmony, “I will work with others peacefully.”
3. Justice, “I will work to set things right.”
4. Order, “I am in control and organized.”
5. Reciprocity, “What I give is what I get.”
6. Righteousness, “I do the right things and I am proud of it.”
7. Truth, “I believe in myself and I am honest.”

African American students have had a mixed history of negative and positive issues in the public schooling system dating back to the era of slavery in America (Woodson, 1919). African Americans were continually led to believe that they were inferior to Caucasians, a concept deduced by Ladson-Billings’ (2000) argument that “African Americans have been told systematically and consistently that they are inferior, that they are incapable of high academic achievement” (p. 208). For example, the schools for African Americans displayed a continual visual reminder of inferiority, as articulated by Woodson (1919), who detailed some characteristics of schools in the United States as being separate based on the race of the child. African American teachers, compared to White teachers were paid less. Schools for White children were properly maintained and cared for, while those for African American students were “deficient and onerous” (p. 318). According to Woodson (1919) and Fireside (2004), White students attended grade-appropriate classes and received what was considered a basic education, while most
African American students were crammed into classes and received the same level of education. There were systematic inequalities within the buildings that housed students. White children were taught in buildings that were well maintained, while many African American children were housed in buildings that were deteriorating. There were also differences in pay between White and African American teachers (Woodson, 1919). These types of inequalities in schools posed challenges for some African Americans in succeeding academically. These issues were based solely on others’ attitudes toward their “Blackness” (Fireside, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Woodson, 1919). The African American experience in the public schooling system hinged on an inequitable curriculum, which favored Whites by promoting the inferiority of African Americans and the superiority of Whites (Coppock-Warfield, 1990; Dickerson, 1996; DuBois, 1935; Woodson, 1998).

Education between White and African American children was not neutral, as the public school system’s curriculum is hegemonic (Apple, 1990, 2004). According to Taylor (1970), the public school system’s curriculum is referred to as hegemonic because it propagates the ideology of White superiority in society, which is a “vital piece of the [W]hite American self-concept” (p. 105). The public school system is based on the foundation of White Anglo-Saxon Protestant ideology (Binder, 2000; Davis, 2009; Ogbu, 1982; Taylor, 1970; Woodson, 1998). This enabled White children to become well-rounded successful individuals, because of what the school represented and how it taught them about their culture (Ogbu, 1982). According to Taylor (1970) and Banks (1993),
Whites do not want their position challenged; therefore, a hegemonic curriculum ensured that no other race of people will challenge their position of comfort. A hegemonic curriculum can keep “African American children . . . disenfranchised” (Lomotey, 1992, p. 456). If the hegemonic curriculum were to become equitable, African American students may “develop a sense of pride far beyond the rhetoric level and begin to use it to develop minds which will seriously challenge a system advantageous for [W]hites and disadvantageous for [B]lacks” (Taylor, 1970, p. 110). The public schooling system keeps African American children psychologically oppressed, in a state of inferiority, on purpose, to suppress their ability to develop a positive self-concept and build progressive levels of self-esteem (Akbar, 1996; Costes-Kurtz & Schneider, 1994; Woodson, 1998).

African American children’s self-concept and self-esteem can become enhanced when they can see and learn about themselves in the curriculum. This is a foundation which enables African American children to form a positive racial identity (Belgrave & Allison, 2010; DuBois, 1935; Maslow, 1943; Shujaa, 1995; Tatum, 2006; Welsing, 1991; Woodson, 1998). These are just a few reasons as to why some African American parents and the community (which includes but is not limited to community leaders, teachers, and Caucasian parents of biracial children) were displeased with the public school system. As Ward-Randolph (2002) argued, the African American community fought for an educational system that would be viable for their children and in the community.

According to Archer and Hornestein (2008), Comer and Poussaint (1992), Giddings (2001), Gill (1992), and Hale (1982, 1986), the public school system was not beneficial to African American children; therefore, parents sought a school that would

Giddings (2001) lists two of the parents’ and community’s objectives concerning education, which were to “deconstruct hegemonic pillars” and to assist in “maintaining a positive self-concept” for African American children (p. 463). Gordon (1993) contended that educators needed to infuse the cultural history of African Americans into their pedagogy. This will assist African American children with issues of ideological domination taught from the hegemonic curriculum (Gordon, 1997).

As an alternative to the numerous issues of inequality within the public school, Afrocentric education emerged during the 20th century when Molefi K. Asante argued the need for crystallized thinking on the part of African descendants. This would enable African Americans to view issues from an African-centered philosophy. Afrocentricity is based on the African person’s frame of reference in which he or she is the center of the phenomena (Asante, 1991). It was essential for African Americans “to study intelligently and from their own point of view” (DuBois, 1935, p. 333), in order to eliminate any inferiority complexes in the classroom setting and inevitability of being seen as a nonperson (Asante, 1991).

Asante (1991) argued that when African American children see themselves as the subject and not the object in education, they begin to perceive themselves as knowledge seekers. This was an integral part of the Afrocentric perspective. Most of the time, when African American children learn about or see themselves, it was in a form of oppression
(i.e. slavery); Bekerie (1994) asserted that issues of “enslavement and colonialism contributed to the anomaly” (p. 133) of psychological oppression and that “Afrocentric theory is a theory of affirmation, . . . a theory to generate new knowledge and to pursue the path of liberation” (p. 133). Afrocentricity includes using as a foundation the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at in relation to Ancient Egypt. This is an essential part in the “philosophical and epistemological understanding of time, place, and histories of the African peoples” (Bekerie, 1994, p. 135).

African American seventh-grade male students were the primary focus of this study because there is a wide range of issues that African American adolescent males face. Some see themselves as academically unsuccessful or lacking the ability to succeed (Osborne, 1997); they have a higher dropout rate when compared to those of other groups (Jackson & Moore, 2006); they have a higher suspension rate (Haynes, 1993); “the education system’s ability to adequately serve African American males is worsening” (Donnor & Shockley, 2010, p. 43), and they are specifically targeted for special education, labeled ADD/ADHD, and therefore over medicated (Fitzgerald, 2009). Adolescence is a period when children “begin to mature mentally and think more about their identity and where they fit in the world” (McCoy-Holcomb, 2005, p. 121).

African American seventh-grade male students can learn how to tolerate and adjust to numerous changes in their external environment as long as the changes do not disenfranchise their racial identity development on a consistent basis (Cross, 1991). The external environment in question is middle school, which serves as a rite of passage from childhood tendencies to a more mature complexity (Bunting, 2004).
Middle school is a transitional phase that marks the end of the childhood stage (Akos & Galass, 2004). Also here are the early stages of the onset of adolescence, where identity formation is critical but also very fluid (Erikson, 1968; Tatum, 1992). Therefore, the importance of balanced information about who they are as a racial group cannot be overemphasized (Bamberg, 2011; Cokley, 2005; Corbin & Pruitt, 1999; Tatum, 1992). In this study, the researcher seeks to express the “voice” of African American seventh-grade male students as they are adjusting to the middle level at the Afrocentric School in Columbus, Ohio, as well as their perception of experiences at this school pertaining to learning about the principles of Nguzo Saba, Ma’at, and racial identity formation. The Columbus Africentric Early College is a K through 12 school with the middle school levels consisting of the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades.

There was an apparent regression of academic achievement and motivation among adolescent students as they were promoted from elementary to middle school. Middle schools as an institution appear to be unable to address the developmental needs of African American adolescents (Davis, 2003; Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006); especially, African American seventh-grade male students, particularly addressing their self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development, as they begin seeking the answer to, “Who am I?” (Bunting 2004; Carter & Goodwin, 1994; Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006; Corbin & Pruitt, 1999; Jenkins, 2006, Tatum, 1992).
Background of the Study

The Afrocentric School in Columbus, Ohio

The purpose of an Afrocentric school was to empower “learners to develop with confidence a sense of self-worth and community, derived from knowledge of African and African-American cultures” (*The Columbus Dispatch*, October 6, 1993, 1B).

The definition of Africentric was approved by the Columbus Public School Board as follows:

Africentricity is a holistic approach to education that focuses the curriculum and all facets of the teaching/learning process from an African world view. This means that content, learning environments, teaching strategies, and community involvement and support are based upon the history, cultures, contributions and values of African peoples on the continent and throughout the diaspora. (*The Columbus Dispatch*, October 6, 1993, 1B)

Several locations were being considered to house the Afrocentric School. The Linden area was recommended to house this program (*The Columbus Dispatch*, September 27, 1994, 2C). The location was seen as ideal for children living anywhere in the Columbus Public Schools district to travel to and from the school. Indianola Middle School was recommended, but there were several objections from the Indianola community (*The Columbus Dispatch*, January 25, 1996, 8C). Mohawk was eventually agreed upon because it “would be more centrally located and large enough to accommodate kindergarten through 12th grade” (*The Columbus Dispatch*, January 25, 1996, 8C).

The Columbus City School Board “passed a resolution supporting kindergarten through 12th grade” (*The Columbus Dispatch*, May 24, 1994, p. 3B). After the location and beginning grade levels were approved, the next step was to work on an agreed-upon
curriculum. The “curriculum had not been selected, but conceptually, it was to offer a core curriculum taught in other schools in the district but include an emphasis on African and [B]lack culture and achievements” (The Columbus Dispatch, June 2, 1996, 1B).

The school’s name began as the Africentric Program, “a more formal name will likely be chosen later and conferred officially by the Columbus Board of Education” (The Columbus Dispatch, August 29, 1996, 1A). It was later known as the Africentric Alternative Program; alternative was a key descriptor of the Afrocentric program because; the Columbus Public School district already had two other alternative schools: Spanish and French. An “Africentric alternative school would have its niche” (The Columbus Dispatch, October 31, 1993, p. 3B) in the Columbus School district, since it already had two. Making this school an alternative meant it was open to any student because it was an alternative to regular public schools (The Columbus Dispatch, October 31, 1993, 3B).

The school’s name went through several more changes over the years (The Columbus Dispatch, August 19, 2003, 1E). When additional grade levels were incorporated, the building was divided into two sections, Columbus Africentric Elementary School K-5 and Columbus Africentric Secondary School 6-12 (The Columbus Dispatch, August 9, 2006, 1B), later becoming the Africentric Early College (The Columbus Dispatch, August 9, 2007, 6B).

The student population was predominantly African American and based on lottery selection; any parent can submit an application for his or her child; race was not factored into the lottery system (see Appendix A). Students were to be accepted based on
blind lotteries. It was expected that children from different areas in Columbus would apply; therefore, the location of the school was essential (The Columbus Dispatch, September 27, 1994, 2C).

It would take an estimated three years to implement and open the centrally located Columbus Africentric Early College. The school was located in downtown Columbus, — a prime location, considering that it was across the street from German Village, a neighborhood that was perceived to be generally wealthy. The school was also centrally located between property owned by Children’s Hospital and The Ohio State University. Major tax dollars came from the neighborhood of German Village, benefitting the Columbus Africentric Early College.

The school had three sections, elementary, K-5, middle grades 6-8, and a high school section that offered the option of attending college during the final two years of high school. The Afrocentric School in Columbus, Ohio, was one of a few schools in the United States that taught from an Afrocentric perspective. Some other schools were:

Seed Academy located in Minneapolis, Minnesota, opened as a daycare center in 1985.
Harvest Preparatory School was an extension of Seed Academy, established in 1992 as a charter school. The school’s mission statement was: “To instruct, empower, enable, and guide African-American children to achieve superior academic, social and moral development.” Seed Academy has 150 children in its preschool section and Harvest Preparatory School has 325 students enrolled in its elementary section. The school is now known as, Seed Academy & Harvest Preparatory School, which serves children from preschool to the sixth grade (http://www.seed-harvest.org/home.html).
Marcus Garvey Academy located in Cleveland, Ohio, was established on September 30, 2002. This was a K-12 school which the curriculum is grounded in Afrocentric educational and cultural components. The school was publicly funded. The mission statement was: “To provide a comprehensive, multicultural educational experience that will impart to each student the knowledge, desire, and confidence needed to succeed in a diverse society” (http://www.marcusgarveyacademy.com).

Marcus Garvey Academy located in Detroit, Michigan, is a PK-8 African-centered school. The vision statement was: “To provide a high performing environment that places emphasis on cultural awareness, global learning, and community service in an African-centered, loving, nurturing learning environment.” This was a public school with a student population of 197 (http://detroitk12.org/schools/school/313).

Dupont Park Adventist School located in Washington, D.C., was a tuition-based Pre-K-10 Christian Afrocentric School. The curriculum was grounded in Christianity with an Afrocentric approach. The mission statement was: “Principally we commit ourselves to excellence in preparing students for the service of God’s church, country, community, and, above all, for Eternity.” This school has been serving the community for more than 80 years (http://dupont22.adventistschoolconnect.org).

Some Afrocentric schools had failed to survive as public schools within the social structure of White institutions. The McClymonds High School located in Oakland, California, from 1992 to 1995, closed because its students failed to demonstrate academic improvements. They had low test scores and high suspension and dropout rates. Students did not display evidence of having been prepared for college (Ginwright, 2002).
Nairobi Day School operated in East Palo Alto, California, opened in 1966 and closed in 1984 because of a lack of funding. The mission of the school was accomplished as African American students excelled academically and developed a positive self-concept (Hoover, 1992). The Afro-American School of Culture operated in Los Angeles from 1967 to 1971, when it changed its name to Kawaida Educational and Developmental Center and later to the Mary McLeod Bethune Institute, which remained viable until the late 1990s. Lack of funds was the reason for these schools’ not remaining open longer than they did (Kifano, 1992).

Because of the desires of African American parents to have their children schooled in the Afrocentric culture and heritage, and to help children develop positive views of themselves, both successful and unsuccessful schools have been established. A number of doctoral dissertations have dealt with the effectiveness of these programs by studying the behavior, academic achievement, and self-concept of African American students.

Dissertations that pertained to Afrocentric education and their findings are as follows:

_The Development of Cultural Congruence in Relation to African American Student Achievement_, by Latoyia K. Bailey, Temple University, 2007: Bailey studied African American students’ perspectives of their “Blackness” and any obstacles they faced academically — whether directly or indirectly — on account of the dominant culture. She analyzed the internalization of the seven principles of Nguzo Saba’s influence on the participants’ value system and sense of self.
Bailey collected data from three schools: Lotus Academy, Imani Charter School, and Khephera Charter School. The three together were viewed as a case study for a model of Afrocentric education. Data were analyzed through the lens of the Ma’atic principles as the seven principles of Ma’at are valuable concepts in viewing the education of African American children. Lotus Academy is an elementary school through grade 6; Imani Charter School is also an elementary school; Khephera Charter School is grades K through 8. Data were collected from observations.

The findings: Khephera Charter School was not considered an African-centered school because it was unclear how the school guided its student population toward cultural excellence. Also, the teachers had limited Afrocentric education. Imani Charter School teaches students about their African heritage. The school began by citing the Affirmation Pledge and the Black National Anthem. The Ma’atic principles were prevalent in the daily structure of the school, although the African consciousness of the teachers varied. The school does not identify itself as being an Afrocentric school but has an African-centered approach to teaching the lessons. Finally, Lotus Academy was viewed as an Afrocentric school that created its curriculum and incorporated culturally relevant textbooks and Afrocentric pedagogy into its structure. The school needs to implement the Afrocentric pedagogy more, based on the Nguzo Saba rubric.

_Afrocentric Education and the Prosocial Behavior of African American Children_, by Chandra L. Pilgrim, Fordham University, 2006: She examined whether an Afrocentric education would produce greater prosocial behavior in elementary children. She compared Afrocentric pedagogy to traditional pedagogy. The participants were from a
suburban school district. There were three elementary schools from this district that participated in the study.

Pilgrim had 233 fifth-and sixth-grade students: 184 African Americans, 46 Hispanics, and 3 Anglo-Americans. She excluded the 49 non-African American students’ data. The findings from this study revealed that Afrocentric pedagogy produced higher prosocial behavior according to the ratings by teachers and African American students when compared to students not educated with Afrocentric pedagogy.

*The Effects of African-Centered Education on the Achievement Motivation of African American Students*, by Jay B. Marks, Wayne State University, 2005: He investigated how an African-centered education influenced “achievement motivation of African American students” based on an African-centered pedagogy and curriculum. He compared middle school students learning from an Afrocentric curriculum with those learning from a Eurocentric curriculum.

The participants were selected from two traditional magnet and two African-centered schools. There were 130 seventh-and 120 eighth-grade students and teachers from both the traditional and African-centered schools. The principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at were the lens for understanding holistic living, as the African American way of life was analyzed based on the seven principles of Nguzo Saba.

Marks found no significant difference for high motivation and academic tasks; no difference in self-concept, social concerns, sense of purpose, sense of competence/self-reliance, or the number of years attending either school by students. The results of middle
school students from the African-centered schools displayed a higher mean score for performance than the students from traditional middle schools.

*Standing in the Gap: A Critical Case Study of the MAAT Academy*, by Kennon Mitchell, The Claremont Graduate University, 2004: He examined how the MAAT Academy influenced at-risk middle school male students, academically and socially. MAAT Academy is an after-school intervention program for African American male students only, living in Southern California. Mitchell analyzed this program holistically and critically to understand how an African-centered pedagogy would affect African American middle school males’ behavior. His study included four teachers, four parents, and 26 African American middle school male students. It is important to note that Mitchell is the founder of the MAAT Academy in Southern California.

The findings from this study revealed that African American middle school male students had lower disciplinary referrals at school; the parents and the students valued the African-centered education received at the academy; parents appreciated the positive male role models their sons were exposed to; African American history and the culture provided knowledge that counteracted the negative images of African American males in society; their son’s self-esteem improved, and the students appreciated the single-sex environment of the program. Teachers at the academy felt it was important to give back to the community and the families in the neighbor; therefore, they were dedicated in working at the MAAT Academy.

*An Africalogical Examination of the Contemporary Charter School Movement*, by Lorenza J. Williams, Temple University, 2002: He analyzed the Africalogical charter
school movement to understand if it was constructive academically, socially, and culturally to African American students. He conducted observations at four African-centered charter schools, two African-centered public schools, and three African-centered private schools. Williams’ study included 186 participants (153 students, seven principals, three vice-principals, four house directors, five curriculum coordinators, and fourteen teachers) with data collected from a survey, observations, and interviews.

Williams found that students demonstrated improvements in academic performance with 98% of students feeling they had improved. Test scores compared to those of traditional school districts were equal to or above, and the students at the African-centered schools had higher attendance rates which was based on the “village concept.” Results from the survey revealed the following: academic performance of charter school students were 98%, public school students were 93%, and independent school students’ results were 81%. Williams’ conclusion was that an African-centered curriculum “inspired motivated and challenged students academically” (p. 189). Also, social commitment, cultural awareness and appreciation improved.

*An Afrocentric Education in an Urban School: A Case Study*, by Bernard Reese, University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2001: He analyzed an Afrocentric education’s strengths and weaknesses pertaining to Black children’s academic achievement in an urban setting. This was a qualitative research design incorporating ethnographic and phenomenological approaches. Data were collected from stakeholders of the Benneker community, which included policymakers, Board of Trustees, faculty and staff, parents, and students. The school was Pre-K to 8, with 325 students, and a 97% African American
population. Reese interviewed a total of 30 participants but reported data from only 20 participants; he contended that he had enough data from the 20 to report accurate findings. This school was located in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

The advantages of an Afrocentric education were: Significant improvements in academic achievement on standardized test, self-esteem, and self-worth, which increased by a culturally relevant education; students were happy to come to school, having improved academically on tests influenced the students’ grades and dispositions outside the school environment; a multicultural education (which teachers became more comfortable referring to instead of Afrocentric education) was an advantage for the student population, because African American students were able to see themselves in what they were learning and White students were provided with information on the African Americans contributions to American society.

The disadvantages were: Parents did not understand that the school was Afrocentric, they presumed that the school just served the community, which was highly populated by African Americans; the school’s environment is not a true sample of American society. There were concerns about how students would fare in society once they left the school; assisting students in dealing with and overcoming systematic racism and prejudice was an original goal that was not accomplished through an Afrocentric education. This goal was later revised to focus more on strengthening the curriculum, but the Afrocentric pedagogy was still maintained; White people were threatened by an Afrocentric education in their community. Their ignorance fueled their fears. Some
African Americans were still ignorant of the meaning of an Afrocentric education, this misunderstanding caused problems in the school.

*Identity for Sale: The Afrocentric Movement and the Black Urban Struggle in Oakland Public Schools*, by Shawn A. Ginwright, University of California Berkeley, 1999: He analyzed the support and criticisms of an Afrocentric education from the community’s perspective and how the Oakland Unified School District implemented an Afrocentric curriculum at the McClymond High School. An ethnography approach was utilized to collect data from 42 participants that included: school administrators who had some involvement in the school’s program development; community residents who were knowledgeable in the political, economic, and social aspects of Oakland, and African American students between the ages 14 to 18 in the district.

Ginwright found that the enrollment rate decreased, academic performance did not improve for students in attendance, the school did not address the way African American students developed their racial identity, nor did the school district personnel take into consideration issues that affect the urban community.

*The Impact of an Afrocentric Educational Experience on School Functioning of Selected Black Students*, by Betty J. Webb, University of Minnesota, 1996: She analyzed the Minneapolis Public School’s Afrocentric program to investigate issues of achievement, performance behavior, and self-concept. The Afrocentric program was based on students’ attending half of the school day learning from an Afrocentric-perspective and the other half learning from a European perspective. Her study involved students from Franklin Middle School and the Lincoln Fundamental School which were
all day schools and the Afrocentric Academy, a half-day school. Webb’s study included a total of 160 male and female students from the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. She had two control groups and one experimental group; an African American control group consisting of 64 students; a White control group also consisting of 64 students; and the experimental group at the Afrocentric Academy consisting of 32 students.

Webb found that the sixth- and seventh-grade students in attendance at the Afrocentric School had higher mean scores in math than the White or African American students from the control groups. In reading, African American students from the control group had higher scores than the White control group or the African American students from the Afrocentric School. For self-concept, the African American students from the experimental group (Afrocentric School) increased their self-rating in scholastic competence more than the other two control groups did.

There were eight studies that were closely related to this one. For instance, in the area of an Afrocentric education, these researchers examined, prosocial behavior of fifth-graders, Pilgrim (2006); academic achievement of pre-K to eighth-graders, Reese (2001); and sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-graders’ self-concept, Webb (1996). Their studies did not address both sets of the Nguzo Saba and Ma’at principles taught from an African-centered perspective or how the principles influenced self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development. Bailey (2007) analyzed the internalization of the Nguzo Saba principles with elementary students. The purpose was to understand how these principles affected their value systems and senses of self. She did not address the development of
their racial identity or self-esteem, based on Nguzo Saba and Ma’at principles that are the foci of this study.

Further, in the area of African-centered curricula these researchers examined Afrocentric versus Eurocentric curriculum, Marks (2005); cultural relevance, Williams (2002); and community support of such a curriculum, Ginwright (1999). Although Marks’ study involved middle school students and used both sets of principles as lenses to understand African Americans’ way of life, his research did not focus solely on African American males. As a matter of fact, none of the studies summarized above evaluated how an African-centered curriculum influenced self-concept, self-esteem, or racial identity development as students were being exposed to it.

In addition, Mitchell (2004) investigated an African-centered after-school program with a focus on African American middle school males. He, however, examined how this type of school influenced them academically and socially. His study did not focus on how this school contributed to their racial identity development, self-concept, or self-esteem. These studies brought out the need for the issues of self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development among African American adolescent males to be studied.

Based on a review of the literature involving an Afrocentric education, the present researcher created a new Afrocentric paradigm as it differed greatly from other studies. This research focused on how an Afrocentric education grounded in the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at influenced the self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development of African American seventh-grade males. They were selected as the focus
of this study due to a lack of research on African American students in this grade and how these two sets of principles influenced their lives. Broughton and Fairbanks (2003) found that seventh-grade females’ concept of self, improved as they transitioned from the sixth to seventh grade. Findings by Ang and Woo (2003) suggested that seventh-grade males had more issues with psychosocial adjustment than females. Therefore, this research will add to the existing literature.

After analyzing other research studies in the field of Afrocentric education, it became clear that those scholars did not address African American seventh-grade male students’ self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development guided by the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at. Based on the descriptions of other dissertations, the phenomenon of an Afrocentric education had been an area of interest years after an Afrocentric perspective emerged during the 1980s spearheaded by Asante. This research sought to fill the gap by focusing on African American seventh-grade male students’ self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development and how these were influenced by the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at.

**Statement of the Problem**

Woodson (1919) asserted that efforts to educate African American males in their culture in the era of slavery were hampered, in part, by their desire to learn about the exploits of Toussaint L’Ouverture and Gabriel’s Insurrection. This led to fear among the White population, who theorized that there would be retaliation for slavery if African American males were to be enlightened with this knowledge (Watson & Smitherman, 1996; Woodson, 1919).
African American leaders in the culture had “often led the inroads to creating educational opportunity for the African American race” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 145). In the deeply rooted power structure of America, which favors Whites, there have been numerous issues facing African American males. This includes psychological oppression, negative self-concept, low self-esteem, and educational inequalities. Because of disenfranchisement’s being passed down from generation to generation (Jenkins, 2006), it has not been difficult for African American males to recognize the prevalence of “inequalities that exist within American society” (Corbin & Pruitt, 1999, p. 69). As the public schooling system perpetuated these inequalities, African American children continue to be mis-educated from their culture, heritage, and racial identity (Akua, 2004; Woodson, 1998).

Racial identity development, cultural knowledge, and discoveries of heritage are difficult for African American adolescent students to obtain. This was due, in part, to the school’s curricula’s being biased toward White students (Binder, 2000). Davis (2003) argues that “schools are critical sites for young Black males as they make meaning of who they are [and] what they are suppose to[be]” (p. 520). Being culturally deprived may lead to a lack of cultural information. Obtaining this cultural information could support a positive racial identity among African American adolescent male students (Bamberg, 2011; Davis, 2009; Davis & Jordan, 1994; Tatum, 1992; Woodson, 1998).

African American adolescents have been underserved by the public schooling system (Gill, 1992; Murrell, 1999; Sadowski, 2008), especially in the area of racial identity development, as they are faced with cultural racism within the schools.
Sadowski, 2008). Perkins (2005) argued that oppressive situations assisted in shaping “the Black Experience in America” (p. 6), which included inequalities in the schooling system and society. It was “within the hidden curriculum that values, beliefs, and assumptions about student achievement dwell. It is here that a veiled curriculum may exist containing characteristics that contribute to the constant devaluation of African American students” (Jones & Jones, 2002, p. 136).

The public school’s structure does not address the racial identity developmental needs of African American male students; the “school curricula are biased toward Europe and are harmful to the self-esteem and performance of African American schoolchildren” (Binder, 2000, p. 71). African American adolescent male students in the public school system are continually taught to accept “as heroes and heroines individuals who defamed African people” (Asante, 1991, p. 171). Being faced with such a hegemonic curriculum, African American students may disregard their “own culture and fuse everyone else’s into [their] lifestyle. Such behavior cheats [African American] children from an identity that connects them to who they are” (Akua, 2004, p. ix). Their history in the United States begins with the oppressive state of slavery, thus making it a reference point of origins (Gordon, 1976; Jones, 1973; Jones & Jones, 2002; Steele, 1992; Vann & Kunjufu, 1993; Woodson, 1919, 1998).

Akua (2004) and Asante (1991, 1992) argued that an Afrocentric education might rectify these disenfranchisement issues which African American adolescent students are exposed to in the public schooling system. The incorporation of an Afrocentric education can nurture the development of African American seventh-grade male students’ self-
concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development (Asante, 1991; Costes & Schneider, 1994; Tatum, 1997). A “progressive classroom that fully nurtures [African American] male development is one that is conscious of the external psychological abuse confronting [African American] males and directly fights against it with strong and positive educational messages and images” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 139).

According to Asante (1991), in the “Afrocentric educational setting . . . teachers do not marginalize African American children” (p. 171). This has been a problem in the public schooling system (Noguera, 1996). Asante (1991) further states that “in education this means that teachers provide students the opportunity to study the world and its people, concepts, and history from an African world view” (p. 171). Otherwise, a hegemonic curriculum can continue to victimize African American students and teach them that they are inferior to the dominant White group. According to Ogbu (1982), the White “middle-class culture and the culture of the schools are similar” (p. 293). White middle-class ideology is taught in the curriculum. A main problem with this ideology was “the thought of the inferiority of the [African American] is drilled into him in almost every class he enters and in almost every book he studies” (Woodson, 1998, p. 2); basically, this continues the historical disenfranchisement of African Americans in the educational system (Jenkins, 2006; Perlstein, 2002).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate, analyze, and understand the influence an Afrocentric education has on African American seventh-grade male
students’ racial identity development through Cross’ 1971 Negro-to-Black Conversion model and Delgado and Stefancic’s 2001 Critical Race Theory.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ. 1. How do the educational experiences from an African-centered perspective influence African American seventh-grade male students’ self-concept?

RQ. 2. How do the educational experiences from an African-centered perspective influence African American seventh-grade male students’ self-esteem?

RQ. 3. How is African American seventh-grade male students’ racial identity formation influenced by an African-centered perspective?

RQ. 4. What makes the Afrocentric School in Columbus, Ohio, sustainable?

**Significance of the Study**

According to Guthrie (2004), African Americans have a history of being perceived as unintelligent and unable of being educated. These beliefs were grounded in the notion that African American children were inferior to White children (Reinhardt, 1927; Wesley, 1940). Such scholars as DuBois (1935), Wilson (1991), and Woodson (1998) have a history of trying to disprove that African Americans are unintelligent. Some scholars have argued for African American children to be educated in a manner that would stimulate their intelligence (Wilson, 1991; Woodson, 1998), develop a self-concept (Costes-Kuntz & Schneider, 1994; Hale, 2001), improve their self-esteem (Griffiths, 1993; Harper, 1977; Kahle, Kulka, & Klingel, 1998), and guide them toward a positive racial formation (Carter & Goodwin, 1994; Cokley, 2005; Horowitz, 1939; Tatum, 1992, 1997). According to Asante (1988, 1991, 1992, & 2003), Akbar, Chamber, and Thompson (2001), and Ani (1994), an Afrocentric education is an avenue in which
African American adolescents can address their cultural background, therefore, providing knowledge that will guide them in developing their self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity.

This researcher focused on African American adolescent males because Kunjufu’s (1984, 1986, 1990) writings described how European Americans have conspired to destroy this population by damaging its spirit in the stages of childhood and adolescence, preventing them from developing into well-rounded African American men. Porter (1997) has suggested that the public schooling system is trying to kill African American males psychologically before they have had the opportunity to develop through the stages of adolescence. He contended that this action is accomplished by medicating African American adolescent males and/or placing them in special education classes. Harry and Anderson (1995) claimed that special education classes are overpopulated with African American children, especially adolescent males. This issue was readdressed 15 years later by Whiting (2010), who argue that African American boys are the dominant student population in number of students assigned to special education classes.

It was important to investigate an Afrocentric education to understand if this type of education would address and rectify the issues presented by the aforementioned scholars. It was also significant to analyze whether an Afrocentric education incorporated the concerns of African American parents who sought a school that would address their children’s needs.

As previously discussed under the “background of the study” section, research reported that an Afrocentric education had a positive impact on the development of
African American children. The context of previous research did not focus on what this researcher was investigating. This research was significant because the results provided the creation of a different paradigm to be added to the field of Afrocentric education, because it involved African American seventh-grade male students and their perception of being educated from an African-centered perspective based in the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at.

Research involving African American seventh-grade male students emphasized that there was a noticeable change in their behavior once they transitioned from the sixth to the seventh grade (Adler & Adler, 1998; Closson, 2009; Eder, Evans, & Parker, 1995; Farmer, Estell, Bishop, O’Neal, & Cairns, 2003; Véronneau & Dishion, 2010; Yoo, 2009). In most traditional public schools, they must “matriculate in an atmosphere that feels hostile” (Steele, 1992, p. 75). African American seventh-grade male students had to also deal with a system that “attempts to erase [their] Black consciousness, or nigrescence, or the development of Afro-American identity” (Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1998, p. 4). Stoughton and Sivertson (2005) found that “middle schools are challenging and complex, with the intense adolescent searching for self-identity” (p. 277). It was significant to understand how African American seventh-grade male students implemented what they had learned from an Afrocentric perspective in grades K-5 into the seventh grade, as it was a critical transition point in the early stages of adolescence. Middle-level grades at the Columbus Africentric Early College consisted of grades 6 through 8. This type of structure positioned seventh-grade students in the middle of the three levels (Broughton & Fairbanks, 2003). It was also important to analyze how an
African-centered perspective had influenced their self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development.

It is worth mentioning that this study was valuable to the community because there were some people in the Columbus, Ohio, area who criticized the emergence of an Afrocentric school. The data from this research provided information that explained the effectiveness of learning from an African-centered perspective. It was significant to educational historians in that it will demonstrate what emerged out of such a school being African-centered and guided by the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at, as a foundation for the phenomena under investigation. It was significant to the field of education, specifically Afrocentric education, because there was a dearth of research focused on this phenomenon.

The Columbus Africentric Early College did not have any data that investigated the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at and how male students were influenced by the principles. This research will serve as a reservoir of data that chronicled the impact of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at on African American seventh-grade male students, self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development in the Columbus Africentric School.

**Delimitations**

This study was conducted at the Columbus Africentric Early College located in downtown Columbus, Ohio. The objective of this study was to examine how the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at had influenced African American seventh-grade male students’ self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development. This research occurred over a period of nine months, June 2010 to late March 2011.
Since African American seventh-grade male students’ experiences were the focus of this study, their voices were a necessity in detailing their daily experiences in this Afrocentric School, and these experiences provided vital information for this study. Patton (2002) elaborated that “information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research” (p. 46). This was a phenomenological case study with the Columbus Africentric Early College as the sole unit.

**Definition of Terms**

The terms used in the study include:

*Education* is defined as “the process of transmitting from one generation to the next knowledge of the values, aesthetics, spiritual beliefs, and all things that give a particular cultural orientation its uniqueness” (Shujaa, 1994, p. 15).

When *public school system* is addressed it is defined as “a process intended to perpetuate and maintain the society’s existing power relations and the institutional structures that support those arrangements” (Shujaa, 1994, p. 15).

*Self-concept* is a positive group identity coupled with a positive personal identity. A positive self-concept depends on the person’s having a positive group identity, which, in turn, will be reflected in a positive personality (Cross, 1991). If an African American male student has a positive self-concept, he may “show a same race preference pattern” (Cross, 1991, p. 14). If he prefers a White group, it demonstrates “a negative group identity and by inference, a damaged personality” (Cross, 1991, p. 14). Negative group
identities also contribute to low self-esteem, which is a result of a damaged personality identity (Cross, 1991).

_Self-esteem_ as defined by Maslow (1943), is the need for humans to belong to a group in society based on

. . . a need or desire for a stable, firmly based, high evaluation of themselves. . . . Satisfaction of the self-esteem needs, leads to feeling of self-confidence, worth, strength capacity and adequacy of being useful and necessary in the world.” (pp. 381-382)

_Afrocentricity_ or _Africentricity_, as it pertains to an African-centered perspective, refers to studying the concepts of African concerns and behaviors (Asante, 2003), which includes placing “African ideals at the center of any analysis that involves African culture and behavior” (Asante, 1998 p. 2). It is a “mode of thought and action in which the centrality of African interests, values, and perspectives predominate” (Asante, 2003, p. 2). When referring to the school’s name the term Africentric will be used. The term Afrocentric will be used when referring to the concept.

**Organization of the Study**

An introduction of the study is explained in chapter one. This chapter also includes background information pertaining to the Columbus Africentric Early College, clarification of the statement of the problem, statement of the research questions, details of the significance, definition of the terms used, delimitations, and the organization of the study.

A comprehensive review of literature is provided in chapter two and includes works by scholars discussing how slavery dislocated the identity of enslaved Africans in America, the history of African Americans in schools, self-concept, and self-esteem of
enslaved Africans and their descendants, to the history of African Americans in public school, racial identity development, middle schools, and Afrocentric Schools.

Chapter three includes details of the methodology and two theoretical frameworks applied in analyzing the data collected. Chapter four addresses the context of the Africentric School; support of the school, it will also address the background of the teachers, council of elders/committee members, and the African American seventh-grade male students. The Afrocentric context and African-centered perspective are analyzed. Chapter five discusses the first research question, analyzing self-concept issues, psychological empowerment based on learning about cultural history, and Nguzo Saba’s influence. Chapter six is a discussion of the second research question, which entails self-esteem and how Ma’at guides African American seventh-grade male students. Chapter seven is an examination of the third research question concerning racial identity formation of African American seventh-grade students, becoming racially aware of their “Blackness,” and the teachers’ influences on identity formation. Sustainability of the Africentric School in Columbus, Ohio, the fourth research question, is discussed in chapter eight. The final chapter includes the discussion, implications, offers suggestions, and issues for further study.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

A review of literature should be relevant to the study (Patton, 2002). Therefore, all literature has not been exhausted and all topics are not included but the relevant issues are addressed. This literature review will lay a foundation as to how slavery affected the racial identity, self-concept, and self-esteem of Africans and their descendants and how this relates to education. Literature reviews add structure to, reduces the chance of duplicating in, and enhance the usefulness of the study (Padgett, 1998). This literature review consists of seven headings, including the history of African Americans in education and the theoretical framework. It is meant to illustrate issues African American students face in public schools. The seven headings are: dislocation of identity during the enslavement of Africans in America, the history of African Americans in public schools; the development of self-concept and self-esteem, African American males in schools, the middle school concept, Afrocentric education, racial identity formation, and Cross’ (1971) Negro-to-Black Conversion and Delgado and Stefancic’s (2001) critical race theory as the theoretical framework.

The first section is an overview of how slavery and the American legal system affected identity, self-concept, and self-esteem of Africans. This section is a demonstration of how slavery laid the foundation for centuries of psychological oppression for Africans and African Americans from which they would seek education as a form of liberation.
In the second section, literature pertaining to the history of African Americans in the public school system is reviewed. This includes subheadings pertaining to issues of racism and a hegemonic curriculum. The history is vital to understanding the problems African Americans faced as they attempted to progress through the public school system.

In the third section factors influencing the development of self-concept and self-esteem are examined. Since this study examines the experiences of African American seventh-grade male students in an Afrocentric school and their racial identity development, it is necessary to describe the issues African American students may face in public schools. These issues may influence African Americans’ self-concept and self-esteem.

The fourth section is devoted to the factors that form racial identity in African Americans. Since the history of racism in the public schooling system has been extensively documented, the influence it has on the racial identity development of African American students is explored in this study.

In the fifth section, literature pertaining to the concept of middle school and African American adolescent male students is reviewed. The purpose is to investigate whether the middle school concept is implemented in schools and what influence it has on African American adolescent male students’ developing into well-rounded individuals. Analyzing the middle school concept and the history of African Americans is significant in order to find whether middle schools are addressing the needs of the students.
The sixth section is a discussion of African American adolescent males in schools. This includes what African American adolescent male students face in the public school system and how that pertains to their academic success and development. It also involves the politics relating to educating African American male students in schools.

The seventh section concerns the concept of Afrocentric education, including the questions, “What makes this different from public schools?” and “What type of education has public schools provided to African American students?”

The final section is focused on the theoretical framework for this study, which is derived from the scholarly works of Cross (1971) and Delgado and Stefancic (2001). The emergence of each theory and its relevance to racial identity and racism in the United States are discussed.

**Dislocation of the African’s Identity**

Africans were uprooted from the African continent and enslaved in America. They were branded “both physically and psychologically, as subhuman beasts of burden” (Burrell, 2010, p. xii). This interrupted the development of their sense of self as a people, as White slave owners forced an identity on them (Sohna, 1994). This re-identification caused psychological damage because it dislocated the enslaved Africans from their culture (Latif & Latif, 1994).

Enslaved Africans and their descendants suffered from the trauma of slavery. It affected the entire African culture. This identity trauma was passed down to future generations, who did not know or connect to their cultural heritage. Slavery damaged the bonds of family, which also contributed to the collective trauma. Slavery destroyed not
only the identity of Africans enslaved in America, but it also damaged the collectivity of their community (Erikson, 1976; Eyerman, 2001).

In general, White society did not want Africans in America to formulate a community in which they could reconnect with their culture or traditions (Latif & Latif, 1994). Africans’ lack of culture-based identity left them in a state of disarray (Omi & Winant, 2005). This disconnection enabled White society to reinforce the ideology of Africans being biologically inferior (Wesley, 1940). The African was viewed as inferior, in part, because of the difference in physical characteristics from White Americans (Reinhardt, 1927). This laid a foundation for a White superiority complex, which added to the formation a positive self-concept for White Americans (Taylor, 1970).

According to Latif and Latif (1994), future generations of enslaved Africans became disconnected from Africa, they increasingly viewed their history as shameful. The shamefulness was embedded into their psyches, as they began to view newly arriving Africans as inhuman. The newly enslaved Africans were dirty, sweaty, and wore ragged clothes. The offspring of enslaved Africans did not want to be associated with this appearance. Whitman (1993) found that this laid a foundation for an identity that would take centuries to rectify in descendants of Africans in America. Slavery was a caste system that implemented racial inequalities between African Americans and White Americans, who had legal rights, and privileges, and who enjoyed these benefits with no regard to African Americans’ plight. When slavery came to an end, laws were implemented which would legally define African Americans as inferior. This can be seen in the Plessy v. Ferguson case of 1896.
*Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) is briefly discussed to demonstrate how laws were implemented to engrain inferiority into the psyche of African Americans. Homer Plessy was of mixed heritage and due to the one-drop rule: any amount of African American heritage caused the person to be identified as an African American. Plessy argued that he deserved equal treatment under the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States. He lost this court case as it was ruled that separate treatment in public accommodations should not be perceived as an inferior treatment. This gave rise to “separate” being “equal” in American society (*Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537, 1896). At that time, the laws of the United States of America further sealed inferiority in the psyche of African Americans. It would take more 50 years before the argument of African Americans’ being treated as inferior would be addressed by the legal system again in the *Brown v. Board of Education* of 1954 court case.

Segregation was a legal means to keep African Americans and Caucasians separate in every venue in U.S society. Segregation enabled Caucasians to enjoy equality and personal privileges (Solomona, Portelli, Baniel, & Campbell, 2005; Whitman, 1993). This study involved education; therefore, issues of segregation are discussed as they apply to the education system. African Americans were not fully covered under the description of the Fourteenth Amendment. Separation based on race was deemed legal by the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case. This was challenged in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case of 1952 and 1954. It was proved that separation in public schools was not equal for African American children. African American children viewed themselves negatively, which was proved in Clark and Clark 1940s research — the Doll Test.
During the 1940s, “psychologists Kenneth Bancroft Clark and his wife, Mamie Phipps Clark, designed a test to study the psychological effects of segregation on [B]lack children.” The outcome of their study was “effectively used in court to show that segregation damaged the personality development of [B]lack children.” The Clarks used “four plastic, diaper-clad dolls, identical except for color.” They showed the dolls to Black children. “The majority selected the white doll and attributed positive characteristics to it.” The Clarks asked the Black children to color the doll figure in their likeness, and “many of the children with dark complexions colored the figures with a white or yellow crayon.” Based on the outcome of Clark and Clark’s research it was “concluded that ‘prejudice, discrimination, and segregation’ caused [B]lack children to develop a sense of inferiority and self-hatred” (http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/brown/brown-brown.html). Kenneth Clark had to testify under oath the results of the Doll Test. In short, African American children were adapting an identity relative to White children. African American children viewed White children as nice, and since the child perceived himself or herself to be nice, then the child related to whiteness, thus developing an African American prejudice (Whitman, 1993). The Clarks’ scholarly research, the Doll Test, was a factor in overturning segregation in public schools (Russo, 1996).

In the Encyclopedia of African-American Education, Russo (1996) discussed the Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education, which recognized that “segregation of children in school . . . based on race was unfair” (p. 65). The Clark’s scholarly work with African American children and their outcomes was used by Robert Carter, who was a member of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund “believed that [the]
Clark’s findings could be effectively used in court to show that segregation damaged the personality development of black children” (http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/brown/brown-brown.html).

It was confirmed through the Fourteenth Amendment that the ideology of separation in U.S. society was not equal for African Americans and the former ruling in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case used to legalize segregation was overturned (Russo, 1996).

The decision of separate not being equal was significant for African Americans as Carter and Marshall (1955) described their involvement in the *Brown v. Board of Education* court case:

> On May 31, 1954, the long-awaited decision of the Supreme Court, on how to implement its opinion declaring segregation in public education unconstitutional, was handed down. Like the decision of May 17, 1954, it was read by the Chief Justice of the United States for a unanimous Court, and its language was simple, direct and non-technical. After the 1954 opinion, it seemed anti-climactic, but nothing world shaking should have been expected. (p. 397)

The decision of the Supreme Court judges made it possible for African Americans to attend non-segregated public schools (Carter & Marshall, 1955). After segregation legally ended, African Americans still had negative experiences in public schools.

**Summary**

Enslaved Africans and their descendants in America became confused about their identity because of the White culture having engrained a concept of inferiority into their psyches. White society made it difficult for enslaved Africans to pass down their cultural traditions and history to their children.

Shame and disgust replaced pride in the African culture as young Africans viewed newly captured Africans as inhuman because of their appearance. Centuries later, descendants of Africans, who felt identity-based inferiority, faced the legal system, which
cemented the inferiority complex in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) court case. This case demonstrated one drop of African blood committed a person to unequal treatment in society, as only White citizens had protection under the law.

This created an ideology of superiority that would not be challenged until 1954, with *Brown v. Board of Education*. The *Brown v. Board* case revealed that African American children did not appreciate their identity as descendants of enslaved Africans. Their psyches had been damaged from decades of psychological oppression.

Segregation continually fueled the belief of inferiority. The end of segregation enabled African American children to receive an equal education, through which their identity could be reclaimed.

**History of African Americans in Schools**

African Americans had negative experiences in the public schooling system dating back to the times of segregation. African Americans were considered biologically inferior (Reinhardt, 1927). In *The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Jefferson (1994) theorized that African Americans, although a different race when compared to White Americans, were inferior mentally and physically. African Americans were perceived as being unintelligent because of having a smaller skull when measured against a White person’s skull (Lewis, 1995).

Guthrie (2004) discussed F. J. Gall and G. Spurzheim’s theory that skull size mattered when separating African Americans and Whites based on intelligence, as Whites were perceived as being highly intelligent in comparison to African Americans. This was based on the capacity of the skull. The Gall and Spurzheim theory dates back to
the early 1800s, and was advanced by Alfred Binet during the late 18th to early 19th centuries.

Guthrie (2004) argued that “Binet constructed a test of intelligence which in a few years played a major role in the attempt to identify intellectual racial differences in the United States” (p. 57). Comparing an adult White person’s skull with an African American child’s skull would lead a person to believe that African Americans should not be educated because they do not have the brain capacity to learn (Lewis, 1995). This was not the case as Lewis (1995) campaigned against such inferiority theories, arguing that he saw “no proof that the average ability of the [W]hite man’s brain to think clearly is any greater than that of the . . . [B]lack man” (p. 472). Such theories have amplified the myth of White intellectual superiority, leading the argument that White Americans should have greater position in society than African Americans (Reinhardt, 1927). The argument was that African Americans should not be educated because they had smaller brains that led to signs of unintelligence. This was based on the theory of Gall, Spurzheim, and Binet had to be disproved and this would take decades. Woodson (1919), Daniel (1932) and Ickes (1934) have argued against African Americans being unintelligent. They stressed that the educational system and American society hampers African Americans’ ability to progress.

Woodson (1919) discussed how African Americans struggled to become educated in America as they fought the myth of being unintelligent. Woodson (1919) and Ickes (1934) explained that African Americans made significant contributions to American society. Some of these contributions were in the form of art and literature. This disproved
any African American mental inferiority that justified keeping their children uneducated (Daniel, 1932).

In the *Journal of Negro Education*, Morgan (1944) pointed out the works of the inventor and scientist George Washington Carver and the numerous inventions he made during his lifetime; Negro poets such as Paul Laurence Dunbar and Langston Hughes, whose poems would dispel the myths that African Americans were not intelligent and could not read; African American inventors such as Jan Matzeliger and Granville T. Woods, whose inventions was not valued; Gabriel Prosser; Denmark Vesey, and Nat Turner, who led insurrections against the oppressive system of slavery; Frederick Douglass, Josiah Henson, Booker T. Washington, and Mordecai Johnson, for their intellectual contributions. It is possible that learning about these African Americans could provide a sense of pride for African American children, dispel inferiority, and disarm any thoughts of being unintelligent.

According to Woodson (1919), White society argued against the education of African Americans because of the fear that African Americans would learn about Toussaint L’Ouverture’s heroic acts in Haiti and seek vengeance against White owners for slavery. The fear was very surreal as African Americans “beyond a certain number were not allowed to assemble . . . unless in the presence of certain ‘discreet’ [W]hite men” (Woodson, 1919, p. 8). By denying African Americans education, white society was also denying them a form of psychological enlightenment (Woodson, 1919).

The history of African American children in public schools revealed that they were not totally accepted in the schooling system (Jones & Jones, 2000). Once they were
admitted, the education they received did not provide information about their history or culture (DuBois, 1935). Ayers and Klonsky (1994) found that “African Americans are cheated out of a meaningful education” (p. 5). This is due to African Americans’ not being viewed as actual citizens during the creation of schools in the United States (Ayers & Klonsky, 1994). The public school system supported the psychological scars by treating African Americans as inferior (Whitman, 1993).

African Americans were tired of an education that treated them as Black Anglo-Saxons. Taylor (1970) discovered that African Americans were, at best, being educated under the assumption that they were intellectually inferior. The education that they were receiving did not pertain to their culture or history, in which they could see and learn about themselves or be educated in ways to fight the social inequalities that they faced in America. According to Spencer (2000) and Woodson (1998), this, in part, is why African Americans did not receive an education that was relevant to their history. Education provides a pathway out of despair. White America did not want African Americans to become educated, which kept them in a status of inferiority.

These are just a few issues African Americans faced in the public school system. African Americans were constantly fighting for an education that would befit their needs. Caucasian children can go to school and be educated in their history without having to prove that they are intellectually capable of learning. The review of literature suggests that education based on the race of the child is a form of racism in the school system. Schools should be inclusive in their teaching of African Americans about their history, providing psychological enlightenment (Asante, 1991; Latif & Latif, 1994). This could

**Racism**

The social system of racism described by Welsing (1991) is “designed to achieve [W]hite domination, the experience of the system molds [W]hite children so that they may function in the role of the oppressors, or the functional superiors” (p. 240). White supremacy has existed in the United States for more than 300 years, while Black equality has been advocated for only 40 years at the time of publication (Kershaw, 1992). Racism is based on classification such as biological characteristics. These characteristics determine social privileges that favor White Americans, thus leading to social injustice in the United States (Young & Braziel, 2006). In the field of education for African American children, parents “by contrast, often had to fight simply to gain access to public education” (Tyack, 2003, p. 83).

Education based on race is a significant issue because White children received an education based on Anglo-Saxon philosophy (Daniel, 1932; Jefferson, 1944). This added to the social inequalities in which White children learn about their culture and are provided a way of thinking (Hallinan, 2001; Spring, 2008). There needs to be reorganizational structuring in public schools (Jenks, 2004). This problem has existed for decades as Daniel (1932) pointed out that White children are provided a distinguished education while African American children are not. Since the curriculum has been essential in children’s learning processes, “teachers’ interests and strengths can determine
curricular focus, emphasis, or starting point” (Posner, 2004, p. 143), thus making the curricula equitable.

The public school’s curriculum was “absolutely necessary to the learning process. . . . With a meager and ill-adapted curriculum, there is indeed a wasteful and poorly functioning school” (Daniel, 1932, p. 277). Sixty years after Daniel (1932) addressed the curriculum, it was still an issue, as Finn (1992) reminds readers that the public has “been receiving evidence that American educators are doing a mediocre job, one that ill-serves this country and our children” (p. xi). When the curriculum was revisited decades later, as Jenks (2004) argued that the public school’s curriculum should assist with “the development of self-knowledge” (p. 196). This is because most “claim that a curriculum is the content, standards, or objectives for which schools hold students accountable” (Posner, 2004, p. 5). Is it fair for African American children to be held accountable to a curriculum that does not take their history into account?

Most African American children are educated on what Spring (2008) has termed the banking system, in which “knowledge is deposited into the child’s mind” (p. 208). In the banking system, African American children are provided information in the form of repetitive lectures, without being able to critically think about it and must regurgitate the information back (Spring, 2008). For African American children to learn how . . . to think critically [it] calls for reflective thought about what to do, how to behave, what to believe, and how to pursue a line of inquiry in such a way that the elements of thought trail are logical, connected, and will withstand scrutiny. (Jenks, 2004, p. 200)

A curriculum that is infused with African and African American history is a major step toward dismantling a psychologically oppressive philosophy and bringing an end to
institutional racism in the public school system (Asante, 1991, 1992; Cokley, 2005; Schubert, 1982). According to Nyborg and Curry (2003), racism in public schools can affect racial development because “growing up in environments characterized by institutional racism may affect the psychological well-being of African American boys” (p. 259). It is important to obtain an understanding of the Afrocentric School’s curriculum in order to analyze any influence the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at have on African American seventh-grade male students’ racial awareness and their development of self.

**Hegemonic Curriculum**

Hollins (1996), defines the curriculum as “the learning, routines, and interactions that occur among all participants as a function of schooling, whether planned or not, which inform and shape responses to the environment within and outside of school” (p. 1). She argues that the school’s curriculum “legitimates knowledge, perspectives, values, and interactions and relationships among people and institutions” (p. 1). Hegemony is defined as an admirable group that is the essence and aspect of society, thus deemed as the basis of societal thought (Berman, 1984; Sizemore, 1990). A hegemonic curriculum has a hidden agenda in schools.

In *Ideology and Curriculum*, Apple (1990, 2004), characterized the hidden curriculum as being “created and recreated by the formal corpus of school knowledge, as well as by the covert teaching that has and does go on” (p. 82,77). The curriculum is “not germane to the life of the African American child, and there has been little effort to incorporate the experiences, achievements, and needs of African Americans into the
The belief that the curriculum often reflects inequalities that exist in public schools is due to “schooling experiences [that] have potentially broad consequences for students’ future educational attainment, employment, and family relations” (Davis & Jordan, 1994, p. 570).

Inequalities in the school system may not be beneficial to the educational pursuit and development of African American students because the curriculum is based on middle-class ideology (Berman, 1984; Davis, 2009; Sizemore, 1990). As a matter of fact, the hegemonic curriculum might add to the problems African American children are faced with inside and outside the classrooms. Spring (2002) found that “public schools continue to be a center of struggle for racial . . . equality” (p. 98). The hidden agenda of the curriculum has perpetuated White Anglo-Saxon Protestants’ ideologies (Apple, 1990; Sizemore, 1990).

In the book *W. E. B. Du Bois: A Reader*, Lewis (1995) suggested that African Americans should be taught about their history in order to develop an appreciation of their culture just like White students have done. It is apparent that “schooling for African American students is deliberately sabotaged” (Baker, 2005, p. 243). The curriculum has not preserved African American history because it is viewed as unimportant, inferior to White history (Lewis, 1995).

In the *Hidden Curriculum and Moral Education: Deception or Discovery?* Vallance (1983) described the curriculum being taught, as often boring, unchallenging to students, and yet respected as viable knowledge. The three dimensions of the hidden curriculum include, but are not limited to, the nurturing of student-teacher interactions,
and several procedures that are deliberately applied intensely in the classrooms to
socialize students in order to preserve the class structure (Vallance, 1983).

There are different curricula based on the social status of the students in
attendance. Anyon (1983, 1996) identified four different curricula: working class, middle
class, affluent professional, and executive elite. She suggested that in “working class
schools, work is following the steps of a procedure,” that “mechanically involves rote
behavior and very little decision making or choice” (p. 149,186). She further argues that
children of working class parents learn how to deal with the conflicts of obtaining capital.

In middle-class schools, according to Anyon (1983, 1996), “work is getting the
right answer. If one accumulates enough right answers, one gets a good grade. One must
follow the directions in order to get the right answers, but the directions often call for
some figuring, some choice, some decision making” (p. 153, 190). The outcomes for
middle-class schools implied by Anyon, is that “children are developing somewhat
different potential relationships to capital, authority, and work.” In middle- class schools,
the “work tasks and relationships are appropriate for a future relation to capital that is
bureaucratic” (p. 163, 201).

In affluent professional schools, “work is creative activity carried out
independently. The students are continually asked to express and apply ideas and
concepts. Work involves individual thought and expressiveness, expansion and
illustration of ideas, and choice of appropriate method and material” (Anyon, 1983, 1996,
p.155, 192). Students develop a “potential relationship to capital that is instrumental and
expressive and involves substantial negotiation.” The acquired symbolic capital “skills
are necessary to become society’s successful artists, intellectuals, legal, scientific, and technical experts and other professionals” (Anyon, p. 164, 201).

In executive elite schools, “work is developing one’s analytical intellectual powers” (Anyon, 1983, 1996, p. 159, 196). She suggests that “children are continually asked to reason through a problem, to produce intellectual products that are both logically sound and of top academic quality” (p. 159, 196). The executive elite schools provide children with “something that none of the other schools does: knowledge of and practice in manipulating the socially legitimated tools of analysis of systems.” The executive elite “schooling is helping them to develop the abilities necessary for ownership and control of physical capital and the means of production in society” (Anyon, p. 165, 202).

Martin (1983) argued that the curriculum is not bound to any school; instead, it is tied to learning. Furthermore, the school curriculum teaches students to be “docile and obedient, to value competition over cooperation, to stifle the creative impulses, and to believe in what Ivan Illich (1970) calls the “Myth of Unending Consumption” (p. 123). Basically, there are different hidden agendas that depend on the school (Martin, 1983).

One concern over the school’s curriculum is that it should “reflect on the deeper social meaning, the wider theoretical significance, of what happens in each social setting” (Anyon, 1996, p. 163). A curriculum that does not address the development of self or racial awareness among African American children will cause psychological issues that were pointed out in Clark and Clark’s (1939) research.

African Americans need a curriculum that is grounded in African-centeredness. This type of curriculum endows African American children with the ability to develop a
well-rounded identity and to reach their fullest potential (Wilson, 1991). Instead, African American children are exposed to a school curriculum that is based in the maintenance of acculturation into the dominant group (Jay, 2003).

Apple and King (1983) make a case for the curriculum as a tool of social control stating that:

The curriculum field itself has its roots in the soil of social control. From its beginnings early in the twentieth century, when its intellectual paradigm took shape and became an identifiable set of procedures for selecting and organizing school knowledge, a set that should be taught to teachers and other educators, the fundamental consideration of the formative members of the curriculum field was that of social control. (p. 85)

Some research has shown that a curriculum that promotes this ideology of superiority can alienate African American students. This alienation is two-fold: not learning about one’s self and being alienated in the classroom and viewed as “acting White.”

Based on the literature, African American students have faced racism in the school system, as well as a curriculum that does not address their issues, history, or culture. This can lead some to see the inequalities as they continue their schooling in the United States.

Alienation

When African American students are not educated in their own culture, do not see their likeness in what they are learning, or are not educated in a language that they can relate to, it causes them to fail in school (Ogbu, 1991). Unfortunately, public “schools teach them in an alien White middle-class culture and language” (p. 434). African American students are alienated when they feel that they do not fit into the culture or that the knowledge they are receiving excludes them from the culture in which they are living
(Hajda, 1961). The hegemonic curriculum, as previously addressed, does not include any other culture’s history.

African American students are alienated by the negativity in the school’s curriculum, which makes them feel unwanted in school (Joseph, 1996). Calabrese and Poe (1990) found that when some African American adolescent students felt uneasy or uncomfortable in the public schooling system it was because their history appeared not to have contributed to American society. Also, African American students were not led to believe in their ability to become successful; instead, the students felt discouraged.

Gatto (2005) stated that “the ability to communicate with others, to share experiences, to collaborate, and to exchange information is critical. Conversation, the ultimate means of communication, must be a central part of a sound education” (p. xxiv). This can be viewed as a reason why White students do better academically in the schooling system, as they are able to speak up and have their voices heard. White students are more confident because the curriculum caters to their psychological needs. Only the African American students who are not alienated have developed resiliency and excel in the public school system.

**Resiliency and Oppositional Collective (Social) Identity**

Resiliency is a concept in which a person adjusts and overcomes psychological issues in any given situation and excels; “resistance may derive from . . . psychological coping processes.” Once resiliency is developed, “a relatively good psychological outcome [is expected] despite suffering risk experiences that would be expected to bring about serious sequelae” (Rutter, 2006, p. 1).
Resiliency is “an interactive concept that refers to a relative resistance to environmental risk experiences or the overcoming of stress or adversity.” Resiliency “differs from traditional concepts of risk and protection in its focus on individual variations in response to comparable experience” (Rutter, 2006, p. 1).

Resiliency emerges as African American students develop strength to overcome adversity. Resiliency is a survival mechanism when students are faced with situations that are considered beyond normal (Richards, 2002). African American students being educated away from their history on a constant basis develop resiliency in order to cope with a hegemonic curriculum in public schools (Richards, 2002; Woodson, 1998). It appears as though “resiliency begins with any point in time when a person has adapted to . . . his situation in life” (Richardson, 2002, p. 310). It was mandatory for children to attend school, but not mandatory to learn from a homogeneous curriculum. Therefore, while some African American students were alienated in the public schooling system, others adapt, become resilient, and continuing to progress through school.

Progressing through the public schooling system and being resilient can be attributed to teachers and other adults who demonstrate support and care of African American adolescents (Scales, Benson, & Mannes, 2006). The support of teachers and other adults aids in a positive relationship and create resilient African American students (Scales, et al., 2006). If a teacher-student relationship developed in the classroom the relationship “can promote learning and positive feeling towards school and academics” (Harvey, 2007, p. 34). This classroom relationship is beneficial for African American
adolescents as it prevents them from distancing themselves from the schooling process (Scales, et al., 2006).

Resiliency is a way for African American adolescent students to develop and excel in the public schooling system. It is a defense mechanism against being or feeling alienated (Harvey, 2007, Ogbu, 2004, Scales, et al., 2006). Resiliency for this study is viewed as “a process more than a list of traits” (Henderson & Milstein, 2003, p. 11). It is identified as a process, because students are transitioning from elementary to middle school, adjusting to the new school climate, and dealing with a hegemonic curriculum.

Henderson and Milstein (2003) suggested six steps in fostering resiliency in African American adolescents: 1) bond with students through their learning style; 2) make clear the policies and procedures of the school and be sure to implement these on a consistent basis; 3) assist students with the developmental stages of adolescence; 4) give constant encouragement, care, and support; 5) motivate African American adolescents with high realistic expectations; and 6) include African American adolescent students in decisions that affect them. These steps are essential in the academic success of African American adolescents and their teachers (Henderson & Milstein, 2003).

African American students being resilient and excelling in the public schooling system also can be a drawback in the African American community (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Ogbu (2004) discusses this drawback as African American students’ developing an oppositional collective (social) identity. This was a defense mechanism that African American students develop as they are accused by their peers as “acting White” because they are excelling in the schooling process (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986).
Conflicts between African Americans and White Americans have caused African Americans to develop an oppositional social identity (Ogbu, 1987). This identity is a “sense of peoplehood in opposition to social identity of [W]hite Americans because of the way White Americans treat them in economic, political, social and psychological domains” (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986, p. 181).

African Americans “express their collective identity with emblems or cultural symbols which reflect their attitudes, beliefs, feelings, behaviors, and language or dialect” (Ogbu, 2004, p.3). Ogbu (1987) concluded that some African Americans “do well in school even though they do not share the language and cultural backgrounds of the dominant group that are reflected in school features and practices” (p. 316). The language and cultural background of schools in question is that of White Anglo-Saxon ideology that is taught to students (Apple, 1990; Asante, 1991; Blanchett, 2009; Hallinan, 2001; Jefferson, 1944; Sizemore, 1990; Spencer, 2000).

Oppositional collective (social) identity is a term that was addressed in Fordham and Ogbu’s 1986 study of African Americans being accused by their peers of abandoning their Blackness for education, which is considered White. Schooling had been considered a privilege for White children since the beginning of the public school system because the schooling system is based on White Anglo Saxon Protestant beliefs (Ayon, 1983, 1996; Apple & King, 1983; Coppock-Warfield, 1990; Daniel, 1932; Kershaw, 1992; Ogbu 1987, 2004; Solomon, et al., 2005; Spring, 1994). Also, African Americans were considered unintelligent and unable to be educated or assimilated into the White culture (Daniel, 1932; Guthrie, 2004; Jefferson, 1994; Lewis, 1995; Reinhardt, 1927).
oppositional identity is a key developmental factor for African American students to protect their sense of self and maintain their racial identity against adversity they face from the White culture (Ogbu, 1991). Ogbu refers to this protection mechanism as a cultural frame of reference (2004).

Ogbu (2004) defines the cultural frame of reference as acting like the dominant group. As far as language is concerned, he describes it as talking like the dominant group. To resist this, “minorities usually develop some strategies to deal with the demands that they behave and talk like dominant group members in order to achieve self-betterment in situations controlled by members of the dominant group” (p. 6). Ogbu (1991) implied earlier that African Americans denounced “behaviors, events, symbols, and meanings” that are associated with White culture and embraced “behaviors, events, symbols, and meanings” that are related to their culture (p. 441).

According to Ogbu (2004), the ability of African American students to distinguish between the difference of their culture and language as they interact with the dominant group is considered a cultural frame of reference. This is based on speaking the language relative to the African American culture that is in opposition to White America’s collective identity. Cross (1995) suggested that “defensive oppositional identity is a protective filter employed by [B]lacks who are, or who seek to become, functional within the larger society” (p. 185). This defense mechanism is a means of protecting oneself psychologically because of African Americans’ being branded as inferior and their inability to “easily escape from their more-or-less ascribed membership in a subordinate and disparaged group” (Ogbu, 2004, p. 5).
Recall that African Americans have been continually “forced into minority status and subjected to oppression” (Ogbu, 2004, p. 5). Therefore, as a collective group identity, each individual responds to inferior and oppressive incidents in “ways that reinforce their separate existence and collective identity” (Ogbu, p. 5). It is the U.S. society’s dominant group that is responsible for African Americans’ inferiority status. Inferior status and oppression, based on the literature reviewed, is from slavery, segregation, and claims of limited intelligence that gave rise to African Americans’ responding in this manner. When African American students excel in the schooling system, they are not acting White because education is not solely a White thing; therefore, African Americans are not abandoning their “Blackness” for education (Kunjufu, 2002).

**Acting White**

The theory of “acting White” is based on the premise that African American children in the schooling system are viewed by their peers as “becoming White” if they excel academically. African American students may begin to ostracize their peers for excelling in the schooling system because they are perceived as assimilating into the dominant White culture (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Acting White first emerged in McArdle and Young’s 1970 study with White and African American students.

In 1970, McArdle and Young formed an interracial student discussion group in order to talk about the integration of African American students into some White-populated schools in Madison, Wisconsin. What surprised McArdle and Young was White students’ “sense of well-being or feeling of superiority” and how some White students expressed “fear and apprehension” of this integration. During these discussions
the African American students “introduced the phase ‘acting white’ with a negative connotation” (p. 136). Integrating into White public schools may take away from African American students’ racial identity because they are taken out of their all-Black community.

According to McArdle and Young (1970), African American students just wanted equality in the school they were going to attend; White students were very concerned about themselves, and did not think about how this integration would affect African American students. African American students did not want to be viewed as “acting White” as they sought the same rights and opportunities as White students in the public school system. African American students in this study were proud of their “Blackness” and did not want being in a White school to take away from their self-pride. What African Americans in the study realized was White students’ obvious feelings of superiority, which led them to feel rejected by the White students.

African American students adamantly did not wish to be viewed as “acting White,” or to lose their identity based on this assimilation into the White students’ school. This recognition is considered a natural response in African American students because of their history in the United States. Truthfully, African American students did not want to integrate into the White school as the students felt they were being divided, and thus, were less powerful (McArdle & Young, 1970).

Other concerns African American students expressed in McArdle and Young’s 1970s study included losing their identity as they integrated into the White students’ school, being rejected by the White students, not being able to maintain their Blackness,
and the lack of solidarity among the few African Americans who were being forced to integrate into these schools. It was becoming apparent that integration and academic success were major concerns for African American students, but not a concern for the White students.

McArdle and Young’s 1970 study consisted of discussion groups. It revealed that White students were more interested in interracial dating as African American students did not “consider it important, nor was it something they thought they would desire” (p. 138). Based on the students’ participation in this 1970 study, McArdle and Young observed the group’s interactions, collected and reported the data in regard to African American community schools being closed and the students having to integrate into the White schools. The issue of school integration had different meanings for White and African American students. The White students were more concerned with holding onto their ideological superiority, and dating, while African American students were concerned about losing their identity and being seen as “acting White” by their peers who did not integrate into the schools.

This subject of “acting White” was revisited and further explained in Fordham and Ogbu’s 1986 study of African American students who revealed that academic success was a part of White American culture. In order for African American students to maintain their racial identity, they may perform poorly in schools to combat the perception of acting White among their African American peers.

In *Black Students’ School Success: Coping with the “Burden of ‘Acting White,’”* Fordham and Ogbu (1986) used Hall of Famer basketball great, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar’s
school experience as an example. Fordham and Ogbu explained that Abdul-Jabbar was considered a very intelligent student who had outstanding reading scores. When his African American peers learned of his academic success, he was teased and got into numerous fights. Bergin and Cooks (2002) found that the academic success of African American students would elicit alienation from their African American peers, which is what happened with Abdul-Jabbar.

Fordham and Ogbu (1986) discovered that African American students do not fare well in school as “they experience inordinate ambivalence and affective dissonance in regard to academic effort and success” (p. 177). Parham (1989) stated that dissonance “exists when one’s racial identity is more Eurocentric than Afrocentric, because it violates the natural core of that person’s African makeup” (p. 196).

Fordham and Ogbu are known for describing the “fear of ‘acting White’” as a significant factor that influenced the attitudes and undermined achievement of African-American students” (Bergin & Cooks, 2002, p. 114). Fordham and Ogbu’s (1986) study was based on an ethnographic approach over a one-year period with 33 African American participants who were “both successful and unsuccessful students in one predominantly [African American] high school in Washington, D.C.” (p. 177).

**Criticism of the “Acting White” Theory**

Spencer, Noll, Stoltzfus, and Harpalani (2001) critiqued the Fordham and Ogbu (1986) theory of “acting White” and the notion of African Americans’ not valuing education. They argued that the results from Fordham and Ogbu’s ethnographic study contributed to “cultural stereotyping in its failure to acknowledge the role of solidly
entrenched social stereotyping in the school adjustment and coping requirements of African Americans” (p. 22). Spencer et al. (2001) argued that when comparing African American students with White middle-class students, which Fordham and Ogbug did, the results denied African American students the right to explain their perspectives based on their culture.

Spencer et al. (2001) were critical of Fordham and Ogbug’s (1986) study because the results “contribute to further stereotyping as opposed to focusing attention on the underlying phenomenon” (p. 24). According to Spencer et al. there were some oversights of data in Fordham and Ogbug’s study that interprets “acting White” based on misinterpretation of the ethnographic findings. An example of overlooking data is to fail to report information pertaining to African American student who succeed in the education system.

Spencer et al. (2001) argued that the research method could result in different outcomes pertaining to African American students and academic achievement. In their study, Spencer et al. had approximately 562 African American participants in middle grades. To collect data, Spencer et al. used “30 items rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale” (p. 24) to measure academic achievement, and the Racial Identity Attitude Scale based on Cross’ (1971) Negro-to-Black Conversion model to describe which of the five stage(s) emerged in their study. The participants in their study demonstrated the stage of Immersion, as Spencer et al. stated that:

Youths with high-immersion racial identity do not have possession of an Afrocentric cultural identity that is proactive and psychologically fulfilling. More than likely, they use their superficial identification as a reactive way of coping with the discomfort of the schooling complex. They may reactively “act out” on
others who may do better by claiming an authentic Black consciousness and demeaning others’ achievement efforts as a reactive method for maintaining personal self-esteem. (p. 26)

The final results from the Spencer et al. (2001) study were that “high self-esteem,” “high academic achievement,” and “valued by others” positively correlated with the African American adolescent participants. The participants did not view academic success with “acting White.” Instead, the participants “demonstrated a clear value for school and high academic performance, with students expressing disappointment over poor academic performance” (p. 28). Spencer et al. data were based on qualitative and quantitative methods that revealed that African American students’ racial identity measurements and academic achievement varied. Some African American participants performed well academically and others had low academic achievement. Neither identified with “acting White” but demonstrated Cross’ (1971) immersion stage. For example, some African American adolescents would wear “Malcolm X or Martin Luther King apparel without a concomitant understanding of either’s contribution to Black history” (p. 26). African American adolescents with a high immersion rating did not understand the Afrocentric culture. This lack of understanding was termed as “having a superficial identity to the African American culture” as a coping mechanism when feeling uncomfortable because of any school complexes.

This superficial identity assisted African American adolescents in maintaining high self-esteem (Spencer et al., 2001). Spencer et al. also found that White students with poor academic performances did not demonstrate the phenomenon of the “acting White.”
Spencer et al. outcomes contradict to Fordham and Ogbu’s (1986) study which reported low academic success in relations to the phenomenon of “acting White”.

Bergin and Cooks (2002) criticized the Spencer et al. (2001) study claiming that they are too judgmental of the “acting White” phenomenon, and that the ethnographic method may not have uncovered all possible data. In their 2001 study, Bergin and Cooks found that African American students did not give up their identity “in order to do well in school, nor had they allowed accusations of acting white to affect their study habits or efforts to achieve” (p. 122). African American students who participated in the study did not allow criticism of being accused of talking like a White person to interfere with their academic pursuit. One participant became frustrated after seeing other African American students give up on learning and achieving in school.

Bergin and Cooks (2002) argued that as African American students associated with other African American students “who [held] similar values and goals they [were] not so threatened by accusations of acting White” (p. 130). In the book Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?, Tatum (1997) observed that “space is created for resisting stereotypes and creating positive identities” (p. 82). Tatum discussed how social networking and connecting with peers who deal with the same issues in schools is a mechanism of support for African American students’ excelling in schools.

Bergin and Cooks’ (2002) study investigated the phenomenon of “acting White” revealed that African American students who participated in the study did not change their behavior as they excelled academically. None of the participants tried to avoid being accused of “acting White” by their African American peers. Bergin and Cooks claimed
that African American students continually excelled as each progressed through the schooling system and intermingled with other African American students who were not performing well academically in school.

There were several differences between Fordham and Ogbu’s (1986) and Bergin and Cooks’ (2002) studies. Bergin and Cooks’ (2002) study included brief interviews with the participants beginning in the 1990s when the participants were in the eighth grade and were chosen based on academic achievement from several different schools. Fordham and Ogbu’s study was based on an ethnographic method. African American students were selected based on observations at one school during the 1980s.

Horvat and Lewis’ (2003) study was conducted at two public urban high schools in California over one year of time, with 100 hours of observations and interviews. The method used was grounded theory. The participants were females from two 9-12 high schools. Horvat and Lewis discovered that African American students who were academically successful displayed and discussed their academic success with other academically successful African American students: “students share their academic success with peers who are supportive of their academic endeavors” (p. 266). When African American students socialized with their African American peers who were not academically successful, they refrained from discussing their academic lives to keep from being called or considered “acting White.”

Horvat and Lewis (2003) determined that Black students “both camouflaged and shared their achievements” pertaining to education. Horvat and Lewis further elaborated: “the point is that the students resisted both dominant white culture’s conception of them
and other black students’ expectations for their behavior in school” (p. 267). As African American students performed well academically and associated with their peers on the same academic level and there were no accusations of “acting White” among them, “friendship groups within the larger [B]lack peer group offered positive reinforcement for academic success” (Horvat & Lewis, p. 269). African American students may retain both social networks when balancing out their behavior between academically and non-academically successful African American peers.

What is the importance of reviewing literature that addressed the “acting White” phenomenon? Tyson, Darity and Castellion (2005) wrote that the burden of “acting White” and academic success of African American students “remains among the most influential publications addressing the academic underachievement of [B]lack students and the [B]lack-[W]hite achievement gap” (p. 582). Tyson et al. argued that the phenomenon of acting white exists in the African American community. Collecting data to investigate this phenomenon from eight secondary schools in North Carolina was important for their study as it was for other scholars who explored this subject, including Fordham and Ogbru (1986), Spencer et al. (2001), Bergin and Cooks (2002), Horvat and Lewis (2003), who collected data from only one school (Tyson et al., 2005). They stated that the “in-depth nature of the interviews allowed us to probe more deeply and specifically into issues related to a burden of acting White” (p. 583).

Tyson et al. (2005), using qualitative data (i.e. interviewing) from eight secondary schools in North Carolina, found that “a burden of acting [W]hite exists for some [B]lack students, even though it is not prevalent among the group” (p. 583). The purpose of
studying eight secondary schools was that, “few qualitative studies addressing this hypothesis have focused on more than one or two schools” (p. 583).

According to Tyson et al. (2005), the characteristics of “acting White” had “two primary conditions: ridicule or criticism directed toward black students must be racialized and it must be specifically connected to academic behaviors” (p. 585). Students at one of the eight schools demonstrated significant characteristics of “acting White.” A rural school with more than 1,700 students showed “evidence of a burden of acting White with respect to achievement” (p. 593). The burden of “acting White” is manifested with African American adolescent males as they are “averse to success’ because it constitutes ‘betraying their brothers’” (p. 594). During the process of interviewing students of color (i.e. African Americans and Mexican-Americans) were offended when their peers accused them of “acting White,” especially when the accusers did not know their own culture (Bergin & Cooks, 2002). Because pursuing academic success is not “acting White,” Kunjufu (2002) states that “people who have a solid understanding of their history do not make asinine statements, such as being smart is acting White” (p. 111). Understanding African American history through education may assist African American adolescent males with challenges that prevent them from developing a positive consciousness of their Blackness.

**Black Masculinity**

Black masculinity was important in the development of African American adolescent males learning about how to become young men. Ratele’s (2003) *We Black Men* detailed the troubles of Steven Biko, who was the father and leader of the Black
Consciousness Movement. Biko fought for the “recovery of black masculinity, of a type of maleness, in contradistinction, for instance, to the recovery of the psychic and embodied integrity of all oppressed humans” (p. 246). Regaining the loss of Black manhood was important in the Black Consciousness Movement as it guides African American adolescent males in the “restoration of the Soul and self-esteem” (Ratele, p. 246).

Descendants of Africans were taught self-hatred in schools as they are constantly bombarded with negative images of African history. Learning about the Black self was important for racial emancipation (Ratele, 2003). Biko and Stubbs (1987) discussed the emergence of Black consciousness, explaining that the Black “man has become a shell, a shadow of a man, completely defeated, drowning in his own misery” (p. 29). To emerge from this oppression was to:

Make the [B]lack man come to himself; to pump back life into his empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity, to remind him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth. (p. 29)

Biko and Stubbs’ (1987) definition of Black Consciousness was “an inward looking process” (p. 29). According to Ratele (2003), this was a “philosophy of everyday life that reminds [B]lack men of the complicity with racism” (p. 242). Blackness was based on personal identity and politics, “Blackness will become positive and [B]lack people will be able to face up to their oppressor. When [B]lack(s) (males) have learned to act like men, able to rise, face up to, and revolt against [W]hite racism,” (p. 244) their struggle will negate negative images (Ratele, 2003).
Harris (1995), focusing on Black masculinity, talked about some issues that African American males face, stating that, “for those who are unable to meet traditional standards of masculinity, manhood has been redefined to be consistent with their alienation from mainstream values and institutions” (p. 279). African American males were being alienated by the schooling system. Two reasons are that they neither learn about themselves or their history, nor do they have African American role models after which to pattern themselves. Hunter and Davis (1994) pointed out that “Black males failed to learn what being a man was all about.” This is due to “the absence of appropriate models of manhood” (p. 22). In American society, African American males have to deal with negative stereotypes. This is an attack on their manhood. Harris supported this ideology and advocates that “forming a masculine identity in the face of conflicting norms and values can be especially stressful for African American male youth” (p. 280). “African American young men successfully resolve demands specific to [the formation of a masculine identity and] those with less resilience may compensate with negative behaviors” (p. 280).

Although African American seventh-grade male students have numerous issues to deal with in U.S. society and the public schooling system, “the process of achieving an identity, which results in defining who one is and hopes to be, involves examining various social systems and institutions and committing to those that have offered the greatest opportunity for mastery” (Harris, 1995, p. 282). An Afrocentric school offers an institutional setting supportive of racial identity development among African American male students. Patton (1981) contends that “the educational system as we know it in the
United States will have to be altered dramatically if it is to contribute to the total development of Black people in general and Black males in particular” (pp. 199-200).

When thinking about African American males, many stereotypical thoughts come to mind — troublemakers or athletes, for example.

Black males are often associated with sports and athletic abilities. Hunter and Davis (1994) distinguished between professionals’ and nonprofessionals’ view of masculinity in African American males. Some professional men viewed being good in sports, being physically strong and aggressive as somewhat important in the development of malehood. On the other hand, nonprofessional men “viewed spirituality and financial security as most important to black masculinity” (p. 25). There was no consensus on what Black masculinity is among men who are most likely being viewed as role models for African American adolescent males.

The categories of Black masculinity pointed out by Watts-Murtadha (2000) were:

- **Conforming** — masculinity is the acceptance of ‘mainstream society’s prescriptions and proscriptions for heterosexual males.’ Black males follow the rules of society. They work hard, set high goals, and strive for success, and yet society does not teach Black males that they have a glass ceiling and very limited opportunities in U.S. society.

- **Ritualistic** — Black males play by the rules, but don’t actually believe in them, feeling as if they have no real purpose or commitment to winning.

- **Innovative** — is distinct from [either] conforming or ritualistic ‘by exaggerating traits of hegemonic masculinity’, if Black males seek material gains it often leads to ‘[B]lack-on-[B]lack crime’ and the debasement of women.

- **Retreatist** — Black masculinity reflects a giving up on life which can be seen in ‘those men who are alcoholics, drug addicts, or who have given up looking for meaningful existence’.
• Rebellious — [B]lack masculinity ‘is exhibited by those who work in organizations committed to black liberation.’ (pp. 55-56)

Conforming, ritualistic, innovative, and retreatists categories help to detail inequalities and oppressive situations in which African American males find themselves within U.S. society. According to Staples (1978), the subordination of African American men as a “racial minority has more than cancelled out their advantages as males in the larger society” (p. 169). In the field of education, African American males often find themselves falling behind, statistically speaking, and do not learn about developing into young African American men (Staples, 1978).

Staples (1978) addressed some “problems created by institutional and overt discrimination,” that African American males “encounter the negative stereotyping that exists on all levels about them: being socially castrated, insecure in their male identity, and lacking a positive self-concept” (p. 170). Acceptance of these oppressive issues can lead to a stereotype threat within the African American male psyche.

**Stereotype Threat**

Stereotype threat occurs when a person or a group begins to believe in the negative perception others have of them (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Aronson, Cohen, and McColskey (2009); Shih, Pittinsky, and Ambady (1999), and Steele (1997) argued that African American adolescent males accepting as truth any societal stereotypes leads to negative issues with intellectual and identity development. To overcome stereotype threats in schools, an African American adolescent male must be able to view academic success as a part of his identity. He must acknowledge that he is intelligent and this intelligence is grounded in his being accountable to himself (Steele, 1997).
Armenta (2010) claims that if African American adolescent males are repeatedly faced with stereotype threats, they tend to “shift in the direction of the stereotype” (p. 94). When African American adolescent males are continually taught from a hegemonic curriculum that does not include their history or shows their history in a negative, oppressive manner, they will develop an identity of intellectual inferiority (Armenta, 2010; Steele & Aronson, 1995). Steele & Aronson suggest that negative stereotypes of African Americans have developed from being viewed as unintelligent, as well as from segregation, discrimination, and prejudices. African Americans have had to endure these issues, which have affected their pursuit for academic success, thus causing racial achievement gaps in schools. African American students should be measured for intellectual capability based on tests that are relevant to their culture — this will reduce stereotype threats.

After African Americans were legally allowed to attend nonsegregated schools, they had problems with test performance (Davis, Aronson & Salinas, 2006). This was frustrating because intelligence has been an issue with the academic success of African American students, and being labeled unintelligent has stereotyped the culture as incapable of achieving in school (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Although there is a lack of valuable African America history in schools, and allegations of the “stereotype are importantly negative, this predicament may be self-threatening enough to have disruptive effects of its own” (Steele & Aronson, 1995, p. 797).
Summary

African Americans in the public schooling system have dealt with issues of being perceived as unintelligent and unable to be educated. African American children being educated led White Americans to feeling uncomfortable or fearful of retaliation of their ancestors’ slavery system. African American students faced issues of racism in schools as they were taught from a Eurocentric perspective. King (2001) argued that the schools are organized “in ways that inherently promote the superiority of those of European descent, thereby promulgating the inferiority of African Americans” (p. 429).

The curriculum did not include anything positive about African American history, thereby perpetuating psychological oppression as African American students were not learning about their identity. The hidden agenda of the school’s curriculum was to nurture White students’ development, which alienated African American students. Their negative experience in schools gave rise to African American’s becoming resilient in an attempt to deal with psychological oppressive issues.

Being resilient enabled some African American students to excel in the schooling system. Those who were academically excelling had to deal with being perceived as “acting White,” as some of their African American peers viewed education as a privilege for White students, since there is a history of negativity for African American students in the public schools.

As a defense mechanism, African American students developed an oppositional collective identity. This was a way to protect oneself from the perception of “acting White,” as African American students maintained the language of the culture and were
able to distinguish between their cultural identity and the White culture as they pursued their educations.

The cultural identity of African American students led them to becoming conscious of their “Blackness.” Being conscious of their “Blackness” guided African American males into developing a positive masculine concept of self. When African American adolescent males feel good about themselves, it leads to a positive self-image (Baker, 2005). This was important because the schooling system continually exposed African American males to a context of White males after whom to model themselves. African American males had to face issues of their “Blackness” being viewed as negative. This is a form of stereotype threat, which could lead some African American adolescent males to view themselves as academically unintelligent. African American students being oppressed in schools has unfavorably shaped the educational system in the United States (Murrell, 2002). This has been embedded in the history of America since the enslavement of Africans.

**Self-Concept**

Self-concept is defined as the personality structure to a specific racial group in reference to self, based on awareness, attitude, belief, and a value system (Betts, 1975; Chang, 1975; Horowitz, 1939; Paschal, 1968). A major part of self-concept is the person’s perception of self that is based on looking inward (Smith, 1980).

An African American, according to Smith (1980), should not “permit others to define what his or her behavior should be, and act accordingly” (p. 356). Woodson (1998) has argued that when an African American allows White people to control his
thinking, the White person does not have to worry about that man’s actions. Smith acknowledges that this has been the norm since the times of slavery, when Whites oppressed African Americans. Parham (1989) defined this as “Negromachy [which is] a confusion of self-worth and dependence on White society for self-definition” (p. 187). Smith further explains that laws were passed that hampered the slave’s concept of self. The laws provided a psychological but oppressive environment that reminded enslaved Africans that they were inferior and that their behavior should be based on White leaders’ prescription.

White leaders included, but are not limited to, Presidents George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, who idealized the inferiority of slaves. Smith (1980) discussed that Jefferson acknowledged that enslaved Africans could most likely recollect issues and events just like Whites, but insisted that slaves were inferior. Enslaved Africans had different reactions to the institution of slavery as some fought the prescribed concept of self as inferior. Enslaved Africans knew that they were not meant to be slaves. White slave owners fought this self-concept with violence and even death as a reminder to other slaves of what could happen if they did not accept this new self-concept. Enslaved Africans with a positive self-concept did not believe in the inferior complex and revolted, rebelled, and confronted the White slave master in hopes of gaining their freedom. The fear of death did not deter their efforts. Other slaves did not want to be physically harmed by the slave master. Therefore, they accepted their prescribed concept of self. Enslaved Africans began to identify with the slave master to the point of believing that they had the same interests. This ideology led to decades of enslaved Africans and their
descendants trying to imitate White Americans in an attempt of being accepted into the
culture (Smith, 1980).

Based on the ideology that self-concept was developed through interacting with
other people, the descendants of enslaved Africans were exposed to the brutality of the
slave system that interfered with children’s abilities to develop their positive self-
perception. This system defined the Black self-concept, and slaves who rejected this
newly prescribed concept were punished; those who accepted it was rewarded (Smith,
1980).

For African Americans to develop a positive self-concept, schools should teach
courses that address African American personality. There should be research that focuses
on African American self-concept and the interaction within the larger African American
culture, a development of African American theories involving self-concept, and the
evaluation of research based on African American teacher-student relationship (Smith,
1980). These courses are important for the psychosocial development of African
American children, as it should guide them in how to behave and interact within their
environments (Hayes, 1990).

Costes and Schneider (1994) found that a favorable “self-concept may be an
important precondition for coping with difficult learning situations, which in turn will
facilitate academic success” (p. 200). As African American children interact in the
school’s environment, they receive messages from peers, teachers, and other school
members. They internalize and assimilate this information. Messages from school
personnel must be favorable in order for the African American child to develop a positive
sense of self. If the messages from adults are negative, they will lead to the development of negative, stereotypical views of self and give the African American child the perception that he or she is not of value to the environment (Hayes, 1990). With the implementation of the Afrocentric idea in education, African American students’ self-concept could change and become positive. An Afrocentric education may lead to academic success for African American students in the public schooling system. An Afrocentric education may also guide African American students to a grounded perception of who they are and what they can accomplish.

**Afrocentric Perspective of Self-Concept**

From an Afrocentric perspective, self-concept is the belief in and knowledge of the African value system that includes African traditions, heritage, and culture (Akbar, 1996; Asante, 1991, 1998; Cook & Kono, 1977; Karenga, 2003; Nobles, 1986, 1998). Maulana Karenga created an African American holiday, Kwanzaa, in 1966 with the purpose of uplifting the African American community (1977). Kwanzaa has seven principles that are to be celebrated in the following order: *Umoja* (Unity), *Kujichagulia* (Self-determination), *Ujima* (Collective work & Responsibility), *Ujama* (Cooperative economics), *Nia* (Purpose), *Kuumba* (Creativity) and *Imani* (Faith) (Karenga, 1977). These principles and their value were described as essential to be implemented into the lives of African Americans (Karenga, 1977; Obijiofor, 2003). These seven principles are a representation of Blackness known as Nguzo Saba, a Kiswahili term (Karenga, 1977; Lomotey, 1992), of which the purpose is to reconnect African Americans to “their African heritage by restructuring it in the
context of their experiences with racism, slavery, and European worldview and culture” (Johnson, 2001, p. 415).

Karenga (1977) has been dedicated to assisting the African American culture in breaking the negative images that have developed over the decades. The principles of Nguzo Saba require African Americans to confront and abolish negative images embedded in their psyche by the White society. Johnson (2001) found that the principles of Nguzo Saba serve to guide African American students in developing a positive racial identity that involves eliminating the European worldview that developed from racism and the system of slavery. This negative view interrupted African Americans’ ability to be family-oriented and build up the community that is grounded in the African culture. This interruption kept descendants of enslaved Africans from relating to the culture and developing an African worldview. The trickle-down effects from the system of slavery, segregation, racism in the hegemonic curriculum, and negative self-concept influences African American students’ self-esteem.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is developed based on the emotions and attitudes of individuals and is maintained, depending on responses to behavior from interactions within the environment (Kahle, Kulka, Klingel, 1980; Reynolds, 1980).

Lomotey (1992) claimed that African American children have many obstacles to deal with in school, and a hegemonic curriculum is an obstacle that can hamper their academic success. This type of curriculum could produce low self-esteem as it affects African American students’ attitudes about themselves (Joseph, 1994). Hewitt (1998)
found that African American children need to have high self-esteem, and that it is important in aiding their self-worth. African American students have many challenges as they develop through the stages of adolescence.

African American children with high self-esteem are able to “resist social pressures to conform to the demands of others” (Hewitt, 1998, p. 16). They are also able to achieve more and are proud of their accomplishments (Griffiths, 1993). An African American child with positive self-esteem is “self-assured without being overconfident” (Joseph, 1994, p. 2). Institutional racism and discrimination in schools produces low self-esteem, and African American students find it difficult to deal with this type of social conflict. Racism and discrimination create a school environment where African American students are at risk for low academic performance (Griffiths, 1993; Hirsch, 1996).

Hewitt (1998) acknowledged that self-esteem “is a precondition to learning, because a child who lacks self-esteem will be unable to absorb what the school has to offer and will likely become another educational failure” (p. 18). Hoge, Smit, and Hanson (1990) added that “both school climate and individual teachers have an impact on students’ self-esteem” (p. 117). A child’s philosophy that he/she is doing well in the schooling process is positive and necessary to building self-esteem and is vital to his/her psyche (McKay & Fanning, 2000). Hewitt (1998) claimed that “children must develop a sense that they are in control, that the sense of accomplishment they derive from doing well in school” should not be solely based on the “arbitrary praise of parents or teachers, but on their own recognition of their success” (p. 67).
A curriculum that teaches African and African American history can assist in elevating African American students’ self-esteem and this enables the students to set and reach higher academic goals (Hale, 2001). An Afrocentric education may support building and sustainability of self-esteem in African American students.

**Afrocentric Perspective of Self-Esteem**

The Afrocentric perspective of self-esteem is an African American’s personal evaluation of self-worth that is based in their ability to deal with social issues and being capable of producing favorable outcomes (Blash & Unger, 1995; Madhere, 1991; Osborne, 1995; Ross, 1995).

Shujaa (1995) reasoned that “adding African and African American content to the curriculum would raise [the] students’ self-esteem” (p. 196). This content is based in the seven principles of Ma’at, which are *Balance, Harmony, Justice, Order, Reciprocity, Righteousness,* and *Truth*. These seven principles are grounded in Egyptian beliefs and traditions that influence African Americans’ self-esteem (Karenga, 2004). The seven principles of Ma’at bring into the lives of African Americans fundamental order that can make the person feel capable of succeeding in their daily actions (Martin, 2008).

**Summary**

African Americans’ self-concept was interrupted by the system of slavery, as White Americans erased any connection with enslaved arrivals of Africans. African Americans’ self-concept was grounded in White society’s philosophy that this group was inferior. This inferiority was nurtured by the school’s curriculum that did not allow
African American students to see themselves or learn about their history in a positive manner.

An Afrocentric education may assist African American students in building and claiming a positive self-concept. This can be accomplished by African American students’ seeing themselves and learning about their history prior to the oppressive system of slavery. As African American students are learning about themselves, they should be able to build their self-esteem. They make connections with their racial group members through this type of education. This connection could lead to the development of their self-worth as members of the African American community.

**Racial Identity Development**

Racial identity was essential for African American adolescents to develop, understand, and learn to appreciate their “Blackness.” This knowledge can guide some African American adolescents in overcoming social issues in society. Other African American adolescents come to believe that assimilation into the White culture will lead to success (Parham, 1989). Racial identity development is contingent upon many psychosocial factors, making it a complex process as African American adolescents attempt to define who they are, how they can fit in the social context of society, and what they can become based on the knowledge of their identity (Corbin & Pruitt, 1999; Grantham & Ford, 2003).

When African American adolescents try to navigate between an Afrocentric and Eurocentric worldview, it produces a dual identity in which they become aware that some things are not right. The problem is learning that the schools they attend are controlled
and based in a Eurocentric worldview that does not complement or support their Afrocentric identity development (Parham, 1993). Identity achievement, according to Phinney (1992), is when African Americans understand who they are. This step is optimal in identity formation.

Tatum (1992) has argued that it is crucial for African American adolescents to understand who they are in order to form an identity. In the United States, positive images about African Americans and their culture are not readily available. Akbar (1996) found that African American adolescents remain ignorant of who they are and what their ancestors have accomplished in society. African American adolescents need to see and learn about their history through images of heroes with whom they can relate. This will assist in African American adolescents’ developing a positive racial identity.

Positive African American role models help to guide African American adolescents in developing respect for themselves and their culture (Akbar, 1996). It is necessary to “honor and exalt our own heroes, and those heroes must be people who have done the most to dignify us as a people” (Akbar, 1996, p. 15), and assist with developing a positive racial identity (Cross, 1991; Helms, 1995; Tatum, 1992). For African American adolescent males, it’s one of the “most important factors influencing identity development . . . those role models and significant others with whom the adolescent identifies” (Corbin & Pruitt, 1999, p. 71). Helms (1995) concurs, stating that, “racial identity or identification with one’s societally designated racial group occurs in response to environments in which societal resources are differentially allocated on the basis of racial group membership” (p. 184). Martin (2008) contends that “racial identity
development is a crucial step in the growth of African American youth” (p. 338). Davis (2001) argues that “schools are important sites for study because they represent a generated masculine space where Black boys make meaning of who they are, what they do, and how they are perceived by other students and teachers” (p. 169).

Noguera (2008) explains that “the process through which racial identities are constructed in school is essential” (p. 142). Messages about racial identity can be found in school textbooks. This has not always included Africans or African Americans, who could enable African American adolescents to learn and see themselves (Dickerson, 1996). This is important to the study because it will show how public schools have neglected African American students’ history in textbooks. This would give African American students the ability to see and learn about themselves in the public schooling system, with the possibility of developing a positive racial identity. Martin (2008) explains that:

African American youth are met with the challenge of discovering what it means to be black; they must also discover their racial identity. This endeavor can prove to be difficult because they find that the world around them has already defined them by the color of their skin. African American youth struggle to define what it means to be black in spite of the stereotypes which are seen around them. (p. 338)

Teaching African and African American history in schools will create ways for African American students to develop a racial identity (Dickerson, 1996; Tatum, 1992). According to Epstein (2001), White students view history textbooks as a valuable method for gaining knowledge about self. He admits that “more studies on the relationship between students’ racial identities and historical thinking need to be conducted” (p. 46).
African American adolescents are constantly reminded to forget about their race in order to succeed academically (Carter & Goodwin, 1994).

Ickes (1934) argues that African American students need to be able to develop to their fullest potential and that education is kept to this path. Education will provide knowledge of what African Americans can anticipate in life. Carter and Goodwin (1994) and Epstein (2001) are still arguing that the school system is neglecting to educate African Americans about themselves and how they can succeed. It is possible for educators to assist African American children in the development of their racial identity (Carter & Goodwin, 1994; Gunby-DeCuir 2009).

Carter and Goodwin (1994) elaborate further that the stages of racial identity consist of “attitudes, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors toward oneself as a member of the dominant racial group” (p. 308). Racial identity can provide African American adolescents with a “framework to identify, evaluate, and buffer the meaning and detriment of racial tension within varied social interactions both in and out of school” (Stevenson & Arrington, 2009, p. 125). Middle school can assist African American adolescents in developing and clarifying their racial identity and finding how to appreciate their own history (Belgrave & Allison, 2010; Gay, 1994; Willems & Bosma, 2006).

**Summary**

African Americans’ developing a racial identity that is not based on inferiority complexes is important for the culture. This development would dispel the myths of negative stereotypes in American society. African American students need to be
consciously aware of their “Blackness” and see positive images after which they can pattern themselves. One way of accomplishing this is for schools to provide textbooks that will educate African American students in their culture.

African American students should be able to develop into their fullest potential when seeing and learning about their ancestors and how they overcame issues of inequalities in American society. Middle schools should be an appropriate venue in which to assist African American students in learning about themselves as they seek to answer the question ‘Who am I?’

**Concept of Middle Schools**

During the 1960s, intermediate education emerged to replace junior high schools (Dyer, 1993). Middle schools were developed to assist adolescents, transitioning them from elementary school and preparing them for high school (Thandiwe, 2002). Adolescents transitioning from elementary to middle school are faced with an environment that is focused on academic achievement (Chung, Elias & Schneider, 1998). Dillon (2008) reports that middle schools were criticized as they emerged to replace junior high schools; the schools were accused of not providing a nurturing environment for adolescents. Middle schools are supposed to “create children imbued with egalitarian principles — in touch with their political, social, and psychological selves” (Yecke, 2005, p. 2). Instead, middle schools provided “little direction, even less support, and a considerable degree of resistance, if not hostility” (George, 2009, p. 4) toward adolescents as they became stressed, worried about academic performance, and
developed low self-esteem based on the stages of adolescence and matriculation through the school process (Chung, et al., 1998).

Middle schools should address issues that adolescents are faced with as they are developing. In *This We Believe* (2003) the National Middle School Association (NMSA) encourages middle schools to implement an agenda that will assist adolescents in learning and developing into healthy, well-rounded individuals. Schools should support adolescents during the stages of adolescence (Erikson, 1968), as they are “forming attitudes, values, and habits of mind that will largely direct their behavior as adults” (NMSA, 2003, p. 1).

As adolescents are progressing through the stages of adolescence, they must have guidance and support from middle schools. Having these will provide for a successful academic learning environment by providing the necessary programs to address adolescents’ interests (NMSA, 2003).

Middle schools are vital for adolescent development because these students are “hungry for positive relationships with caring adults and opportunities for informal interactions and conversations with them” (NMSA, 2003, p. 4). To successfully accomplish assisting with the psychological and social development of adolescents, NMSA (2003) presented 14 beliefs upon which the curriculum should be based (see Appendix B), and recognized that adolescents “undergo more rapid and profound personal changes between the ages of 10 [and] 15 than any other time in their lives” (p. 3). Therefore, middle schools should implement all the above principles. This will enable adolescents to be academically successful and well-rounded.
Yecke (2005), an opponent of middle schools, argued that adolescents’ potential for academic achievement diminishes in middle schools, adolescents develop discipline problems, and there are no high expectations academically or behaviorally for them.

Although African American adolescents are homogeneous as a group, they have had problems being academically successful and developing a sense of self (Hillman, 1991). Schools often overlook the developmental characteristics of African American adolescents and the problems they deal with in school because of prejudice and racism based on their “Blackness” (Gay 1994; Manning, 1993). African American parents entrust schools to educate their children and not alienate, discriminate, or make them feel inferior (Baker, 2005). Pollard (2002) found that African American students were not treated in the same manner as White students. African American students were treated in a negative manner than White students.

Summary

Middle school personnel should assist African American students transitioning from the elementary system into middle school, as each was developing through the stages of adolescence and preparing for matriculation to high school. The middle schools staff can provide guidance to African American adolescents as they were seeking to become well-rounded individuals.

The middle school concept was a guide that can assist in the development of African American students in dealing with issues of identity, while pursuing academic success and coping strategies for life in society. It was important for African American students to become well-balanced young adults because they have numerous issues with
which to deal in society. These issues include, but are not limited to, racism, prejudice, stereotypes, and a history of being perceived as inferior and unintelligent.

**African American Males in Public Schools**

When African American adolescent male students leave home for school, they are in the trusted hands of “specialists in the field of education” (Comer & Poussaint, 1992, p. 174). It was unfortunate that they are negatively affected by social and educational stresses (Baker, 2005; Haynes, 1993; Pollard, 2002). African American male students are often misunderstood and misinterpreted in the public school system (Hopkins, 1997); they have more discipline problems, most often due to a boring curriculum (Thompson, 2002). Harris and Duhon (1999) reported that:

> The mission statement of most public schools has cited two major goals for their charges: 1 — to stimulate the desire and provide instruction for sound scholarly achievement; 2 — to provide an atmosphere conducive for the development of interpersonal expertise required for societal entrance. (p. 8)

These two goals were not being met for African American male students.

African American adolescent male students were not recognized as academically gifted and challenged in the school system. This can lead to a student’s withdrawing from school because he is not receiving any psychological support from the teachers (Hargrove & Seay, 2011; Milner, 2007). African American adolescent male students are more likely to be placed in special education classes because of the teachers’ not understanding their learning style and the students’ non-interest in the lessons being taught in class (Grantham & Ford, 2003; Mills, 2003).

Most teachers suffer from cultural and racial biases that influence their perceptions of African American adolescent male students. These types of perceptions
prevent African American adolescent male students from succeeding academically in the school system (Mills, 2003).

According to Comer and Poussaint (1992), Haynes (1993), Hopkins (1997), African American adolescent males were often considered to have emotional issues and are often diagnosed with a learning disability by school personnel. Schools can be stressful for African American adolescent males because they have to deal with teachers who both stereotype and are prejudiced against them. Also, a typical school’s environment does not accommodate African American adolescent males’ academic and developmental needs.

African American male students are more often suspended from school than other groups of students (Haynes, 1993; Watson & Smitherman, 1996). When these students are suspended, it is often because of inappropriate behavior based on cultural differences. This can lead to students dropping out of school on account of their behavior’s being constantly misunderstood (Anderson, Howard & Graham, 2007; Fashola, 2003).

African American male students have to deal with racist attacks against their identities, because as they are often reminded in the school system that their history was that of the oppressed (Comer & Poussaint, 1992; Thompson, 2002). They grapple with this negative information as they are attempting to maintain a positive racial identity in a system that was White-dominated (Byfield, 2008; Hopkins, 1997; Paley, 2000; Thompson, 2002). Teachers with these negative preconceived notions about African American male students and their academic potential (Paley, 2000) can impede their
ability to acquire knowledge, excel academically, and contribute to society (Jackson, 2001).

African American adolescent male students need an environment that nurtures their learning and encourages academic success. The students also need teachers who will empower them to reach their potential as young African American men. This was important as it prepared them to envision life far beyond the low expectations teachers and society have established for them (Milner, 2007; Wilson-Jones & Caston, 2004).

Schools were unprepared to address African American adolescent male student issues (Polite, 1994); even though the school system was supposed to be a means through which African American adolescent male students’ lives were shaped. This included, but was not limited to, academic success, social attachment, and a healthy psychological image of self (Dryfoos, 1996). Apparently, there are politics that underlie in the educating of African American adolescent male students.

**Politics of Educating African American Male Students**

It is mandatory for children to attend school in the United States. Initially this statement was not to be applied to African American children. Schools were established to nurture White children and provide them with the knowledge to deal with any conflicts that may arise in American society. Schools were to guide White children in problem-solving techniques and with how to apply these techniques in their lives as tools for social upward mobility; they were not intended to guide African Americans, especially males (Perlstein, 2002; Robbins, 2005; Stovall, 2007).
Teachers who teach African American male students tend to have a low opinion about them and their abilities, based on preconceived notions. Most teachers are unwilling to learn about the African American culture or assist with guiding African American male students toward developing a worldview that complements them and addresses academic and social issues they may face in society (Brown, 2005; Robbins, 2005). There is a history of teachers having control over the curriculum; therefore, schools have become a weak entity in educating African American male students as the classrooms are not student-centered (Chubb & Moe, 1988; Jones, 1993; Merelman, 1980; Perlstein, 2002; Sabia, 1984).

Fitzgerald (2009), Jenkins (2006), and Perlstein (2002) found that schools do not provide education for the upward social mobility of African American male students. The education system is rooted in practices that are discriminatory against African American males. This disenfranchisement is a part of the history of public schools’ educating African American male students. For decades, African American parents have pushed for their children to attend public school, knowing the inequalities their children would face. According to DuBois (1935), parents “take infinite pains to force their little children into schools where White children, White teachers, and White parents despised” them (p. 330). The school system maintains images of White society in harmony and psychologically balanced, while most African American males are developing hatred for themselves and their culture.
Summary

African Americans in the public school system have been faced with White dominant ideology. This led to the perception of inferiority. Racism played a major role in how African American students are educated. Investigating the politics of African Americans in schools was important because racism in society and schools can affect their identity development.

It had been difficult for African American males to receive an education that was based on learning about themselves in order to develop positive self-images. The schooling system had attacked African American male students’ images by neglecting to provide them with an education equitable to that White students receive (Armenta, 2010; Baker, 2005; DuBois, 1935; Woodson, 1998). African American males in schools had to deal with teachers who do not believe in their ability to succeed academically and often perceive this group as being unintelligent and not as academically gifted as White students.

What can an Afrocentric worldview accomplish in alleviating this disenfranchisement of African American male students developing hatred for their culture and racial identity? DuBois (1935) and Wilson (1991) have made claims that, historically, African American children were not getting an education that would assist them intellectually. An Afrocentric education was recommended because White society will not change its perceptions about African American male students’ abilities and intelligence.
**Afrocentric Schools and Education**

DuBois (1935) argued that most African Americans look down upon Afrocentric schools, believing that the schools are inferior to White education. If African Americans perceived that they can develop a school that is educationally sound, then establishing Afrocentric schools would not be a major issue. As long as African Americans believe that they are inferior, a notion that was embedded in the culture during the system of slavery, Afrocentric schools will remain an issue.

Harris (1998) explained that an “Afrocentric orientation is one which asserts that consciousness determines being. Consciousness, in this sense, means the way an individual (or a people) thinks about relationships with self, others, nature, and with some superior idea or Being” (p. 18). The ideology of an Afrocentric education is to enlighten African American students about their history and culture. This makes them the subject of what they are learning about and not the object (Asante, 1991). The promotion of African and African American cultures is a form of psychological liberation as African American students begin to make connections among themselves, and African traditions and values (Asante, 1991, 1998; Karenga, 2003; Nobles, 1986; Shujaa, 1994). Afrocentric education guides African American students toward an Afrocentric worldview that is based in the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at. These sets of principles can be related to what is being taught in the public school system (Asante 1991, Harris, 1998; Karenga, 2003; Mazama, 2003).
There are three perspectives that influence a person’s reality:

1. **Ontology** — “the nature of reality is believed to be at once spiritual and material. Self-knowledge becomes the basis of all knowledge in Afrocentric epistemology and one knows through symbolic imagery and rhythm.” (Myers, 1998, p. 5)

2. **Epistemology** — validates reality…throughout a combination of historical knowledge and intuition. History is key because when the individual appropriately submerges himself in the reservoir of African history, then that submersion allows the individual to discover him[self] or herself in the context of that history and thereby judge the reality of any given phenomenon. (Harris, 1998, pp. 21)

3. **Axiology** — the highest value is placed on interpersonal relationships among people. [It] creates a conceptual system, a pattern of beliefs and values that define a way of life and the world in which people act, judge, decide, and solve problems. (Myers, 1998, p. 6)

The Afrocentric philosophy of ontology, epistemology, and axiology constructs African American students’ reality, their “place in it, and the way one validates knowledge, and determines one’s life changes” (Harris, 1998, p. 19). Ontology is grounded in the philosophy of community. African Americans exist as a group and function to sustain the culture. Epistemology combines African and African American history to provide knowledge of events and issues to bestow accurate information to African American children. Axiology provides validation of African and African American history that is learned though events and issues in society. History provides meaning to which African Americans can relate (Harris, 1998).

Harris (1998) argued that “what is known, what can be proven are demonstrated through the harmonization of the individual consciousness with the best traditions in African past” (p. 18). European philosophy was grounded in individualism and materialism while Afrocentric philosophy was based in community and spirituality.
The ideology of Afrocentrism is to provide psychological liberation to African American students and reconstruct their thinking to an Afrocentric worldview. Western ideology displaces African American students into a worldview that does not address African values, traditions, or interests (Mazama, 2003; Ginwright, 2004).

Perkins (2005) argues that African American “youth have never had an opportunity to develop their true potential in an environment free of racism and social oppression” (p. 51). The principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at should give African American adolescent male students a strong foundation in who they are within the African American culture. African-centered schools as described by Shujaa (1994) “represent institutions fully committed to collectively determining what aspects of cultural knowledge are to be transmitted” (p. 16).

An Afrocentric School seeks to elevate African American adolescent male students from WASP ideology, which is a common practice in most public schools. According to Perkins (2005), a few benefits for African American adolescent male students learning from an Afrocentric education are:

1. Achieving a sense of identity that embraces the culture, history, and struggles of people of African descent.

2. Achieving a strong sense of racial pride.

3. Developing an ideology based on Pan-African principles.

4. Developing an Afro-centric view of the world.

5. Acquiring a Black value system. (p. 60)

The purpose of Afrocentric Schools is to incorporate the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at into the curriculum. This assists African American students with placing
themselves at the center of what is being taught. African American students become the subject of what they are learning, rather than the object.

Critique of Afrocentric Education

Afrocentric education does have some critics as Richards (2000) claims that the curriculum of the school system is based in European American ideology, and, therefore, infusing perspectives from African and African American history into the curriculum is not beneficial for African American students. In order for African American students to excel in American society, they will need to be educated in the European traditional school system. This is the only way to becoming successful in society. Walker (2001) argues that Afrocentrism is politically charged and a form of groupthink. African Americans were once oppressed, but not the culture as a whole. Afrocentrism is basically a myth as it has no valuable data to support its findings. Afrocentrism is not a form of psychological liberation for all African American people. Afrocentricity is grounded in the history of Ancient Egypt that teaches about kings, queens, and pharaohs, but not everyone in Ancient Egypt was royalty. Walker (2001) explained that someone had to build the pyramids and sphinx. This invalidates the notion of Ancient Egypt’s being a place of social harmony.

Summary

Afrocentric education was supposed to be a tool in educating African American students and guiding them toward connection with their African ancestors. This was a way to develop an Afrocentric worldview because a Eurocentric worldview has not been beneficial in guiding African American students toward establishing their racial identity,
a positive self-concept, or high levels of self-esteem. On the other hand, the argument against Afrocentric education is that African American students will not benefit from this type of education in U.S. society.

Theoretical Framework

Cross’ 1971 Negro-to-Black Conversion Model

This qualitative research was selected, in part, because of William E. Cross Jr.’s, racial identity development theory. It was vital to include a theoretical framework because “all research is guided by some theoretical orientation” (Bodgan & Biklen, 1998, p. 22). This Negro-to-Black Conversion model assisted with analyzing data collected from focus groups, observations, field notes, individual interviews, documents, and the literature. Data were collected from African American seventh-grade male students, their teachers, parents, council of elders/committee members, and two principals.

Because this study was an investigation of how the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at, from an African-centered perspective, influenced self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development of African American seventh-grade male students, Cross’ 1971 identity model of “Black consciousness” served as the theoretical lens while the participants were observed and interviewed. Bodgan and Biklen (1998) inform researchers that in order to be thorough, they must know the “theoretical base and use it to help collect and analyze data” (p. 1). Therefore, Cross’ 1971 theory was used to analyze which stage best described African American seventh-grade male students as they discussed issues of being African American and their concepts of self, self-esteem, and racial identity.
In the article, “Negro-to-Black Conversion Experience,” Cross (1971) discussed the necessity for an African American psychological “understanding of the behavior of human beings within the context of [the] Black American” (p. 13). What emerged from the African American perspectives were five stages for Black liberation from oppressive White middle-class ideology (Cross, 1971). Data collected for Cross’ 1971 racial identity development model were obtained from “phenomenological data, scattered interview material, and juxtaposing information” (p. 14); the participants were African American males and females “going through changes as a consequence of their participation in the modern Black movement” (p. 14), which consisted of events from the Civil Rights Movement and the Black power era.

In the book *Shades of Black: Diversity in African-American Identity*, Cross, (1991) theorized the necessity for the psychological liberation of the African American community living in what has been termed “White domination.” Cross contends that “whether from the vantage point of Black or [W]hite observers, concern for the psychological significance of “Blackness” in a White world has been a pivotal theme in the social history of Afro-Americans” (p. 3). Based on the outcomes from the renowned scholarly works of Clark and Clark during the 1940s, a positive racial identity development for African American participants was an issue. These outcomes, which resulted in a negative racial identity developmental process with African American children, along with the Black Power phase, which emerged during the 1960s, influenced the concept for a Black identity; this led to Cross’ Negro-to-Black Conversion model (Cross, 1991).
According to Cross (1991), when psychological metamorphosis occurs, the African American starts to transition through what Cross (1971) characterizes as five different stages: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion/emersion, internalization, and internalization commitment. As the African Americans transition through these psychological stages, they are becoming conscious of their “Blackness” (Cross, 1971).

For the purpose of this study, each of Cross’ 1971 psychological liberation stages will be defined. A paragraph that explains how each stage might be applied to this study’s African American seventh-grade male students’ experience as they transition from one stage to the next will be added.

In the pre-encounter stage, African Americans are politically naïve and are grounded in White Anglo-Saxon Protestant ideology (Cross, 1971). Nigrescence was a “resocialization experience; it seeks to transform a pre-existing identity (a non-Africentric identity) into one that is Afrocentric” (Cross, 1991, p. 196). This pre-encounter stage psychologically cripples African Americans into favoring the Eurocentric perspective (Cross, 1991). African Americans feel “nothing but a sense of imposition, alienation, and inferiority, their sense of “Blackness” is clearly that of a mark of oppression” (Cross, 1991, p. 196).

During this stage, the African American seventh-grade male student has not been exposed to his cultural history, nor has he seen or learned about himself. He does not believe in the ability of the African American culture to achieve any social upward mobility, thus favoring White society. The African American adolescent male is
continually exposed to a history of WASP ideology; therefore, he is trying to form his racial identity based on heroes in the White culture.

The literature has revealed that the public schooling system’s curriculum is based on WASP middle-class ideology (Anyon, 1983; Apple, 1990; Davis, 2009; Jay, 2003; Woodson, 1998). African American seventh-grade male students may feel inferior in a traditional public schooling system (Haynes, 1993; Hopkins, 1997; Thompson, 2002; Welsing, 1991). In this study, African American seventh-grade male students were investigated to gather information as to what influence the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at have on their self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development, since they are learning from an African-centered perspective.

In the encounter stage, an African American interacts with a person who is well aware of his or her “Blackness,” and who, therefore, educates the naïve African American (Cross, 1971). This naïve African American who had experienced a racist encounter begins to “reinterpret the world as a consequence of the encounter” (Cross, 1971, p. 16). The African American’s identity begins to filter future experience in the world in which he or she lives. This was an attempt to assimilate these experiences into the understanding of self. This attempt “jolts the person into at least considering a different interpretation of the [African American] condition” (Cross, 1991, p. 201). This Nigrescence “process tried to pinpoint those circumstances and events that are likely to induce identity metamorphosis in [the] individual” (Cross, 1991, p. 199). As the African American transitions into this stage, the previous stage fades out, thus enabling the emergence of an Afrocentric person (Cross, 1991).
An understanding of the principles of Nguzo Saba, from an African-centered perspective, enhances an African American seventh-grade male student’s knowledge of his history. He begins to question the hidden agenda of the school’s hegemonic curriculum. He begins to wonder about his racial identity, his cultural heritage, and he starts to seek knowledge that will aid in answering these questions.

The literature demonstrates what the public school system’s curriculum was like for African Americans during the time of legal segregation. The public school system “is guilty of practicing and perpetuating mis-education” (Fenwich, 1995, p. 4). In one schooling system, African American students were seeing and learning about themselves (Morgan, 1944). This type of curriculum allowed for psychological liberation of the African American students, thus empowering them with the ability to pattern themselves after heroes in their own image (Tyack, 2003).

The third stage has two parts. The first is immersion, during which an African American begins to immerse himself or herself into everything that involves African American culture (Cross, 1971). Transitioning into the immersion stage is a “strong, powerful, dominating sensation constantly being energized by Black rage, guilt, and a third and new fuel a developing sense of pride” (Cross, 1971, p. 18).

The African American seventh-grade male student is interested in anything that pertains to his “Blackness” or the continent of Africa. He immerses himself in the culture of “Blackness,” which enables him to become psychologically liberated, giving him a sense of empowerment (Cross, 1991). The immersion stage can make the African American anxious as he theorizes about being the “right kind” of African American and
begins to display his identity with symbols relating to “Black consciousness” (Cross, 1991). The African American appreciates the naturalness of his hair and loves the complexion of his skin. In this way, he is proud of his Blackness (Cross, 1971). As the “grip of Immersion phase loosens, and the convert begins to see immersion as a transitional period and not an end state, and that continued growth lies ahead, he . . . is ready to move toward an internalization of the new identity” (Cross, 1991, p. 207).

Exposure to an African-centered perspective and the principles of Nguzo Saba at this stage encourages African American seventh-grade male students to delve deeper into their cultural history. The African American seventh-grade male student continues to shed his once white philosophy and resist psychological assimilation.

The African American seventh-grade male student is exposed to his history in an Afrocentric School and is now further immersed into learning more (Akbar, Chambers, & Thompson, 2001; Asante, 1991; Banks & Banks, 1995). He is empowered, becomes a critical thinker, and realizes that he does not have to pattern himself after the White culture because he has his own rich history. He has developed an Afrocentric ideology.

In the second half of stage three, emersion, Black rage against the White culture begins to dissipate. The African American views the African American culture in the terms of social upward mobility, political power, and cultural history upheavals of the past (Cross, 1971). The African American is in control of his emotions and intellectual abilities as he continues to develop a sense of self based on role models and heroes in whom he can see himself. This is the beginning of the development of an identity that he loves and appreciates (Cross, 1991).
Implementing the principles of Ma’at from an African-centered perspective encourages the African American seventh-grade male student to develop a balance within himself and an appreciation of his history. Thus, he realizes that his ancestral history does not begin in the oppressive state of slavery; he begins to learn about the continent of Africa. He now looks for role models and can now see heroes in his own image, enabling emotional harmony within.


During the fourth stage, internalization, he is either inspired to go back into the African American community or he is very frustrated with the state of affairs within the African American culture. If he is inspired, his self-concept and self-esteem empowers him to become a secure African American male. He is proud of his racial identity and develops a means of empowering the African American culture from psychological oppression. If he is frustrated with the African American culture, he may develop an attitude of not wanting to learn more about the culture. He lacks motivation and desires of psychological empowerment (Cross, 1971). According to Cross (1991), from a psychodynamic point of view, the internalized identity seems to perform three dynamic functions in a person’s everyday life: 1 — to defend and protect the person from psychological insults that stem from having to live in a racist society, 2 — to provide a sense of belonging and social anchorage, and, 3 — to provide a foundation or point of departure for carrying out transactions with people, cultures, and situations beyond the world of Blackness.” (Cross, 1991, p. 210)
The African American seventh-grade male student begins to accept his Black conscious identity. He can resist racism and oppressive situations because he is grounded in the knowledge of his cultural history and he knows who he is. He has developed well-rounded characteristics to ward off negative stereotypical images. The African American seventh-grade male student is more concerned with oppressive racist institutions rather than racist people.

The African American seventh-grade male student has developed the ability to become resilient to the underpinned issues of racism, inequalities, and stereotypes, and is able to pursue a life of his own choosing. He is either psychologically liberated to pursue a path in politics, entrepreneurship, or higher education because he is grounded in his history and has role models after whom to pattern himself, or he is very frustrated and feels that the White man is trying to keep him unproductive in U.S society.

In the final stage, internalization-commitment, the African American is confident in himself as an African American and anger toward White society has dissipated as he seeks a means of dealing with racist and oppressive institutions (Cross, 1971). The African American has transitioned from “unrealistic urgency to a sense of destiny; anxious, insecure, rigid, inferiority feelings to Black pride, self-love and a deep sense of Black communalism” (Cross, 1971, p. 23). The African American male has internalized “Blackness” in a positive sense and seeks to develop a plan to challenge oppressive situations in the African American community. During this stage, the African American seventh-grade male student would be eager to share his knowledge from an African-
centered perspective with other African Americans, who are progressing through any stage of the Negro-to-Black Conversion.

The African American seventh-grade male student is contemplating sharing his knowledge with others in order to liberate the person from the White middle-class ideology. He may feel that his peers, who are not educated from an African-centered perspective, should pursue knowledge about their “Blackness” and incorporate it into what they are learning in traditional public schools in order to elevate psychological oppressive situations, thus leading to a path of Black self-actualization.

**Criticism of Cross’s Theory**

Parham (1989) stated that this model “assumes that Black/African self-identity is an entity independent of socially oppressive phenomena: Black/African identity is actualized through personal thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that are rooted in the values and fabric of Black/African culture itself” (p. 195). Parham (1989) critiqued this model because it “assumes that there is a qualitative difference between a person who moves through the Nigrescence process in adolescence or early adulthood and the person who recycles through the stages” (pp. 195-196) later in their adult life. What Parham (1989) argued is that the more African Americans interact with White society, the more “stressful and oppressive conditions” (p. 196) they may face. Constant interaction with White people will occur during upward mobility. In this case “if an individual’s sense of affirmation is sought through contact with and validation from Whites, then the struggle with one’s racial identity is eminent” (Parham, 1989, p. 196). White philosophy contends that African Americans are unable to obtain equality without their assistance (Cross,
1996). On the other hand, if an African American’s principal contact and validation is from other African Americans, there should be fewer struggles for affirmation (Parham, 1989). This can lead the African American person to recycle through the stages again, leading back to an Afrocentric ideology. There will be some African Americans who may not develop an Afrocentric ideology; thus, the Negro-to-Black Conversion theory does not encompass every legitimate explanation of the person’s becoming aware of their “Blackness” (Cross, 1991).

**Critical Race Theory**

Bell (1980) discussed issues with the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision and the appeal courts’ (United District Court in Kansas, 1951) unwillingness to end segregation. The decision of this court case failed to provide immediate racial equality for African Americans in America, especially in the public school system. After schools were desegregated, most White Americans fled to suburban areas to keep their children from attending schools with African American children. Segregation fed White Americans’ false ideology of being superior to African Americans. White Americans had better public accommodations and schools that were provided more resources than African American schools (Bell, 2005). Racism was “the glue that holds our society together” (Bell, 2005, p. 1063) and is grounded in every aspect of American society (Bell, 2005; Du Bois, 1994). Based on racism in American society, critical race theory emerged. Therefore, it was another theoretical lens through which this study will be viewed.
Critical race theory (CTR) which materialized during the 1970s was fueled by social inequalities in the U.S., pertaining to the struggles and unceaseless discrimination toward African Americans during the 1960s. Critical race theory is a legal tool seeking to empower and liberate groups who feel oppressed (Tate, 1997).

Delgado and Stefancic (2001) claimed that critical race theory has been used by numerous scholars from different fields of study. They analyze the transformational relationships dealing with racial issues and people in power. Critical race theory “centers on the notion of racism as normal . . . [a part of everyday living], as the root cause of capitalist ideologies which perpetuate subservient populations to work menial labor for artificially low wages” (Knaus, 2009, p. 142). Although civil rights laws have been successful in American history, there are still issues of racism which is an “endemic part of life in the USA” (Parker, 1998, p. 45).

Critical race theory will be applied as another theoretical framework to examine the field of education. Parker (1998) argued that educational institutions in the U.S. are based on racist laws and policies that have, according to Knaus (2009), continually promoted white ideology through its pedagogy and curriculum, thus ignoring African Americans’ history. This could assist in shaping reality in African Americans’ lives. Lintner (2004) believes that critical race theory “seeks to reduce marginalization through the recognition and promotion of historically disenfranchised” (p. 27) African Americans.

African Americans have been victimized in the educational system, which is based on flawed theories, belief systems that have been supported by faulty scientific and political agendas and preconceived racial and stereotypical characteristics (Tate, 1997).
African Americans have historically been perceived as intellectually and biologically inferior to Caucasians, and are measured against middle class white males, who are considered the standard of society. Western ideology perpetuates these social ills, which continue to promote the philosophy of African Americans as being intellectually inferior and undeserving, while Whites are perceived as duly entitled. This philosophy is deeply rooted in slavery, during which cultural ethos deemed educating African Americans a serious crime, and was supported by White society’s desire to maintain capitalist control in order to secure permanent economical progression (Tate, 1997).

Knaus (2009) asserts that critical race theory challenges white society’s colonial-based schooling by providing African Americans with a “voice,” which empowers them, thus allowing their input in the schooling community. Critical race theory empowers the powerless, makes the invisible visible, and shifts attention from the powerful to the powerless (Linter, 2004). Delgado and Stefancic (2001) concur, explaining that critical race theory examines the hegemonic curriculum by analyzing Americans’ social situation and how this structure promotes racial divides and hierarchies to transform the social structure toward equality.

The history of inequalities for African Americans in the schooling system has encouraged African American students to believe that they are less intelligent and not good enough (Knaus, 2009); this idea is supported by American history textbooks (Romanowski, 1996). Ladson-Billings (1998) characterized the curriculum as a “culturally specific artifact designed to maintain a White supremacist master script” (p. 18). Critical race theory is applied to the field of education to decenter Whiteness, which,
in turn, decenters racism (Knaus, 2009). It is unfortunate that U.S. schools do not value an equitable knowledge base among its student population (Knaus, 2009). Whereas history classes can be neutral (Lintner, 2004) and where textbooks can be incorporated that are not “influenced by political, ideological, or moral beliefs of the author” (Romanowski, 1996, p. 170).

Incorporating critical race theory to enhance Cross’ (1971) Negro-to-Black Conversion model strengthens this research, as Cross analyzed five stages of “Black consciousness,” through which African Americans can transition. Critical race theory, “critique[s] both the status quo and the purported reforms” (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 62). Critical race theory will focus on storytelling narratives as a means of telling one’s perceived reality, considering narratives of racism as a means for psychological liberation (Delgado, 1989).

**Criticism of Critical Race Theorist**

Kennedy (1989) critiqued critical race theorists Bell and Delgado, arguing that these two scholars did not prove their theories of racism. Kennedy acknowledges that all African Americans have experienced racial oppression in America and this racism has influenced how they view the world. Kennedy (1989) provided an example that begins with Bell (1987) who claimed that an African American professor who applied for a position at a law school was denied based on his race. Kennedy (1989) refutes this accusation, claiming that there was a possibility that the African American professor did not have the strengths the law school sought as criteria for hiring. Next, Kennedy addresses Delgado and his inability to support his claim of racism in academia.
Delgado (1984) claimed that White scholars did not use any African American scholars’ work when writing and studying the intersections of racism. Delgado based his claim on his reading of 28 articles dated from 1959 to 1979. Kennedy (1989) argued that Delgado (1984) did not compare any African Americans scholars’ writings to see if White scholars were used in their works. Kennedy (1989) suggested that these two scholars failed to support their arguments of racial exclusion in academia, that there was a lack of supporting data, and that they did not look at opposing arguments when comparing issues between White and African Americans.

Analysis of Theory

A theoretical framework enhances the researcher’s view in an attempt to understand the phenomenon under investigation. No theory can totally explain what is being studied (Given, 2008); therefore, this study incorporates two theories Cross’s (1971) Negro-to-Black Conversion and Delgado and Stefancic’s (2001) Critical Race Theory. These two theories should decrease inexplicable analysis of any influence the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at have on African American seventh-grade male students’ self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development from an African-centered perspective (Given, 2008).

During a review of literature pertaining to this study, Cross’s (1971) Negro-to-Black Conversion theory emerged as the oldest model of analyzing racial identity development. His theory has been incorporated, revised, and applied to other cultures by such scholars as Thomas Parham and Janet Helms. It is important to understand that Cross’s (1971) racial identity model was the results of a study conducted with African
American adults. His theory is being implemented into this study as a theoretical lens to analyze self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development of African American seventh-grade male students. This allows for the projection of which stage each student demonstrated based on his life experiences and knowledge.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter the research methods employed to investigate the phenomenon under study, were explained. This included the application of theories, choice of site selected, selection of participants, procedures for collecting data, sources of the data, analysis of the data, role of the researcher, ethical issues, and the limitations within the study.

The four research questions, which were introduced in Chapter 1, influenced the choice of selecting a qualitative research design. The qualitative research questions provided an opportunity to understand the perception of African American seventh-grade male students about an African-centered education (Patton, 2002). Another reason for selecting qualitative research was to obtain an understanding of the lived experiences of African American seventh-grade male students in relation to the influence of the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at had on self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development (Creswell, 1998). Because the students were receiving an Afrocentric education, qualitative research provided information as to how each participant viewed his schooling process (Creswell, 2003). Qualitative research enabled the understanding of the participants in attendance at the Columbus Africentric Early College (Miller & Salkind, 2002). Through qualitative research, it was possible to capture enough data to present information regarding the influence of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at on African American seventh-grade male students (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).
**Research Design**

Using a qualitative approach was compatible with the four research questions under investigation (Patton, 2002). The questions related to African American seventh-grade male students’ educational experiences with the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at from an African-centered perspective (Patton, 2002). The four research questions explored issues that pertained to self-concept, self-esteem, racial identity development of African American seventh-grade male students, and the sustainability of the school. The qualitative approach provided a means to understanding these issues (Creswell, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Information collected from this qualitative approach was based on the participants’ meaning and understanding of the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at from an African-centered perspective (Creswell, 2003). This qualitative approach provided an opportunity to collaborate with seventh-grade teachers, principals, parents, and the council of elders/committee members to obtain their perspective on how these sets of principles influenced African American seventh-grade male students (Creswell, 2003). This qualitative approach allowed this researcher the opportunity to observe all participants in the school setting (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

This study was conducted at the Columbus Africentric Early College with seventh-grade male students as the focus. Therefore, a research design that would allow data to be collected from the participants’ point of view in the school setting was needed (Creswell, 2003; Patton, 2002). A qualitative research design allows the study to occur in its natural setting and the researcher to use “multiple methods that are interactive and
humanistic” (Creswell, 2003, p. 181), in nature. Observations, focus groups, individual interviews, and document analysis were used to collect data that answered the four research questions.

A “general understanding of the intent and rationale for conducting qualitative research” (Creswell, 1998, p. 18), was necessary in order to obtain depth and breadth of the phenomenon under investigation (Glesne, 2006; Patton, 2002). Qualitative research allows for the integration of all information collected in order to convince any reader of the study about the importance of the phenomenon under investigation (Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

The strength of qualitative research was that it allowed the researcher to gather explicit data from the participants in the study. Although data from African American seventh-grade male students may not be representative for other students in a different Afrocentric school, the research questions, which will be discussed later in this chapter, provided the tools to obtain an understanding of the participants’ interactions with the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at from an African-centered perspective, which was thoroughly informative (Patton, 2002).

The chosen research designs for this study were the phenomenological and case study methods. The strengths of these research designs allowed the incorporation of observations, focus groups, and individual interviews. They also allowed the collection of documents to be analyzed, understood, and reported on the influence Nguzo Saba and Ma’at had on African American seventh-grade male students’ self-concept, self-esteem, racial identity development, and how the school has been sustained. This was made
possible because documents collected (i.e. school’s handbook and The Columbus Dispatch) contained some information about the emergence of the school and the incorporation of the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at into the school’s curriculum. This is why qualitative research was best suited for this study. The combination of two approaches — phenomenology and case study — enabled the collection of rich data that answered the four research questions.

Cross’ (1971) theory was selected to examine issues that pertained to the participants’ developing a racial identity. It is important to note that, Cross’ (1971) theory was based on adult participants who had participated in the Black Power Movement during the late 1960s, in which five stages were characterized. According to Cross (1971), stage one is *pre-encounter* whereas the person has not faced racism; stage two is *encounter* and occurs the first time an African American faces an issue based on his or her “Blackness”; stage three with the first part being *immersion* an African American immersing himself or herself into their culture with the purpose of learning more about their “Blackness” the second part of this stage is *emersion*, meaning the African American has been educated in their culture, has accepted it, and is proud of what he or she has learned. In some cases the person may not be very accepting or happy with the information he or she has learned as they emerge. The fourth stage he defined as *internalization* which occurs when the African American accepts the belief system, values, and tradition of the Black culture that defines his or her self-concept. The *internalization commitment* stage transpires when an African American becomes
obligated in assisting other African American develop psychologically through the stages.

What Cross (1971) discovered was that, as African Americans faced issues of racism, they wanted to learn more about themselves in terms of their “Blackness.” Cross (1971) also discovered that as African Americans went from one stage to another, they recycled through the stages as new information was obtained. In this study, Cross’ (1971) theory was applied to African American seventh-grade male students to analyze which stage each participant demonstrated as they were learning about their “Blackness.”

Delgado and Stefancic’s (2001) critical race theory was chosen to analyze the types of issues with racism African American seventh-grade male students have encountered. These researchers’ critical race theory, particularly storytelling, was employed in order to understand the participants’ perspectives of any racism events they had faced. They explained that storytelling can provide a connection among people who are discussing racism in their lives.

The implementation of a phenomenological approach, along with a case study design, provided the tools for collecting information based on the participants’ experiences in the Columbus Africentric Early College. A phenomenological case study design was utilized to address the phenomenon of the principles of Nguzo Saba’s and Ma’at’s influence on African American seventh-grade male students’ self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development.

In this chapter, an effort was made to understand the experiences pertaining to an Afrocentric education influence on African American seventh-grade male students while
in attendance at the Columbus Africentric Early College (Creswell, 1998). Qualitative methodology allowed this researcher to be located in and to observe activities within the school, as well as to be positioned in order to collect comprehensive field notes (Creswell, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

**Phenomenological Approach**

This phenomenological approach is a qualitative research design that allowed the researcher to describe the perception(s) of African American seventh-grade male students’ experience while learning and applying the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at in their daily activities (Miller & Salkind, 2002). Therefore, it enabled the development of understanding their worldview (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Phenomenological research according to Creswell (2003) pinpoints the “essence of human experiences concerning a phenomenon, as described by participants in the study” (p. 15). It was this researcher’s objective to study African American seventh-grade male students and their interactions within the Columbus Africentric Early College, to understand how they participate in the classroom, with the staff, and with their peers as they learn the required school subjects of mathematics, social studies, Earth science, English literature & composition, and reading (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) from an African-centered perspective.

It was necessary not to assume any influence or outcomes the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at had on how African American seventh-grade male students interacted within the school’s setting (Lancy, 2001). The phenomenological approach enabled the
development of questions that elicited the experiences of all participants in this study, and provide an accurate description of the responses (Miller & Salkind, 2002).

This study concentrated on what Harms (1999) defined as a psycho-social inquiry, which was directed inward because the study sought “not objective knowledge but subjective knowledge, i.e. self-knowledge-knowledge about the self” (p.56). It was imperative to allow the “voice” of African American seventh-grade male students to be heard in this study because it was about their perception of their self-concept, self-esteem, and the development of their racial identity based on the phenomena under investigation.

**Case Study**

In order to strengthen this qualitative research design, a case study approach was deemed a suitable “strategy of inquiring [because it assisted in exploring] in depth a program . . . [involving] one or more individuals” (Creswell, 2003, p. 15). It must be understood that this approach was an inquiry of an Afrocentric education and the infusion of an African-centered perspective (Stake, 2000). This case study unit included all African American seventh-grade male students in attendance at the Columbus Africentric Early College, located in Columbus, Ohio, (Stake, 2000) inasmuch as all were being observed. Researching the complexities and particularities of African American seventh-grade male students was undertaken to understand how the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at influenced their self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development (Stake, 1995). All data collected were as descriptive and detailed as possible (Marshall & Rossman, 2006), which allowed any reader to understand how these participants reflected
upon being an African American male (Merriam, 1988), as well as how they dealt with issues of developing through the stages of adolescence, while balancing school, home life, peer pressure, and possible racism.

Marshall and Rossman (1995) stated that the researcher “interviews individuals or studies . . . documents to gain insight into behavior” (p. 20). The behavior of interest was how the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at guided African American seventh-grade male students’ ideology from an African-centered perspective, in forming a concept of self, dealing with their self-esteem and developing racial identity, as they discovered and interpreted issues of racism in the United States.

To acquire depth and breadth of knowledge from research, Miller and Salkind (2002) characterized, in detail, procedures for ensuring data collection for a case study:

1. Provide an in-depth study of a bounded system — the researcher must be interested in developing an in-depth discussion and analysis of bounded system. To establish this analysis, the researcher must determine the type of case that will best yield information about an issue or whether the case is important in itself.

An Afrocentric school, which infused the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at from an African-centered perspective into the public school system’s curriculum, was selected.

2. Ask questions about an issue under examination or about the details of a case that is of unusual interest — the research question asked addresses either an issue or a problem or a case.

Numerous questions that addressed self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development of African American seventh-grade male students were asked. The questions were posed to the participants who returned their signed consent forms: seventh-grade teachers, the staff at the Columbus Africentric Early College, parents, and the council of elders/committee members. Questions regarding the sustainability of the school were addressed to the council of elders/committee members, teachers, and administrators.
3. Gather multiple forms of data to develop in-depth understanding — these forms might include interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisual materials.

Data were collected from school observations, detailed field notes, and interviews with two focus groups of African American seventh-grade male students. There were several individual interviews conducted by using a digital recorder and the recording system on a Netbook computer to preserve data. Also, data were collected and analyzed from school documents, as well as The Columbus Dispatch, a newspaper circulated in Columbus, Ohio.

4. Describe the case in detail and provide analysis of issues or themes that the case presents — data analysis involves developing a detailed description of the case. One popular pattern of analysis for the qualitative researcher of collective case studies is for the inquirer to analyze within each case for themes and across all cases for themes that are either common or different.

The Columbus Africentric Early College was the case study unit where this research was conducted. It is described and analyzed in chapters 4 and 8.

5. In both description and issue development, situate the case within its context or setting — in the analysis, the case study researcher situates the case within its context so that the case description and themes are related to the specific activities and situations involved in the case.

Observations were explained in detail as to what was being observed while conducting research at the Columbus Africentric Early College. They included what was observed in the classroom setting, in the hallways as students passed from one class to another, what was observed during lunchtime, and the interactions with teachers, principals, and the participants’ peers.

6. Make an interpretation of the meaning of the case analysis — the researcher interprets the meaning of the case, whether that meaning comes from learning about the issue of the case (instrumental case) or learning about an unusual situation (intrinsic case). (pp. 163-164)

Chapter 4 addressed the context and overview of the Columbus Africentric Early College, the background of all participants, and the district’s support of the school’s mission. Details of how the principles of Nguzo Saba’s and Ma’at’s influenced the development of racial identity, self-concept, and self-
esteem from an African-centered perspective were clarified in chapters 5 through 7. Within chapter 5 is the discussion of issues pertaining to self-concept, in chapter 6 is the examination of issues involving self-esteem, in chapter 7 are details about the issues of racial identity development and in chapter 8 are several explanations about the sustainability of the school.

According to Merriam (1988), a “case study offers a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding a phenomenon” (p. 32). Since a case study is based in real-life situations, it results in “a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon” (Merriam, 1988, p. 32).

A weakness of a phenomenological case study is that the data collected from participants could become exaggerated, which could mislead the audience (Merriam, 1988). To overcome the weakness in this phenomenological case study, it was important to maintain details that addressed the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at based on an African-centered perspective and their influence on African American seventh-grade male students and to report accurately data that emerged from this study that pertained to the research questions.

In summary, this phenomenological case study enabled me to interview participants and to obtain a rich and thick description of how they applied the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at into their daily experiences. This type of research also allowed me to obtain information as to how and why this school has been sustained over the years.

**Application of the Theory**

Delgado and Stefancic’s (2001) theory was also applied to buttress Cross’ (1971) racial identity model in this study. While analyzing these two theories and reviewing
literature four research questions that will be conceptualized individually emerged. They will be discussed in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Chapter 5 is an explanation of the first research question, “How do the educational experiences from an African-centered perspective influence African American seventh-grade male students’ self-concept?” Within this chapter, how an African-centered perspective influences African American seventh-grade male students’ self-concept based on the Nguzo Saba principles is explained. Four themes emerged as data were being analyzed: 1) emergence of psychological empowerment, 2) Africa’s inspiration in influencing psychological empowerment, 3) perception of Nguzo Saba’s influence, and 4) mirror image: seeing self and future aspirations. Cross’ (1971) theory was applied to this section to understand how the participants viewed themselves, what each participant thought about what was learned that pertained to Africa, and what each think, by the end of this study about being an African American male.

In Chapter 6, the subject pertains to the second research question, “How do the educational experiences from an African-centered perspective influence African American seventh-grade male students’ self-esteem?” Results in this chapter demonstrate how the seven principles of Ma’at influence participants’ feelings about their “Blackness.” There were two themes that emerged from the data and were analyzed: 1) African-centered perspective and self-esteem, and 2) growing in the seven principles of Ma’at. Cross (1971) theory was applied in Chapter 6 to analyze which stage most related to the participants. Each participant discussed his feelings in regard to the history of Ancient Egypt, the education he had received, and the pedagogy of an African-centered
perspective. In this chapter, how the principles of Ma’at can improve African American seventh-grade male students’ self-esteem in a manner that yields positive outcomes are discussed.

The third research question, “How is African American seventh-grade male students’ racial identity formation influenced by an African-centered perspective?” is addressed in Chapter 7. This question materialized out of the data and the issue of African American students’ attempting to assimilate into White middle-class culture, because of having been exposed to White history in the public schooling system, and emulating White heroes. The three themes that emerged are: 1) identity affirmation: becoming racially aware, 2) teacher impact on racial identity formation, and 3) growing in the principles of Ma’at. Cross’ (1971) theory was applied to provide an understanding about African American seventh-grade male students’ perceptions of Whiteness, how teachers can influence the participants’ knowledge of the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at from an African-centered perspective to guide the participant’s development of their racial identity, and how students interacted within the classroom environment. Delgado & Stefancic’s (2001) theory was applied to explain how African American seventh-grade male students’ experience racism.

Cross’ (1971) Negro-to-Black Conversion model was applied to Chapters 5, 6, and 7, which should have addressed any level of “Black consciousness” African American seventh-grade male students had or were experiencing. Delgado and Stefancic’s (2001) theory was also applied in chapter 7 to analyze any issues of racism that could not be thoroughly addressed by Cross’ (1971) theory. There were no
applications of theory to chapter 8 as it contained relevant information concerning the sustainability of the school.

Conducting research at the Afrocentric School in Columbus, Ohio, led to questions that captured the “voices” of African American seventh-grade male students, their teachers, the council of elders/committee members, and the principals. Kershaw (1992) wrote:

[To generate] emancipatory knowledge, one needs to first generate practical knowledge. Then one needs to generate technical knowledge that helps one to identify and assess the empirical relationships described from the practical. One needs to begin by operationalizing then describing and analyzing the effect of those social forces on the life changes of people of African descent. There is the need to participate in action that improves the life changes of African descended people. (p. 165)

This study resulted in knowledge about how the influence of the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at shaped the self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development of African American seventh-grade male students, from an African-centered perspective, and the sustainability of the school. To generate emancipated knowledge, the present study incorporated focus-groups, individual interviews, and observations in a phenomenological case study unit (Kershaw, 1992).

Selection of the Site

According to Marshall and Rossman (1999) and Stake (2000), the selected site should include elements, such as people and programs where data can be collected and would answer the research questions. The selected site should also provide an understanding about the school’s setting (Berg, 2001; Miller & Salkind, 2002). It was important to select a school that infused an African-centered perspective into the public
school’s curriculum. The closest school within reasonable range of this researcher was the Columbus Africentric Early College located in Columbus, Ohio. Because particular guidelines had to be followed and permission had to be obtained before entering the Columbus Africentric Early College to conduct this research, the main principal was contacted first and he suggested going to the Evaluation Services of Columbus City Schools to see — Saundra Brennan, its head officer. Dr. Brennan was a person who fulfilled the role of what Glesne (2006) referred to as the gatekeeper, so she was necessary in order to gain entry into the school. A researcher has to follow particular guidelines and obtain her permission before entering the Columbus Africentric Early College to conduct research.

The Columbus Africentric Early College is the only K-12 school in the Columbus City Schools district (Columbus City Schools’ Factline, personal communication, January 25, 2011) and the only K-12 Africentric Early College in the United States (http://www.earlycolleges.org). The Columbus City Schools district was a part of the Franklin County School district, in which there were only three other K-12 schools,— Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow, FCI Academy, and the Scholars Preparatory and Career Center for Children, — and one Pk-12 school, Special Education Center (Columbus City Schools’ Factline, personal communication, January 25, 2011). This made the Columbus Africentric Early College nationally unique in education, based on its being a K-12 African-centered perspective school connected to a college program.

There were an estimated 941 students in attendance at the Columbus Africentric Early College, with a breakdown of 360 elementary students who were identified by
green tops and khaki bottoms; 272 middle school students identified by purple tops and khaki bottoms, and 309 high school students identified by black tops and khaki bottoms. Male students were considered Nubian Kings and female students were considered Nubian Queens. The focus for this study was African American seventh-grade male students in the Columbus Africentric Early College.

The school’s student breakdown was 54% female and 46% male, with an average of 23 students for every full-time teacher, and 19 students to every part-time teacher. An estimated 58% of teachers report having a master’s degree and they averaged seven years of teaching experience (see Appendix C). The seventh-grade teachers’ breakdown was five males, (four African Americans and one Caucasian), and three females (two African Americans and one Caucasian). There were a total of 89 seventh-grade students (47 African American males and 42 African American females), including two biracial males self-identified as African American. The racial background of seventh-grade teachers and students was important and will be discussed in the next chapter. Based on the Ohio School Report Card for 2009-2010, the Columbus Africentric Early College had a total student population of 98.8% African Americans (Columbus City Schools’ Factline, personal communication, January 25, 2011) (see Appendix C).

The principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at were taught on a consistent basis within grades K-5. Once students advanced to middle school the principles were emphasized by signs posted on the classroom walls and hallways of the school, as well as through interactions with teachers. To gain access to the school, staff, and student population for this research, the school’s principal was contacted for information on the necessary
procedures. The head principal oversaw the entire school population, and each division (elementary, middle, and high school) also had its own principal.

Selection of Participants

For this study, the middle school principal, the lead principal, seven of the eight teachers who teach seventh-grade students, nine African American seventh-grade male students who returned their signed consent form (see Appendix D), three parents, and three of the council of elders/committee members were interviewed.

According to Berg (2001), participants should possess information that could answer the research questions. For this study there were three people who participated based on snowball sampling: Jerry Saunders, Charles Tennant, and Ako Kambon. While this researcher was conducting research on the school through document analysis (i.e. school’s handbook), Moriba Kelsey’s name emerged as a committee member who had assisted in establishing the Columbus Africentric Early College. Kelsey was unavailable to be interviewed, therefore, Jerry Saunders offered his time and services. Both Saunders and Kelsey worked at the Africentric Personal Development Shop, Inc, located in Columbus, Ohio. Kelsey was the founder and Saunders was the chief executive officer. During the interview with Saunders, who participated in the establishment of the school, he suggested other committee members, Tennant and Kambon. Tennant was located and interviewed to obtain information pertaining to the school. Tennant had worked for the Columbus City School district for more than 40 years. After Tennant had been interviewed, Kambon was located to arrange an interview. He also had been a committee
member, although at the time of this research he was the president of Visionary Leaders Institute, also located in Columbus, Ohio.

The council of elders/committee members were selected because each one had played a major role in the emergence of the Columbus Africentric Early College and provided valuable information in understanding the need for this type of school, how the curriculum should be implemented in the classroom, what outcomes were projected for students based on the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at from an African-centered perspective, and the sustainability of the school.

Purposeful sampling was adopted to select key informants because each possessed key information in which the researcher obtained valuable knowledge (Patton, 2002) about the influence of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at on African American seventh-grade male students’ self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development.

There were seven seventh-grade teachers who also taught other middle-level grades at the school. Data collected from these seven teachers were important because they were teaching from an African-centered perspective, had constant interactions with the participants, and provided insight into how the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at affected the self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development of African American seventh-grade male students, and what made this school sustainable. The teachers who were interviewed have been teaching at the school from one to 15 years at the time this study was conducted. There were four male teachers (three African Americans and one White) and three female teachers (two African Americans and one White). Letters of introduction were mailed to each teacher over the summer. The
teachers consented to participating in this research and signed consent forms after the first week of observations.

The students selected were those who had returned their signed consent forms, a total of nine African American seventh-grade males. Consent forms had been sent to parents of seventh-grade males over the summer. The students’ ages ranged from 12 to 13 and they had attended the school for at least two years each.

Out of 47 African American seventh-grade male students in attendance at the Columbus Africentric Early College, nine returned their signed consent forms (see Appendix D). For this study, there were two focus groups of nine seventh-grade male students who self identified as African Americans. Although there were only nine participants, this group provided in-depth information, about how the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at had influenced their lives (Patton, 2002).

African American seventh-grade male students at the Columbus Africentric Early College had been learning about the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at for several years by the time this study was conducted. Therefore, they were presumed to have an understanding of the meaning of their principles, which provide depth and breadth of knowledge to the research questions for this study (Patton, 2002).

Parents were included in order to obtain their perspectives of an Afrocentric education, to find the effect this type of school had on the development of their children, to answer how their children viewed themselves in the scheme of U.S. society, and what made this school sustainable. Two mothers who were in the school while this study was being conducted volunteered their time to be interviewed. An additional parent
interviewed accidentally when researching documentation from the Columbus City School’s Board of Education. She answered the phone at the Board of Education office one day while arrangements for the study were being made. This parent indicated that her son had once attended the school; therefore, she volunteered information about his experience.

Each participant had a connection to the school, whether it was as a principal, a council of elders/committee member, a teacher of African American seventh-grade male students, or a child in attendance at the school. Their perspectives added depth and breadth to this study.

**Data Collection Procedures**

In November 2009, contact was made with Principal Theodore Thompson of the Columbus Africentric Early College to obtain information on procedures for conducting this dissertation research at the school and to solicit his willingness to assist in this endeavor. Principal Thompson suggested talking to Saundra Brennan, the director of Evaluation Services for Columbus City Schools, to acquire guidelines for doctoral students interested in conducting research in the district (see Appendix E).

After contacting Brennan in December 2009, information on procedures of conducting dissertation research in the Columbus City School district was obtained. Brennan e-mailed a guideline packet, which was carefully reviewed (see Appendix E).

In May 2010, after filling out all the necessary documents for approval, the Department of Evaluation Services for Columbus City Schools required submission of the documents along with the approved Internal Review Board letter from Ohio.
University. It was also necessary to submit to a criminal background check before gaining entrée into the Columbus Africentric Early College. If no background check was conducted, the only option for gaining entrée to the Columbus Africentric Early College would be to have an administrative escort throughout the building for the entire period of conducting research at the school. The background check was completed and satisfied one part of the requirements for gaining entrée into the Columbus Africentric Early College. Unfortunately, IRB personnel needed an approval letter from Columbus City Schools District (Brennan), stating that the district will allow the research to take place. This became a lengthy process because both departments needed an approval letter from the other before granting an approval letter for this research.

After a few weeks of trying to get approval from the IRB or Brennan, she e-mailed a letter of approval on June 1, 2010, providing a way for conducting the research based on the contingency of this dissertation research being approved by IRB. This letter was sent to Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance at Ohio University (see Appendix F). An approval letter to conduct research from Ohio University’s IRB was received on June 11, 2010, and it was then e-mailed to Brennan (see Appendix G).

Brennan provided two letters on June 16, 2010, one granting approval to conduct the dissertation research at the Columbus Africentric Early College with the stipulation that upon completion of the study, a copy would be sent to the Evaluative Services Department. The other letter was an introduction/approval to the Columbus Africentric Early College. This letter was required to be signed by a principal and a copy sent to Brennan (see Appendix H).
Contact was made with the Columbus Africentric Early College in June 2010 to make arrangements with Principal Thompson to start the dissertation research; it was surprising to learn that he had been reassigned to another school. Therefore, the matter was referred to Mama Williams, the middle school principal. Arrangements were made with the principal to come to the school, had her sign the necessary forms, explained the dissertation research, and, to finally, begin the fieldwork, as, the school was in session year round. A letter of introduction was sent to all the seventh-grade teachers informing them of the classroom observations; this was necessary in order to conduct the research at the school. Their cooperation allowed observations of their classes and was appreciated.

After meeting with Principal Williams, on June 29, 2010, to inform her of this dissertation research, she signed the Letter of Introduction form, and it was e-mailed immediately to Saundra Brennan. During this time, I did not known that the school was on summer break and would not be back in session until July 27, 2010. Several consent forms were left with Principal Williams for the parents of African American seventh-grade male students to read and sign, if they would allow their sons to participate in the focus groups. Notification was given to Principal Williams that the research at the school would begin the first week of school; and that the class schedule for seventh-grade students was needed. In the meantime, data collection began at the Columbus Board of Education, where documentation pertaining to the Columbus Africentric Early College was sought.

While seeking documentation regarding the Columbus Africentric Early College at the Columbus Board of Education, the receptionist was new and did not know how a
researcher should proceed or where to go; the process did not proceed as planned. Therefore, she recommended going to the Teaching Certified Personnel Office, where a staff member in the department did not know where information could be obtained. The staff member sent me to Pupil’s Services. A staff member in Pupil’s Services did not know where I could obtain documentation regarding the emergence of or any information on the Columbus Africentric Early College. She then sent me to Customer Relations. A staff member in the Customer Relations department said, “I think Charles Tennant had something to do with that school.” Charles Tennant worked in Customer Relations. The staff member gave me Tennant’s work number and told me to call in a couple of days because he was off for the rest of the week. A few days later contact was made with Tennant, who sounded enthusiastic to discussing his part in the emergence of the Columbus Africentric Early College; a place and time to meet was arranged. This meeting occurred at the Columbus Africentric Early College during the month of August 2010.

Meanwhile, a search was conducted to find some council of elders/committee members and former principals of the school so they could be interviewed. Two former principals did not return the numerous phone calls that were made; another former principal had retired due to illness. School personnel did not know how to successfully contact two of the council of elders/committee members: Tony and Aziza West, Moriba and Niambi Kelsey. As it turned out, the Kelseys had left Columbus the week of my entering the field, June 2010, when he moved to Atlanta, Georgia. Therefore, interviews
began with people in the community, including Jerry Saunders of the Africentric Personal Development Shop, Charles Tennant, and Ako Kambon.

A message had been left with a staff member two weeks prior to going to Columbus. It asked that M. Kelsey contact me to discuss the possibility of his participating in my research. When research was conducted regarding the Columbus Africentric Early College’s website, it was discovered that M. Kelsey was credited with defining the Africentric perspective for the school. Upon further research, data were uncovered about the Africentric Personal Development Shop, an organization M. Kelsey had founded. A message was left for M. Kelsey, which was forwarded to Saunders, who contacted me to offer any assistance in finding information regarding to the Columbus Africentric Early College. After discussing the research topic, he appeared very enthusiastic to assist in this endeavor; arrangements were then made to interview him.

After returning to the Columbus Africentric Early College on July 27, 2010, to obtain the class schedule of seventh-grade students and to initiate the observation process, notification was received by an administrator that the research could not be conducted for another two weeks. The school’s administrators were still assigning students to classes after the lottery enrollment process, and some parents were late in enrolling their children. It was, of course, a disappointing setback that entrée could not be gained at that time. There was, apparently, some miscommunication with the administrator regarding the date for a return to begin the process of observation and data collection. Glesne (1999) explained that a researcher should not become discouraged because he or she is not an integral part of the school’s environment. It was important to
remember that the research would be conducted and completed, even though at a later date than originally planned.

The first week of August, contact was made with Yorktown Middle School to find a Columbus Africentric Early College former principal, whose name emerged when conducting an interview with Saunders. This principal (Melvin Taylor), was no longer at the Yorktown Middle School because he was transferred to the Columbus Africentric Early College in July 2010. The person who could provide valuable data was now at the school in which entrée was in process of being obtained. Contact was successfully made with Principal Taylor and information regarding the research was explained. A time was scheduled to meet, as well as to obtain the class schedule of seventh-grade students. Principal Taylor was extremely helpful, which led to optimism about gaining entrée and the school’s allowing the classroom observations of African American seventh-grade students to begin. Principal Taylor was interviewed at the beginning of August 2010, the class schedule of seventh-grade male students’ classes was obtained, and a date was set (the following day) to begin observations.

I was then introduced to all African American seventh-grade male students as Debra D. Rayford, a doctoral student from Ohio University working on a PhD; they were told that they would be observed in their classrooms and that those who returned their signed parental consent forms would be interviewed at a later date. Mama Williams (Principal Williams) asked the African American seventh-grade male students if they had any questions, and a few did. One student asked why they are being researched. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998), a researcher should not provide details in
explaining why he or she is present at the school. The reply was to obtain an understanding of how an Afrocentric education influenced them. What followed was a discussion of what the literature revealed about adolescents’ characteristics and learning from an African-centered perspective. After this brief discussion everyone proceeded to class and the observations continued.

The class schedule for seventh-grade students had previously been reviewed. It was made up of the following subjects: math, social studies, Earth science, English literature and composition, and reading. A schedule for this researcher was organized to follow throughout the days in which the fieldwork was done. As the classroom observations began, the fact that some of the classes were single-gendered was noticed. The middle school level had three streams: male/female classes, male only classes, and female only classes.

According to Tully (2002), single-gendered classrooms were nothing new to the field of education. During the middle of the 20th century, single-gendered classrooms were the norm in higher education. In the public school setting, single-gendered classrooms have led to higher academic achievement (Lee & Lockheed, 1990). Martino, Mills, and Lingard (2005) found that single-gendered classrooms made it possible for teachers to address boys’ educational needs. Lee, Marks, and Byrd (1994) claimed that a teacher provides more advice to students, especially, when he or she is of the same gender as the student. Although boys do not favor single-gendered classrooms because there were no girls present (Jackson, 2002); teachers were able to facilitate the classroom
more efficiently by matching his or her teaching style to the student population (Kirschenbaum & Boyd, 2007).

After observing mixed-gendered classes, I focused on classes in which single-gendered males were in attendance (social studies, Earth science, English literature and composition, reading, and math). I made sure to enter the classrooms before the students were settled and engaged in their class work. This allowed a brief opportunity for an introduction to the teacher who had been notified an observer would be coming, based on a letter of introduction that had been sent two weeks earlier. Seating was allowed anywhere in the classroom to conduct the observations.

First period lasted for 45 minutes, while the 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 6\textsuperscript{th}, 7\textsuperscript{th}, and 8\textsuperscript{th} periods were 50 minutes. Fourth period was lunchtime, which lasted for 45 minutes, with middle school students eating first, followed by high school students. Lunchtime was gender-separated. Male students ate while female students gathered in the auditorium; on other days females ate first while male students were in the auditorium. Once male students finished eating, female students came into the lunchroom to eat while the male students went outside for recess on this particular day of observation. The Columbus City Schools guidelines for doctoral students conducting research require that a study be done with minimal disruption to students’ class time.

During these particular school observations and field-note taking, unanticipated questions emerged. For example, students had to read the book \textit{Surviving Hitler: A Boy in the Nazi Death Camps}, and two questions that emerged were: “What do you think about racism?” and “Do you wish you were White?” These two questions assisted in answering
research question 3: How is African American seventh-grade male students’ racial identity formation influenced by an African-centered perspective? The “fundamental work of the observer is the taking of field notes” (Patton, 2002, p. 302). Therefore, as this researcher was in the field, the opportunity to fine-tune open-ended interview questions for the participants based on information gathered during observation was accomplished. While observing students and teachers in the school’s setting, rapport developed.

Some participants may feel uncomfortable speaking openly to an outsider, and a visiting researcher would probably be viewed as one. There are no guarantees that interactions with participants will lead to rapport (Padgett, 1998). The fact that this researcher was of the same racial background as the participants, had been introduced to the African American seventh-grade male students, had been sitting in the classrooms observing, sent a letter of introduction to all the seventh-grade teachers before gaining entrée, would not have guaranteed rapport.

In October 2010, arrangements were made for interviewing teachers and for setting up timetables for conducting the two focus groups with the African American seventh-grade male students who had returned their signed consent forms. During this time in the field, three parents willing to participate in this study were identified. One parent had a seventh-grade son in attendance, another parent had three sons (in the 3rd, 8th, and 11th grades) in attendance, and the final parent’s son once attended the Columbus Africentric Early College. Observations, field notes, documentations collected from the Columbus Board of Education, focus groups, and individual interviews provided different data sources for triangulation.
Triangulation

Data-source triangulation provided a means of understanding information collected and observed. It also worked to prevent biases and to build trustworthiness of the data gathered while in the field (Glesne, 2006; Stake, 1995). Triangulation provided the researcher with the ability to crosscheck findings (Patton, 2002). It gave the researcher the tools to corroborate data collected from observations, field notes, focus-groups, documentation, and individual interviews. Reasoning was to address from an African-centered perspective any influence of Nguzo Saba’s and Ma’at’s principles on self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development of African American seventh-grade male students. It is imperative to note that triangulation “is restricted to the use of multiple data-gathering techniques (usually three) to investigate the same phenomena” (Berg, 2001, p. 5). The data being analyzed here were gathered from sources such as school observations, field notes, interviews, documents, and focus groups.

In summary, data were collected from June 2010 until March 2011, it started with school observations, focus groups, and documents gathered for analysis. As well as interviews with three parents, three council of elders/committee members, two staff members of the school, and seven of the eight seventh-grade teachers. Several attempts to interview the final teacher were made, even via telephone, but they were not successful. The interviews totaled 8 hours and 59 minutes. Interviews with council of elders/committee members, teachers, parents, and the two focus groups occurred over a nine-month period. Conversations in two focus group sessions occurred during their lunch break and the students’ last class period, which was considered to be mentoring
time. Interviews with the two principals and three of the council of elders/committee members occurred throughout the time in which the field observations were taking place.

**The Sources of Data**

Data were collected from classroom observations in which field notes were taken, focus groups with nine African American seventh-grade males, and individual interviews with teachers, parents, principals, and council of elders/committee members. According to Patton (2002) and Glesne (2006), different types of data collection provide depth and breadth to research.

**Document Analysis**

Documents provided information pertaining to the emergence of the Columbus Africentric Early College, how the school district supported an Afrocentric school, and the mission statement of the school. Documents were important to analyze as they were viewed in an historical context that added to the depth and breadth of knowledge of this study (Patton, 2002).

*The Columbus Dispatch* dated 1993 to 2007 provided information of the emergence of the Afrocentric School and how it developed into a K-12 school. Although there were gaps of information missing from this set of documents, interviews with council of elders/committee members and teachers from the Columbus Africentric Early College filled in some of them. The Columbus Board of Education’s meeting minutes produced no information pertaining to the establishment of the school, but it was necessary to analyze these documents as they may have captured and preserved important context of what was discussed in the meetings (Patton, 2002). The resolution of support
of the Africentric School provided data that addressed its African-centered perspective, the purpose of the school, and how to carry out the school’s mission statement with the support of the Board of Education. According to Glesne (2006), documents assist researchers in obtaining data.

Several books that the students read at the Columbus Africentric Early College were also analyzed because they were considered as written materials or official publications, which Patton (2002) defined as documents. One book, *History of Our World: The Early Ages* by Jacobs, LeVasseur, Kinsella, & Feldman (2008) was analyzed because African American seventh-grade male students were using it for class. The other book, *Surviving Hitler: A Boy in the Nazi Death Camp*, by Warren (2001) was analyzed to understand how an African-centered perspective was applied to the context of the books.

*The Pact* by Davis, Jenkins, and Hunt (2002) and *A Treasure Within: Stories of Remembrance & Rediscovery* by Akua (2002) were analyzed to understand what situations African American seventh-grade male students may have faced as each progressed through the stages of adolescence, dealt with peer pressure, balanced school with other activities, and applied the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at to these situations.

The strength of documents, according to Glesne (2006), was that they were descriptive with detailed information. Patton (2002) reminded researchers that a weakness of documents could have inconsistent information making it difficult to understand what was being analyzed.
Observations

Three sources for data collection were used in this study; observations and field notes, focus groups, and semi-structured interviews. Observations and accumulated field notes of African American seventh-grade male students in an Afrocentric school setting were conducted and gathered.

Observations at the Columbus Africentric Early College occurred over several months and provided rich data. The first day of observation started in the auditorium, because that was where middle school students gathered to begin their daily “rituals.” Principal Williams greeted me as she was greeting the middle school students as they entered the auditorium. A description of the seating arrangements in the auditorium is as follows: if facing the front of the auditorium, sixth-grade students sat on the right, seventh-grade students sat on the left, and eighth-grade students sat in the middle. Their assigned teachers stood next to the rows in which the first-period students were seated, in order to accompany them to the classroom and make sure that the students participated in the daily ritual (which will be discussed later). For example, in the section where seventh-grade students were sitting, if the first three rows were students who were in math class for first period, the teacher was standing near the second row, allowing a clear view of each student. Once the rituals ended, eighth-grade students were dismissed in an orderly manner to report to class, followed by the sixth-grade students, and then the seventh-grade students.

The eighth-grade students were viewed as role models for the sixth- and seventh-graders. They displayed how to act and carry themselves as they left the auditorium.
without teachers accompanying them. But on this first day of observation, the seventh-grade males were informed to remain seated, while their teachers left the auditorium and accompanied the seventh-grade females to class.

Observations were conducted in all seventh-grade classrooms. School observations and field notes were obtained during the regular school period, from 7:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, July to November 2010. School observations and field notes were not restricted to classrooms. Although the principal suggested returning to the classroom in two weeks, some hallway and main office observations were done before that time. I observed seventh-grade students in the auditorium setting. Because sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students have assigned sections in the auditorium, locating the participants for this study was made easier. Notes were made pertaining to seventh-grade males in the lunchroom, during lunchtime, and in the halls as they passed from one class to the next throughout the school day. Patton (2002) stated that “field notes contain the descriptive information that will permit you to return to an observation later during analyses and eventually permit the reader of the study’s findings to experience the activity observed through your report” (p. 303).

This was crucial in providing data that addressed whether the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at influenced African American seventh-grade male students (Estacion, McMathon, Quint, Melamud & Stephens, 2004). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) suggested that a researcher should go into the school and observe all social situations that allowed for the gathering of information about African American seventh-grade male students’ behavior. Therefore, observations were conducted in the lunchroom and the auditorium.
The auditorium is where middle school students met in the mornings to perform daily rituals and hear announcements.

The purpose was to observe and gather as much data as possible in a natural setting within the time spent in the field (Angrosino & Mays de Pérez, 2000). School observations gave this researcher the tools to describe events, which occurred in the classrooms, lunchroom, the auditorium, and hallways (Patton, 2002).

When conducting observations in the Columbus Africentric Early College, field notes were jotted down at every possible moment. At times field notes may be lengthy depending on what is being observed. Other times, field notes can be short mentions of what is being observed as an event is occurring (Lancy, 2001).

The intent of “observational analysis is to take the reader into the setting that was observed” (Patton, 2002, p. 23). Explaining and describing events that occurred in the classrooms can be informative and should capture the reader’s attention, thus allowing him or her a clear understanding of what was observed.

The field notes were written in a detailed descriptive manner as events were being observed. They contain information pertaining to African American seventh-grade male students’ actions with one another, their teachers, females, and other staff members at the school. It was important not to depend on memory to recall information (Patton, 2002). Field notes during observation served as a valuable tool in collecting as much accurate information as possible in the classroom setting, lunchroom, hallways, and the auditorium.
The strength of the observations rested in the researcher’s ability to use observations, focus groups, individual interviews, and documentation. This allowed a researcher to “build on strengths of each type of data collection” (Patton, 2002, p. 307) sources. The weakness of using observations is the “possibility that the observer may affect the situation being observed in unknown ways, program staff and participants may behave in some atypical fashion when they know they are being observed, and the selective perception of the observer may distort the data” (Patton, 2002, p. 306). To overcome this weakness while conducting observations in the school’s setting, this researcher remained in the field for a period of six months. By this time, the staff and participants should have become used to a person’s presence in the school building during observation and the taking of field notes. Therefore, they should have proceeded with business as usual.

**Focus Groups**

Focus groups, as described by Patton (2002), have “become highly valued and widely used qualitative methods” (p. 112) for obtaining rich detailed data. The nine African American seventh-grade male students who returned their signed consent forms were placed into two focus groups (four participants in one group and five in the other group). There was no type of selection criteria for assigning a particular student into either of the two focus groups. Focus groups involved “open-ended interviews with groups of five to eight people on specially targeted or focused issues” (Patton, 2002, p. 236). Although there were nine participants in total for the two focus groups, participants provided rich data which addressed the research questions. This was a valuable approach
because in focused group sessions “there is no set questionnaire and most of the questions are open ones, designed to encourage the respondent to talk freely about each topic” (Moser, 1961, p. 206). Morgan (1998) asserted that “focus groups are fundamentally a way of listening to people and learning from them . . . [and creating] lines of communication” (p. 9). This researcher intended to seek an understanding of African American seventh-grade male students’ perspective on how the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at influenced their self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development. The focus groups added to the value of using the qualitative research method while conducting this study.

The strength of using focus-group interviewing was to “yield a more diversified array of responses and afford a more extended basis both for designing systematic research” (Merton, Fiske & Kendall, 1990, p. 135), on the phenomenon under investigation. An additional strength for using focus groups was that it “secures data from several people rather than from one person” (Merton et al., 1990, p. 141). Merton et al. (1990) advised that focus group interviews “may also serve to bring to each individual’s mind details of his experiences which would otherwise not be recalled” (p. 146). For example, when asking the participants to name their role models, each gave an answer, but when one participant responded by naming his father, the other participants reacted by stating, “Oh yeah, my father, too.”

A weakness of conducting focus group interviews, according to Merton et al. (1990), involved “controversies or amicable discussion [that] may spring up among interviewees” (p. 147). In this study, no side conversations emerged while asking for and
receiving responses for the research questions being asked, though one student frequently asked for me to repeat some of the research questions. It appeared as though he had lost focus while thinking of a response and waiting for the other participant(s) to finish responding to the research question being asked. To overcome this weakness, I ensured that the focus-group interviews stayed on track and remained focused on the questions being presented.

Questions addressed in the two focus groups as described by Krueger (1998), were “clear, brief, and reasonable . . . [and] the words [were] understandable to the participants” (p. 4). If the process went off track, this researcher would have remained sensitive and guided the participants back on track by asking the next question or reiterating the last response that a participant made to the question presented. I remained calm and sensitive, when the one participant kept asking for a repetition of questions. The questions, according to Krueger (1998), were “designed to be answered quickly . . . and to make people feel comfortable by identifying characteristics that participants [had] in common” (p. 23). In this study, no African American seventh-grade male student appeared uncomfortable; all students were perceived to be totally participating in the focus groups, and eager to answer the research questions.

**Interviewing**

Interviewing the seventh-grade teachers at the Columbus Africentric Early College was useful, as each teacher had a different teaching philosophy he or she used when interacting with African American seventh-grade male students in the classroom. It was important to capture this data and any other data that emerged to assist in explaining
the phenomenon of the principles of Nguzo Saba’s and Ma’at’s influence on African American seventh-grade male students’ self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development from an African-centered perspective. The interviewing technique entailed asking open-ended questions.

The purpose of this technique was to collect in-depth responses to open-ended questions from the participants based on their perception of the influence of the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at, their feelings about learning from an Afrocentric perspective, and their applications of this knowledge into their lives (Patton, 2002).

Open-ended questions enabled this researcher to “understand and capture the points of view of other people” (Patton, 2002, p. 21). Also, using open-ended questions enabled the researcher to obtain “direct quotations [that] are a basic source of data in qualitative inquiry, revealing respondents’ depth of emotion, the ways they have organized their world, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions” (Patton, 2002, p. 21). For this research’s objective, open-ended questions were appropriate for gathering rich, in-depth data and breadth of knowledge from the seventh-grade teachers, parents, council of elders/committee members, and principals. The data collected were based on qualitative interviewing. This enabled access to rich and specific details of the actual life situations of the participants (See Appendices I-M).

Marshall and Rossman (1999) explained that the strength of interviewing is the obtaining of an abundant amount of raw data that each participant will provide and the understanding of the each participant’s perception. The strength of interviewing as
illustrated by Patton (2002) was that the all the participants receive the same questions, their responses could be compared, and much data could be collected from each one.

The weakness of qualitative interviewing was exemplified by Padgett (1998), is the possibility of “losing control of an interview [that] leads to frustration and self-doubt” (p. 62). Also, when conducting interviews, “uncooperative informants can be one of the most exasperating experiences a qualitative research will have” (Padgett, 1998, p. 62). Although the individual interviews were on track, one participant answered in brief statements no matter what the question was, and two adult participants were concerned that their jobs were in jeopardy. Still, cooperation from all participants was received. Patton (2002) stated that interviewing “does not permit the interviewer to pursue topics or issues that were not anticipated when the interview was written” (p. 347). To overcome these weaknesses, it was important not to take things personally and to remember that these were interviews in which the participants were volunteering their time to participate. This fact was kept in mind, and this was important when one of the interviews lasted a little over six minutes. The responses were very brief and yet informational. On different occasions, two teachers were concerned that being interviewed for this project would lead to their dismissal; this was due, ostensibly, to their own fears of perceived inefficiency. These fears were understandable later when these teachers were observed in their classrooms. Details on this will be discussed later.

Data Analysis

The data, especially field notes, were analyzed as they were being gathered. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) acknowledged that “data analysis done simultaneously with
data collection enables you to focus and shape the study as it proceeds” (p. 127). The data were transcribed immediately upon collection. Marshall and Rossman (1999) explained that “data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to the mass of collected data” (p. 150); this is why daily transcription of field notes and interviews occurred. Rubin and Rubin (2005) stated that “the goal of analysis is to understand core concepts and to discover themes that describe the world you have examined” (p. 245). The theory and the literature reviewed were used to analyze the data. The five stages of the Negro-to-Black Conversion model by Cross (1971) assisted in analyzing the data to see the “Black conscious” awareness level the participants depicted. Delgado and Stefancic’s (2001) Critical Race Theory, particularly storytelling, provided an opportunity for the participants to explain issues they faced and perceived it as a form of racism.

**Data Coding and Categorizing**

There were four research questions formulated to address how the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at from an African-centered perspective influenced self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development of African American seventh-grade male students. Each research question was coded, categorized, and analyzed. The data were collected by using a digital tape recorder and the recording device on a personal Netbook computer as a backup to the digital tape recorder. Once the data were transcribed, which happened immediately, the sub questions were re-examined, and each was then placed under the research question to which it applied. Then the data were analyzed for each individual research question for emerging themes.
The coding process made possible the assigning of colors to the different aspects of all data collected in order to retrieve the necessary data that pertained to answering each research question (Merriam, 1988). This coding process lessened any confusion that may have occurred as I analyzed the data and searched for themes (Patton, 2002). Data collected from interview questions were color-coded as follows: responses from the two focus groups — light blue; responses from individual teachers — gray; the administrators’ response — pink; responses from the parents — red, and the council of elders/committee members — green. Color-coding was one way to separate and analyze data collected (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The next steps were to categorize each question.

After responses to the research questions were read over, the participants’ answers to the interview questions were separated and then placed under the appropriate research question (Bell, 2005). Afterward, the data were analyzed again to ensure that the responses properly addressed their respective research questions. Then the data were analyzed again to identity themes or recurring ideals or patterns (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

Once the emerging themes were identified, similar themes were merged into one category. The data were analyzed again to verify that the information answered the particular research question. Categorizing data should be a thorough process to ensure that all information was properly categorized (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

Miller and Salkind (2002) pointed out eight essential qualities a study should have in order to capture rich and in-depth data, which this research attempted:
1. Identify a central phenomenon to study  
2. Ask central research questions  
3. Collect data primarily through interviews  
4. Analyze data by following the procedural steps  
5. Reduce the numerous significant statements to meaning units or themes  
6. Analyze the context in which the individuals experienced the meaning units or themes  
7. Reflect on personal experience you have had with the phenomenon  
8. [finally] write a detailed analysis of the “essence” of the experience for the participants. (p. 153)

All eight characteristics were incorporated into this study to obtain thick and rich description of the phenomena under investigation, thereby gaining an understanding of the sustainability of the school, and the impact Nguzo Saba and Ma’at have on seventh-grade African American male students at the Columbus Africentric Early College.

**Researcher’s Role in the Study**

As the instrument for collecting data in this study, it was my responsibility to interact with all participants in a professional manner. The “quality of qualitative data depends to a great extent on the methodological skill, sensitivity, and integrity of the researcher” (Patton, 2002, p. 5). As previously mentioned, a number of participants felt uncomfortable participating in this study for fear of job security. Ensuring confidentiality of the names of all participants who signed the consent forms was very important. As the instrument, trust was developed with the concerned participants; this can be seen in their willingness to participate. Their input was vital for this study because of their interactions with the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at based on an African-centered perspective.

As the instrument, one of my most useful characteristics was the ability to reassure. It was important to reassure two reluctant participants that their jobs were not in jeopardy because a researcher was observing their lack of classroom management skills.
It was explained that my sole duty in their classroom was to observe. It is apparent that rapport was built among the teachers, parents, the two reluctant participants, and myself based on how they later became involved in the research. As stated by Marshall and Rossman (1999):

> Researchers who conduct qualitative studies will need to propose and develop roles that ease entry, facilitate receptivity of environments and participants and offer rewards or benefits of some sort to motivate. . . .They will need to demonstrate that they can conduct research in such a way that neither the setting nor the people in it are harmed. (p. 63)

The school’s philosophy is grounded in the African proverb “it takes a village to raise a child.” The village concept is rooted in community involvement based on a shared responsibility and a common goal (Legg, 2001; Mohamed, 1996). Thus, any adult who came into the school’s setting was to address or report any misconduct of students to a principal. The Columbus Africentric Early College’s philosophy was in accordance with this African proverb (Mama Williams, personal communication, June 29, 2010; Mama Clark, personal communication, October 28, 2010,). I was immediately referred to as Mama Rayford. Mama and Baba were terms used by the Columbus Africentric Early College community. They represented a form of extended family, which will be discussed later in greater detail. On several occasions, middle school male students were viewed acting inappropriately by touching females, who appeared to enjoy it.

On several other occasions during observation, students appeared to be disruptive and unruly in class. As a mother and, here, viewed as an extended parent, I had an immediate impulse to chastise these behaviors displayed in the classroom and hallways (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Researchers must acknowledge any biases and maintain
ways of dealing with them (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). The sole objective of this research, as the instrument, was to collect data, not to parent any students.

It was obvious that the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at were prevalent in the psyches of African American seventh-grade male students and, from this, self-awareness should emerge. The principles of *reciprocity* and *harmony* were illustrated in the classroom setting, as it became apparent that African American seventh-grade male students acknowledged that they get what they put into their class participation. If they were required to read a section in their assigned textbook to find the answer to a question posed, they did not immediately receive the teacher’s assistance. The African American seventh-grade student had to put forth the effort of trying to understand what they were reading. This enabled them to find the answer to the posed question, enhancing their critical thinking skills.

As another example, if they were disruptive in the class, the teacher would point out several students who were working quietly and thanked them for doing so. This influenced the disruptive male student to settle down and become harmonious with the classroom environment. In summary, being the instrument of this study for collecting data overcame innate parenting skills of intervention and the ideology of being an extended family member when students were disruptive in the classroom. No “matter how much you try you cannot divorce your research . . . from your past experiences” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 34). In this way, the role as a researcher did not interfere with observations throughout this process.
Ethical Issues

It was important to maintain professional standards while conducting this study by not sharing information such as names with anyone. Patton (2002) argued that the “researcher is interested in truth rather than action; it is easier to protect the identity of informants or study settings when doing scholarly research” (p. 273). Aliases were given to African American seventh-grade male students, seventh-grade teachers, the principals, and the parents when coding the collected data, thus protecting their identities. To safeguard the identities, no name was used in the interviewing or field notes, aliases were given to all participants who signed consent forms. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) stated that “confidentiality in research implies that private data identifying the participants will not be disclosed” (p. 73).

Since this research involved human subjects, this researcher described in detail how there would be minimal risk to the participants. They were informed that, if at any time anyone felt uncomfortable, he or she could withdraw from the study. This study was submitted to the Ohio University’s Internal Review Board for thorough examination (Salkind, 2008). Therefore, this study did not move forward until the IRB approved all of the necessary requirements. If any obstacles arose, they were assessed and corrected so that the project could proceed.

Finally, all collected data from observations, focus groups, and individual interviews were used prudently. In this way, the results were conveyed as accurately and as truthfully as possible. This will be explained in the following chapters of this study (Salkind, 2008).
Limitations

This study is an investigation of how the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at used from an African-centered perspective influence the self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development of African American seventh-grade male students. It was limited to the nine students who returned their signed consent forms and to the Columbus Africentric Early College in Columbus, Ohio. Data from documentation were limited to information from *The Columbus Dispatch*, Board minute meeting notes, and the Columbus Africentric Early College Handbook. There is limited documentation on the emergence of the Africentric Alternative Program, the continuous changing of the school’s name, the implementation of grades K-5, and how the school incorporated grades 6-12.

This study was limited to the middle school section of the Columbus Africentric Early College. This study was also limited to the seventh-grade teachers of middle school students, two parents, the middle school principal, and the lead principal of the school. There were difficulties locating the council of elders/committee members who assisted in the formation of the school because many of them moved out of state or retired. Therefore, this study was limited to the council of elders/committee members who agreed to be interviewed.

This research should not be generalized to any other case studies of Afrocentric schools, especially, if it has not been determined that the same conditions exist within the confines of the other Afrocentric schools (Bakker, 2010; Shenton, 2004).
Chapter 4: Context of the Afrocentric School

Introduction

This chapter will provide an understanding as to why this type of school was warranted based on discontentment of a hegemonic curriculum, what steps were taken to establish an Afrocentric school, and a contextual description of the school. A profile of the participants which include, administrators, seventh-grade teachers, the council of elders/committee members, and seventh-grade male students who participated in focus groups interviews are also discussed. There is an example of the seating arrangements, classroom sign, and reinforcement token of the principles encouraging good behavior which are provided. Furthermore, an overview of the structure which includes the Nubian motto and middle school expectations, the class schedule, the Afrocentric curriculum, its concept, meaning, and application are analyzed.

The purpose of this section is to provide a rich contextual description of the research setting that was the Columbus Africentric Early College; this is also the unit of analysis under the study. The data collected from focus groups, individual interviews, observations, and field notes were used to discuss and describe the context where necessary. Documents such as the resolution of support, the Columbus Africentric Early College’s handbook, and particular articles that pertain to this school were analyzed in order to expand the understanding of the school’s context. Literature and the appropriate theoretical framework were incorporated when deemed applicable.
Discontentment with a Hegemonic Curriculum

A hegemonic curriculum according to Posner (2004) transcends knowledge of the dominant culture in an attempt to maintain superiority over other racial groups. Berman (1984), Sizemore (1990), and Apple (1990, 2004) concur with Posner (2004) as they argued that a hegemonic curriculum sustains White Anglo-Saxon Protestant ideals, viewpoints, and values. Overtime, these types of philosophies led African American parents, community leaders, teachers, and non-African American parents to become discontent with the perceived Eurocentric public school system, thus seeking an alternative system which would meet the needs of their children (Foster, 1992; Kifano, 1996).

Between the 1960s and 1970s, African American parents, with the support of numerous groups in the community, sought to establish an educational system that addressed the needs of African American children. The school needed to incorporate a liberatory pedagogy and an Afrocentric perspective with the value system that corresponded to African ancestry (Kifano, 1996). Since Columbus had a history of de facto segregated communities, along with the 1972 Penick vs. Columbus school desegregation case that desegregated the Columbus Public Schools, the parents and community members sought to alter the failure of their children in the schools. They believed their children’s failure was the result of the changes that had occurred in the school system since desegregation and subsequent resegregation (Ward-Randolph, 1996).

The materialization of an Afrocentric School in Columbus, Ohio, surfaced when Charles Tennant, a former teacher at Walnut Ridge High School, reviewed a report in
March of 1993. It detailed the results of quarterly grades for African American students. He noticed that the average child’s report card included four F’s. There were about 1,300 students at this school in which 900 were African American. Out of the 900 African American students, about 550 of them had failing grades and resided in the same neighborhood. Charles Tennant stated:

I started thinking, what can be done to eliminate some of those problems? I knew a lot of them derived from kids’ coming from unstable home life. And I said, what can happen to bring these kids into an environment that could do something positive for them in an academic situation? Plus, give them some understanding of themselves? So, I came up with the idea of an Afrocentric school, in April 1993. (personal communication, August 19, 2010)

Since Columbus Public Schools were not addressing the prerequisites of African American students’ education, according to Tennant, he provided the school board with a proposal for an Afrocentric school in May of 1993. The original philosophy behind the premise of the Afrocentric school was “to infuse African, African American history, culture, and beliefs into the regular curriculum” (Charles Tennant, personal communication August 19, 2010).

Tennant argued that the Afrocentric School should be structured in the format of a lottery system. He conceived that the school should lottery in students for grades K-3; the reason for this being that “these young ages between 5 and 8, you have a chance to mold them” (personal communication, August 19, 2010).

According to Tennant:

The board unanimously approved my concept for an Afrocentric school, October 5, 1993. Then we had to work on a location. The superintendent at that time wanted the school in Indianola, which is north (of Columbus), or at Linmoor Middle School, which is kind of northwest, and I did not want the school there.
My experience in the school district and working with parents is that most parents don’t have transportation, therefore, they have to depend on public transportation. I felt that the school should be centralized; the only place that I looked at was this one (formerly Mohawk School), this building right here. I went to the board in November and December, and the first board meeting in January they voted 7-0 to put it here (Mohawk School). Putting the school here was a good location, which was once upon a time an all-White school; had a lot of White kids here, didn’t have any Black schools downtown. I received a lot of phone calls from White people and radio stations, saying why do you need a Black school? (personal communication, August 19, 2010)

The school started in August 1996 with grades K-5 (Charles Tennant, personal communication, August 19, 2010; Mama Williams, personal communication, June 29, 2010; *The Columbus Dispatch*, August 29, 1996). The Afrocentric School was “always intended to be K-12, you just add a grade each year” (Charles Tennant, personal communication, August 19, 2010). To ensure that the Afrocentric School would be organized in such a way to address the needs of African American children, a committee, which included, but was not limited to, Charles Tennant, Ako Kambon, and Moriba Kelsey, decided to “go around the country to look and see other Afrocentric schools. The committee visited Afrocentric schools in Detroit, California, and Cleveland.” Once the committee members gathered all the necessary information, Tennant, Kambon, and Kelsey, reviewed it and decided to put a proposal together and submit it to the Columbus City School Board (Jerry Saunders, personal communication, July 29, 2010).

Furthermore, according to Saunders:

We needed to have a school that would encourage our children, help them to be very successful and they (Charles Tennant, Stan Embry, and Ako Kambon) felt that part of it (the problem) was in the current school district. A lot of our kids were starting off learning about slavery being their history — being a point of reference as a beginning, as opposed to Ancient Egypt and all of those wonderful accomplishments and achievements that we (descendants of the African diasporas) have done for over a hundred thousand years. That was just totally
ignored so they (Tennant, Embry, and Kambon) felt that to start a school that would put emphasis on (the history of Ancient Egypt) would be a big piece for some of the kids. Now there was a bigger picture than that (a reference point of slavery). (personal communication, July 29, 2010)

Tennant taking the initiative of researching the problem and proposing an Afrocentric school was the basis of implementing a school that would address the educational needs of African American children from a different perspective. An Afrocentric perspective that would guide African American children in excelling academically, developing a clearer sense of self, and becoming better educated in their history. Tennant’s commitment to this initiative was demonstrated in his dedication to attending each Board meeting and surveying sites that were considered convenient to house students from different areas of Columbus City School District. Saunders concurred that this type of school would improve how African American children felt about themselves, especially males. African American children learning that they had a rich history beyond slavery was essential in developing a sense of self-worth. Sanders suggested that African American children needed to know more than the oppressive part of their history. Therefore, a carefully developed curriculum that encompassed the seven principles of Nguzo Saba and the seven principles Ma’at taught from an Afrocentric perspective was infused into the public school system’s curriculum.

The Development of the Columbus Afrocentric School

A resolution of support passed in 1993 laid the foundation for how an Afrocentric curriculum should provide an Afrocentric worldview in which African values, culture, and history would be taught to students to empower them with a sense of pride in themselves (see Table 1). The regular school district curriculum was based on a
Eurocentric worldview that alienated African American children in such a way that most did not feel a sense of self-worth, had limited knowledge of African and African American history, thus leading to a lack of self-confidence. This African-centered curriculum was petitioned by parents, students, and the community (Giddings, 2001; Gill, 1992; Nicholson, 1990; Ward-Randolph, 2002).

To verify the necessity and support for an Afrocentric school, the superintendent did the following:

1) Survey[ed] the district’s parents to determine the scope and depth of interest in Africentric education at all levels;
2) Arrang[ed] visits by Board members and appropriate staff to other school systems having experience with Africentric schools; and
3) Determine[d] the funding needs and possible source of funds to establish and operate Africentric schools (see Table 1).

A purpose of an Afrocentric education was to provide guidance to the student population, especially African Americans, to build a sense of self, based on what was learned from an African-centered perspective. The school district was more than 50% African Americans; therefore, this type of school was warranted by the community to teach its children about African and African American history. The Resolution of Support indicated below provides further details.
Table 1. Resolution of Support

| WHEREAS, Africentricity is a holistic approach to education that focuses the curriculum on all facets of the teaching and learning process from an African worldview, meaning that content, learning environments, teaching strategies, and community involvement and support are based upon the history, cultures, contributions, and values of African peoples dwelling on the continent of Africa and throughout diaspora of African communities; and |
| WHEREAS, Africentricity empowers learners to develop with confidence a sense of self-worth and community derived from a knowledge of African and African-American cultures and enables learners to become positive and constructive members of their communities and to assume their place in those communities and society as a whole; and |
| WHEREAS, The Columbus Public Schools already has established and put in place a program of alternative schools that specify a curriculum emphasis, e.g., French immersion, Spanish immersion, and arts impact, to name a few; and |
| WHEREAS, The history, the culture, and the myriad other contributions of African and African-Americans have been manifestly absent from the general curriculum of the Columbus Public Schools, the public schools of Ohio, and, indeed, the public schools of these United States; and |
| WHEREAS, Over fifty percent of the students of the Columbus Public Schools are of African heritage; and |
| WHEREAS, A significant number of students, parents, and other concerned citizens have appeared before this Board of Education to petition the public body for the inclusion of African and African-American history and Africentric schooling in the Columbus Public Schools’ program offerings; and |

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the Columbus Board of Education’s Ad Hoc Committee on Africentric Education, with the assistance of the Superintendent and his staff, continue its work by defining the intent and content of an Africentric school program and assist in the development of a proposed implementation plan;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Ad Hoc Committee on Africentric Education, with the advice and recommendations of the Superintendent, shall identify and select fifteen individuals from the Columbus community, including parents, educators, business persons, and students to act as an advisory/support body for the Ad Hoc Africentric Committee;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Superintendent shall
1) Survey the district’s parents to determine the scope and depth of interests in Africentric education at all levels;
2) Arrange visits by Board members and appropriate staff to other school systems having experience with Africentric schools; and
3) Determine the funding needs and possible source of funds to establish and operate Africentric schools;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Superintendent shall determine what new structures and facilities would be necessary to support Africentric K-12 Schools or identify existing structures that could appropriately house the schools with proper improvements and structural changes;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That these resolutions be carried out with utmost urgency so that K-12 Africentric schools, if determined feasible, can be implemented as soon as possible.

Source: *The Columbus Board of Education’s FactLine.*
Notes: The resolution of support was written in 1993 to provide guidance for the superintendent of the then — Columbus (Ohio) Public Schools and the 15 member ad hoc committee to create a holistic Afrocentric education for students. The 15 member committee was selected from various educational and professional backgrounds were to analyze other Afrocentric schools and collect data that would be studied and used as a reference for establishing an Afrocentric school in Columbus.
The Resolution of Support detailed the groundwork for incorporating Africans and African Americans history into the Columbus Public School system’s curriculum. This resolution was based in a holistic approach grounded in an Afrocentric perspective that teachers must implement in their classroom(s) in order to empower students, provide guidance in developing a positive sense of self, which was what the community wanted for African American children. Therefore, developing this alternative school made it possible for parents to have a choice in which curriculum their child would become educated. The main purpose was to guide African American children in to becoming positive and productive members in their communities. It was important for a diverse committee to be organized that allowed for different opinions to be implemented in the development of the Africentric School.

**Contextual Description of the Columbus Africentric Early College**

This section begins with a brief description of the school followed by the profiles for the school’s administrators, seventh-grade teachers, council of elders/committee members, and seventh-grade male students who participated in focus groups interviews are presented. Also, information about the school’s context which demonstrates the norms, activities, classroom practices, student classroom behaviors, and the school’s structures which either made this school unique or similar to other public schools in Columbus, Ohio. Furthermore, there was a discussion of the operationalization of the Afrocentric principles in the school.
The first image a visitor to the school observes as he or she enters the school is a banner located outside of the building’s walkway. The school’s current name is inscribed as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1. Banner and Sign Post of the School
Source: Debra D. Rayford

The Columbus Africentric Early College was established during the 1996-97 school year and was the only K-12 school in the Columbus City School district (FactLine, personal communication, January 25, 2011). Its mission was “to develop an African-centered holistic education system for students, parents, staff, and the community addressing the needs of the total self, by implementing ‘Ma’at & Nguzo Saba’ as guiding principles” (Columbus Africentric Early College Handbook, see Appendix N). The mission statement was in accordance to the Resolution of Support, which narrowed down the purpose for reaching goals of the community that voiced their concerns about African American children not learning about their history, culture, and heritage. The education that students were learning about was grounded and guided by the seven principles of
Nguzo Saba and the seven principles of Ma’at with the objective of assisting him or her to develop a well-rounded character.

Although the Afrocentric School was a part of the Columbus City School District, the curriculum was infused with the seven principles of Nguzo Saba (*Umoja, Kujichagulia, Ujima, Ujama, Nia, Kuumba, and Imani*) and the seven principles of Ma’at (*Balance, Harmony, Justice, Order, Reciprocity, Righteousness, and Truth*). The school’s educational environment was grounded in the Africentric perspectives that was developed by Kelsey with four main objectives: being responsible in furthering the education of self and others; being outstanding in everything you set out to accomplish; being aware of inner strengths that promoted balance and harmony; and being cognizant that decisions should be based on group thinking and not individual resolutions. These decisions must be guided by the Kemetic principles and grounded in the history of Africans and African Americans (see Appendix N).

According to Mama Fairbanks, the school’s original name was the Africentric Alternative Program; however, over the years, its name progressed to the Columbus Africentric Early College. The school is in partnership with Columbus State Community College, which allowed high school juniors and seniors to attend free of charge and to earn college credits along with their high school diploma. This venture was made possible by a grant from Bill and Melinda Gates through KnowledgeWorks. This was an Ohio Post-Secondary Enrollment Option Program. KnowledgeWorks assisted in developing avenues for public school students to transition into college. The organization was student-centered with a “focus on the need of the learner”; it was important for
students to take responsibility for their educations and to work collaboratively with teachers (http://knowledgeworks.org).

The Columbus Africentric Early College was divided into three sections: elementary grades K-5, middle grades 6-8, and high school grades 9-12. The school’s personnel and visitors were considered an extension to the student’s family; therefore, everyone was called Baba (father figure) or Mama (mother figure) said Mama Williams. According to Columbus City School’s FactLine, there were 51,074 students in the district, and 30,074 identified as African American (FactLine, personal communication, March 9, 2011).

The Columbus Africentric Early College had an estimated 941 students with 272 in the middle grades (FactLine, personal communication, March 9, 2011). Of the 272 middle school students, 89 were in the seventh grade, including 47 males and 42 females (Columbus Africentric Early College staff member, personal communication, January 24, 2011).

Profile of the Administrators

At the time of this study Melvin Taylor (Baba Taylor) had taught at the middle school level for approximately six years in Columbus, Ohio. He also taught at Windsor School and Franklin Alternative School in the same city before going into administration. Baba Taylor was an assistant principal at Linmoor Middle School, the Columbus Africentric Early College, and Yorktown before being reassigned in 2010 back to the Columbus Africentric Early College as the lead principal over the program. Baba Taylor
was an alumni from The Ohio State University where he earned a Master’s in Elementary Education in conjunction with a principal’s certificate in 2008.

At the time of this study Lisa Williams (Mama Williams) was the middle school principal at the Columbus Africentric Early College, where she had been working at the school since 2007. She explained that based on the Columbus City School’s policy, staff and administrators were placed in a school, contingent upon the needs of the school and the strengths of the staff and administrator. Mama Williams was assistant principal at Clinton Middle School before being assigned to the Columbus Africentric Early College. She had an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education, a Bachelor’s of Science in Elementary Education, (with a focus in mathematics) from Ohio University. At the time of this study, Mama Williams was pursuing a graduate degree in Educational Leadership. The background of teacher is presented below in figure 2.
### Profile of the Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Subject Taught</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Educational background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roger Stevens (Baba Stevens)</td>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>University of Michigan — Master degree in Curriculum &amp; Instruction and Educational Administration (2001); Miami University — Bachelor degree in Elementary Education (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leo Morris (Baba Morris)</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>The Ohio State University — Master degree in Biology (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Jefferies (Baba Jefferies)</td>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>University of Dayton — Master degree in Secondary Education (2002) Note: planned to eventually pursue a Ph.D. in History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicholas Noll (Baba Noll)</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Ashland University — Master degree (2005); Xavier University — Bachelor degree (2003); University of Cincinnati — Associate degree (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evelyn Fairbanks (Mama Fairbanks)</td>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Indiana University — Master degree (2000); Indiana University — Bachelor degree in Sociology (1998) Note: continued taking college courses to enhance knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Cole (Mama Cole)</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>University of Cincinnati — Master degree in Counseling Education &amp; teaching certificate (2006); Bowling Green University (Ohio) — Master degree in Science (at the time of this study she was pursing this degree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole Hall (Mama Hall)</td>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>The Ohio State University — Master degree in Education Note: at the time of this study she was in pursuit of this degree.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**** Year began teaching at the Columbus Africentric Early College

*Figure 2. Background of Teachers*
The teachers interviewed for this study, also taught sixth- and eighth-grade classes. The focus here was on what subjects the seventh-grade students were taught, as this study was about African American seventh-grade male students. Note: The names and educational information of teachers and staff had been slightly altered to ensure anonymity.

Profile of the Council of Elders/Committee Members

At the time of this study Charles Tennant was a graduate of the Winston-Salem State University, The Ohio State University, and Ohio University, with degrees in education. He had worked in Columbus City Schools for more than 40 years and was an advocate of African American children learning about their culture, history, and African traditions in school. Tennant proposed an Afrocentric School to the Columbus School Board and was active in the location of the school and initial curriculum.

Jerry Saunders Sr. was the chief executive officer of the Africentric Personal Development Shop, Inc, located in Columbus, Ohio. He was a graduate of Oberlin College, and had attended Amherst College and The Ohio State University. He became involved with the establishment of an Afrocentric School for Columbus when it was stalled because of political red tape. He was able to meet with board members to discuss how the process of the establishment of an Afrocentric School could become a reality.

Moriba Kelsey (notable mention) had a lot to do with the formation of the Columbus Africentric Early College. His name emerged several times through the interview process; he apparently coined the definition of Africentric Perspective (see Appendix N). M. Kelsey was the founder of the Africentric Personal Development Shop,
Inc. “Dr. Kelsey has just been tremendous; he’s been a mentor, a genius, and I have just
learned a lot from him” (Jerry Saunders. Sr., personal communication, July 29, 2010). M.
Kelsey established four perspectives of an Africentric Perspective: to continue self-
 improvement with continued education; do extremely well when involved in an activity;
establish and maintain inward balance and harmony; and to decide issues based on group
consensus and not individual perspectives. All decisions must be grounded in the
Kemetic principles (see Appendix N); he was very active as a council of elders/
committee member within the school. Kelsey’s philosophy of Africentric perspective was
no different than such scholar as Molefi Asante; because both emphasized teaching
African American students from an Afrocentric worldview; and pointed out that
communal was the foundation of this worldview instead of individualism.

Ako Kambon was the president of Visionary Leaders Institute, located in
Columbus, Ohio. He was a graduate of The Ohio State University, with a degree in
political science. Kambon served on the committee that researched and implemented the
curriculum and contributed to the establishment of the Columbus Africentric Early
College.

Profile of African American Seventh-Grade Male Students

During the time of this study, Steve was 12 years old and had attended this school
since kindergarten; DaMar was 12 years of age and had attended the school for three
years; Benjamin, Lorell, Geno, and Derrick were 13 years of age and had attended the
school for two years; Terrance, Darnell, and Thomas were 12 years old and had attended
the school for two years.
Seating Arrangement in the Classrooms

The typical classroom set-up at the Columbus Africentric Early College can be viewed in the two pictures below:

The students sat facing the front of the classroom while the teacher either stood or sat at a table to facilitate the class lessons. In another classroom there were oblong tables situated in a square with students sitting and the teacher sometimes sitting off to the side inside the square. The above images were provided for a visual characteristic of the classroom’s learning environment.

Classroom Sign and Positive Reinforcement

Signs posted on the walls of classrooms and hallways were supposed to reinforce the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at. To demonstrate how students were reminded to act on a daily basis, in one classroom there was a sign which read as follows:
This sign reinforced the need to use class time efficiently and emphasized that African American seventh-grade male students should come to class prepared to work and possessed the necessary materials. The principles that were applied here was **Balance** and **Order**. Students must learn to **Balance** their time and be prepared to get the most out of the class period. This can be accomplished by having homework completed, paper out so the student does not have to go into his or her book bag to dig for paper to write on, and pencils sharpened in order to participate in class. For example, in math class, African American seventh-grade male students already knew there would be math problems and homework to go over in order to ensure students did not have problems answering the questions. During observations, it was more productive for students to have pencils sharpened to prevent holding up other students from moving forward with answering, and correcting the homework problems or having to wait for a student to sharpen his or her pencil at any time after the first five minutes of class in which sharpening was allowed.

The other principle that this sign may be representing was **Order**. African American seventh-grade male students must have their homework completed, paper to copy and solve math problems, and the necessary tools with which to work. With **Balance** and **Order**, African American seventh-grade male students can be prepared to complete the day’s in-class assignments. The principle **Ujima (Collective**
work/Responsibility) was also implied in this sign; African American seventh-grade male
students, being prepared, can work together in solving math problems. They should be
responsible for having the necessary tools ready, instead of disturbing another student by
asking for a paper to write on or a pencil to write with, and then needing it sharpened.

In another classroom there was a sign posted on the wall reminding students to:
Come prepared, stay seated, stay quiet, and keep hands and feet to yourself.
Consequences = warning phone call to home, lunch detention, or after school detention.
The brief breakdown of a few directives reminded students to be prepared when coming
to class, and this allowed for a smooth operation of the class’ lesson. On a couple of days
during observation, students had forgotten their homework or left it in their lockers. If the
homework was left in the locker, the student would ask to retrieve it. Teachers would not
allow the student to retrieve his or her homework, because the students just came from
their locker during transition from one class to the next. This was one visual reminder and
reinforcement to consciously practice the Ma’at principle Order — I am in control and
organized. Although this type of sign may be posted at other public schools at the
Africentric School, the intentional purpose was to guide students to automatically
practice both sets of principles.

It was important to the class’ productivity for students to remain seated during the
class period. On several occasions, students were observed walking around to talk with
their classmates, or were seen running to the door because someone was knocking. In
Baba Noll’s class, African American seventh-grade male students constantly ran to the
doors to answer it. During observations, once the students returned to their seats, they did
not appear to be participating in the class discussion, as they would be preoccupied in side conversations.

This was a violation of the next directive, that of being quiet. In a few classes, on a continual basis, students were disruptive in the classroom. McDonald (2010) found that a misbehaving student can become problematic in the classroom because the student(s) take away time from learning and are not engaged in the academic process. Misbehaving students do not demonstrate the principles of Nguzo Saba or Ma’at. This type of behavior disrupted the class’ lesson that the teacher had prepared for the day and would take away time allotted to learn the day’s lessons. Based on observations of this classroom, it would have been a good opportunity for Baba Noll to reinforce the principle of *Harmony* — *I will work with others peacefully.*

African American seventh-grade male students were expected to practice *Harmony* and allow for the development of a learning atmosphere. In this case, one could also envision the principle of *Reciprocity* — *What I give is what I get*; if African American seventh-grade male students do not abide by these directives, there were consequences. Sometimes during an observation in Mama Cole’s class, a disruptive student received a day’s detention or was sent to the principal’s office, the results for the consequences of their actions. Mama Cole would normally continue with the day’s lesson until the student(s) became too disruptive, at which time a detention was assigned to the student(s).

Another Nguzo Saba principle that the statements represented was *Umoja.* Unity was essential in the classroom, to allow for delivery of information from the teacher, to
enable students the opportunity to answer questions and to receive guidance in answering questions. This was difficult to attain if African American seventh-grade male students were being disruptive and distracting their peers. In this classroom, if students abided by these directives, they were given a small memento of appreciation for practicing the principles, see figure 5. This small memento was a form of positive reinforcement that reduced disruptive behaviors in the classroom (Franklin & Brown, 2001; Godwyll, 2010).

Figure 5 defines five of the seven principles of Ma’at that students have practiced in the classroom, and for which they were given this token for positive reinforcement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T.H.R.O.B Card which means:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T-TRUTH I am honest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-HARMONY I will work with others peacefully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-RIGHTOUSNESS I do the right thing and I am proud of it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O-ORDER I am in control and organized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-BALANCE I achieve quality at school, home &amp; socially</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student’s Name: _________________________________
Teacher’s Name: _________________________________
Positive Action: __________________________________
__________________________________

Figure 5. T.H.R.O.B Ticket as a Form of Positive Reinforcement
Source: Mama Cole
While conducting this study and observing students receiving this little ticket, the students appeared content with the acknowledgment of their good behavior. For example, a male student smiled after he received this ticket for his participation in class. He then continued writing down what was on the overhead and looked in his book to find an answer to the question that was posed to the class. On one occasion, a student reminded Mama Cole, a science teacher, that he did not receive a T.H.R.O.B ticket for his good behavior. During observations of this class, other students who did not receive a ticket did not seem to be concerned when another student received a verbal expression of his good behavior along with a T.H.R.O.B ticket. On some days students wanted a T.H.R.O.B ticket and appeared to work diligently in the classroom to earn some. Therefore, based on observations, the tickets did reinforce positive behavior and on other days the possibility of receiving some did not.

**The Nubian Motto and Middle School Expectations**

The ideology of the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at surrounded students of this school as a reminder of how he or she should conduct themselves. It should be in a manner that reflects Nubian kings and queens which is expected in their behavior. African American seventh-grade male students have several visual images and mottos posted throughout the school to remind him of the Afrocentric principles and perspectives. Below is one image of a poster with information to understanding Nubian Pride, see figure 6.
We Are The Proud Nubians!

Nubia:
Once encompassed both Egypt (Ancient Kemet) & Sudan (Ancient Kush). Nubians were Indigenous Black Africans. They were great warriors, shared political & military power with women, built golden cities, temples and royal pyramids.

Nubia:
Is a derivative from the ancient Kemetic word, “Nub” which means gold. Nubia was once a leading commercial center trading in gold, ebony, ivory, incense & spices.

Nubia:
Emerged during the Pre-Dynastic Kemet (Around 3800 B.C.E.), which served as the Original Cradle of Arts & Sciences, and the birth place of Hieroglyphic (Medu Netcher) sacred writings.

We are the mighty NUBIANS?
Nubians are the descendants of ancient peoples from what was once called Lower and Upper Nubia or Northern Sudan and Southern Egypt today. The word Nubia comes from the Kemetic word Nub which meant gold. Thus Nubia was referred to as the land of gold and its people were called NUBIANS, or people from the land of gold. Nubians are the people of Africa’s earliest black culture with a history that can be traced back from 3100 B.C. onward through Nubian monuments and artifacts, as well as written records from Egypt and Rome.

Figure 6. Meaning of Nubian Pride
Source: Columbus Africentric Early College Handbook
Students were constantly reminded to “Show their Nubian Pride” by acting like young kings and queens, see figure 6. When asked in the focus group sessions, “How do you show your Nubian pride?” the participants’ responses were:

**Steve:** By wearing our school colors and being proud of them and wearing a belt, not letting our pants sag, and representing our school in a good way.

**Lorell:** Tucking in our shirts.

At the time of this study, the dress style of the culture were pants sagging below a male’s waist which was called drooping and shirts not being tucked inside of his pants. Steve and Lorell were suggesting that they did not give into peer pressure of imitating this style and demonstrated the Nguzo Saba principle, *Kujichagulia (self-determination) — I think for myself.* This school’s staff reinforced several rules regarding appearance, for example: “Shirts must be tucked in *(NO SAGGING)* and No T-Shirts (unless school T-Shirt),” for more rules on how a student should be dressed for school (see Appendix N).

Benjamin’s response to the same question was “trying to act the way a king or pharaoh would act.” He appeared to be reflecting from his readings and lessons about Ancient Egypt and its connection to African civilization. Benjamin was displaying pride in this common African heritage and paying homage to kings and pharaohs as he demonstrated Nubian Pride. Kings and Pharaohs were viewed as people of importance in Egyptian civilization. Steve’s and Lorell’s comment related to the popular image of African American males and how the principles of the curriculum are fostering positive self-respect for one’ appearance as an African American male. Four other participants responded to the question as follows:

**DaMar:** By showing respect for our elders.
**Geno:** By being respectful to others.

**Derrick:** By showing respect.

**Thomas:** Respecting my ancestors and showing that we are intelligent.

Most adolescents did not demonstrate respect for their elders in society (Deutsch, 2005; Deutsch & Jones, 2008). DaMar, Geno, Derrick, and Thomas had noticed this and decided that showing their Nubian Pride was to show respect for themselves and others.

*Nia (purpose) — I will make it my job to build and develop my community and Imani (faith) — I believe in myself and the victory of my work,* were applied because they were setting an example of how to treat and honor the elders in the community in an attempt to rebuild a respectful community. This was their purpose, to eliminate the stereotype of African American young men being disrespectful toward others in society. Terrance and Darnell exhibited their Nubian Pride by doing what was right and not displaying deviant behavior, stating that:

**Terrance:** By using our principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at.

**Darnell:** By following the rules.

As mentioned before, some students at this school were disruptive in the classroom which lessened the time teachers had to implement the day’s lesson. This type of disruption is what Kunjufu (2012) characterizes as selective discipline; which is a student respecting and learning from a particular teacher while disrespecting and ignoring another teacher.

African American seventh-grade male students were surrounded with images that represented the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at, which were intended to positively affect their behavior throughout the school day. Figure 7 is one example:
Middle school students were expected to follow all the school rules, especially these five listed on the poster. This poster served as a visual reminder of what the school community needed from each middle school student.

In the hallways of this school, in the auditorium, and classrooms were signs posted reminding students about the seven principles of Nguzo Saba and the seven principles of Ma’at. There were also postings about how to demonstrate the proper behavior while in school, see figure 8.
Students must learn that having friends in middle school was good, but students should not fall under peer pressure and do for their friends things that would get them into trouble. They should have and demonstrate respect for themselves and others throughout each and every school day. One can perceive that the practice of these rules utilizes three principles of Nguzo Saba, particularly, *Umoja* (unity), *Kujichagulia* (self-determination),
and *Nia* (purpose); and six of the seven principles of Ma’at namely, *Balance, Harmony, Justice, Order, Righteousness,* and *Truth* embedded in the rules above.

**Middle School Class Schedule**

The middle school day included a typical class schedule, which comprised breakfast before the morning ceremony. As stated before, the morning ceremony consisted of singing “Lift Every Voice and Sing”, reciting “The Pledge”, and “Where Else Can I Go?” Their first-period class was math or a course in humanities, followed by science or a course in humanities. The third period was math, or science, followed by 4th period lunch time that lasted 45 minutes. The fifth period was English or history, the sixth period was reading or social studies. The seventh period was tutoring, and the last period was homeroom/ advisng. An example of the entire school day can be viewed in figure 9. It was required for seventh-grade students to take math, science, reading, English, literature, social studies, and history courses.
According to the Ohio Department of Education these were mandatory courses for seventh-grade students. All information can be found at their website (www.ode.state.oh.us). What made this schedule Afrocentric was the incorporation of the seven principles of Nguzo Saba and the seven principles of Ma’at. Which each teacher were to infuse into their lesson plans, along with teaching the Columbus City School’s required curriculum, making it grounded in an Afrocentric perspective. During classroom observations, some teachers did not infuse the principles into their classroom’s lesson plan. Baba Jeffries and a parent Mama Grace noticed that teachers had migrated away from teaching based in an Afrocentric perspective. Baba Jeffries stated that teachers were “not on the same page” when it pertained to teaching about the principles of Nguzo Saba.
and Ma’at in their lesson plans. Both Baba Jeffries and Mama Grace explained that Baba Taylor’s return to the school as lead principal, the school should be back on track with all teachers implementing these principles in their lesson plans and teaching it based in the Afrocentric perspective.

**An Afrocentric Curriculum**

**The Concept**

The Columbus Africentric Early College was based in an African-centered perspective using as guides the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at. Students were educated based on the ideology of centeredness. Students were expected to apply what they read in the literature and textbooks, thus make connections and implications to the African American Culture.

According to Asante (1991), most African American children do not perform well because they are not culturally centered in the classrooms. African American students need an educational context that speaks to their culture, just like White students receive information pertaining to their culture. This type of curriculum was important in the Columbus Africentric Early College because:

A majority of the kids in the school district at that time (early 1990s), you’re talking about 64% of the kids of the Columbus Public School District, was African American. Now you’re looking at these kids and the curriculum, it was geared toward other kids (White children) and not these particular kids (African Americans) in the school district. They (Charles Tennant, Stan Embry, and Ako Kambon) said we need to make some changes, get a curriculum that’s more suitable to the students who go to school here. (Jerry Saunders, personal communication, July 29, 2010)
Tennant implied that “the curriculum would be the same as that offered at other schools, but would also include African-American studies and courses in discipline, morals, and values” (personal communication, August 19, 2010).

This type of curriculum would teach African American students how to be confident and proud of their “Blackness”, thus develop a state of “Black conscious” awareness. Having been educated about African Americans’ lifestyle promoted a form of psychological liberation, leading to a sense of self (Cross, 1971).

**Africentric-Afrocentric is Interchangeable**

Africentric and Afrocentric describe the same meaning, the term Afro or Afri is “land of spirit of Africa” (Jerry Saunders, personal communication, July 29, 2010). “Most people get that mixed up. They think it means Black, but Africentric means to bring into focus that which is centered, which was geared toward African or African American history, culture, and the ways they work in their society” (Charles Tennant, personal communication, August 19, 2010). The term Africentric emerged in the field of Black psychology and was considered the preeminent term for African Americans in articulating and guiding their actions (Banks, 1992). African and African American history should be viewed from a Black frame of reference; if not, the fundamental essences of Africa’s tradition, history, and culture will be less complementary (Cook & Kono, 1977). Using the term Africentric is the same as using the term Afrocentric (Asante, 2003). Asante further clarified that as long as the meaning is based in the knowledge of Africa as a “mode of thought and action” (p. 2) and in the African value system, there was nothing incorrect about the terminology (Asante, 2003).

Africentric was a “mindset, a way of thinking,” said Baba Taylor, lead principal. When asked about the meaning of an Africentric school a few students responded as follows:

**Derrick:** It is a school based on African belief.

**Lorell:** It helps African American students learn their traditions.

**Steve:** It is supposed to teach you about your heritage, traditions, Africans’ beliefs and, of course, you are supposed to have your regular education.

The premise of an Afrocentric school had been effective in teaching African American students to appreciate their history, culture, and Africans’ traditions, as Derrick, Lorell, and Steve pointed out. Steve also realized that being educated about Africans’ and African Americans’ in the school setting was in conjunction to the regular school’s curriculum; thus recognizing that their history was just as important as European history.

Based on the literature, an Afrocentric school focused on the transmission of the history, culture, heritage, and value system of Africans, as a means of leveling the
superiority constructs in society (Shujaa, 1994). The participants expressed their understanding of Afrocentric education as follows:

**Geno:** Somewhere for Black kids to go and learn.

**Terrance:** An African American school.

**Benjamin:** A Black spiritual school.

**DaMar:** It’s where Black males and females can learn their culture.

**Thomas:** It is a school where Black people learn about their ancestors and to remember their ancestors.

**Darnell:** All types of cultures can come here.

Thus they were expressing that this type of school empowered students by educating them in their “Blackness”. They do not feel inferior to any other culture (Cross, 1971); in fact, as Darnell pointed out, any student of a different culture was welcomed to attend the Afrocentric School. These students were proud of their ancestors and the culture, therefore, willing to share the knowledge with others. But during observation at this school only African American children were in attendance. The Afrocentric School was based in the history of Ancient Egypt and was taught from an African-centered perspective.

**The African-Centered Perspective Revealed**

Essential elements of one textbook and a novel will be discussed in this segment to demonstrate how an African-centered perspective was applied. This is a brief extraction of paragraphs that explained a few chapters in the textbook *History of Our World: The Early Ages*, by Jacobs et al. (2008), which included an in-depth history of Africans. This textbook was used for seventh grade history and social studies class. It was important to understand that this textbook was not the sole source of information for
students. It was being used as an example of learned knowledge for African American seventh-grade male students in an Afrocentric school. This section was intended to explain what the students were reading at the Columbus Africentric Early College in order to provide an understanding of how the students continued to enhance an African-centered perspective of what they were learning. This added to the student’s foundation to build upon and expand an Afrocentric worldview.

The display that follows is entirely a summary of the facts in the selected chapters of the book as rendered by the authors. Jacobs et al. (2008) described the time of ancient Egyptians when pharaohs looked to the goddess Ma’at for guidance. Pharaohs had buildings and irrigation systems built, along with pyramids and sphinxes. Ancient Egypt had an estimated 31 great dynasties that emerged from around 3100 B.C until 332 B.C. see figure 10. One well-known ruler in Ancient Egypt was Menes. He was credited with uniting Upper and Lower Egypt, which led to the stabilization of the Egyptian society.

Figure 10. Three Great Dynasties
Source: History of Our World: The Early Ages
Jacobs et al. (2008) explained how King Tutankhamen became ruler of Egypt as a child and how years later, he would take over the reign when he became an adult. The authors provide another example of a well-known pharaoh named Thutmose III. By the time he became of age to serve as Pharaoh, he was well educated to take the throne. Thutmose III was most remembered for his skills in conquering his enemies, thus protecting Egypt from invasion.

Citizens assisted in the rising greatness of Ancient Egypt; even those who were considered lower-class contributed. The latter group consisted of those who planted and harvested crops; this was recognized in the meaning of Kwanzaa, which was explained in Chapter 2. This was the premise behind the celebration of first fruits of harvest. Women of Ancient Egypt were regarded as equal to men. Ancient Egyptians were smart, which scholars determined through their writing of hieroglyphs. Ancient Egyptians were very creative; they were able to fashion papyrus from plants. Medicine and astronomy transpired as ancient Egyptians used the stars to foretell the rise and fall of the Great Nile River (Jacobs et al., 2008).

The Nile River played a major part in the cultivation of land for agricultural purposes. Medicine was overseen by a priest. A few selected priests were in charge of preparing the pharaoh’s body for mummification. The priest became familiar with human body parts; therefore, when a person had an ailment, the priest was able to use plants as a natural remedy to cure the illness. Priests were also capable of performing surgical procedures. All this information was recorded and preserved on papyrus, which the Greeks and Romans later came to rely on for medical guidance (Jacobs et al., 2008).
Education and mathematics also emerged out of ancient Egyptian society. People came to Egypt from different parts of the world to obtain knowledge. Mathematics was invented as the people had to measure stones precisely to build pyramids and sphinxes (Jacobs et al., 2008). Students at the Columbus Africentric Early College are learning about the contributions Africans in Ancient Egypt made to society, which was then emulated in different parts of the world throughout history (see Appendix O). Teachers made conscious inferences to Ancient Egypt as the ancestral home of Africans and implication of the African American race. Therefore, African American students were learning that their African ancestors had a rich history and that it did not originate in the oppressive state of slavery in America (DuBois, 1935; Wilson, 1991; Woodson, 1998).

**Application of an African-Centered Perspective**

The African-centered perspective can be applied to events or issues when the student demonstrated an ability to connect them to Africans’ concerns, culture, and behaviors (Asante, 1998, 2003) and see the significance of Africans’ traditions in these events and/or issues which they were learning (Anselmi & Peters, 1995; Nobles, 1998).

One event African American seventh-grade students were learning about was the rise of ancient civilizations based on information from the textbook by Jacobs et al. (2008) *History of Our World: The Early Ages*. Students learned about the first ancient civilization in Egypt, followed by Ancient Greece, China, and Rome. Several events occurred in the development of these civilizations which the ancient Egyptian culture influenced. A few examples were chosen and discussed below in no specific order.
The first development in ancient society was the formation of fertilized land for farming. People living during ancient Egyptian times depended on the Nile River to provide soil deposits for cultivation. Citizens of Ancient Greece, China, and Rome lived near the river and farmed neighboring land. In Baba Jeffries’ male-gender class the students were given an assignment in which they had chosen to write a rap, rhyme, or poem about the importance of the Nile River and its geographic location. Once the assignment was completed and time allotted each student read their response allowed. The purpose of this assignment according to Baba Jeffries was for students to demonstrate how he would honor the Nile River. Without the knowledge of ancient Egyptians, African American seventh-grade students would have postulated that farming originated in Europe and/or the southern areas of the U.S. Instead, this type of knowledge guided students to understand that their ancestors in Ancient Egypt developed farming and pointed out the importance of the Nile River.

The second development of ancient civilization was the formation of leaders and the establishment of governments. Ancient Egyptians were ruled by pharaohs/kings and queens, some pharaohs/kings were of adolescent age (i.e. King Tutankhamen). Ancient Greece was ruled by kings and aristocrats, some of these leaders were also of adolescent age; Ancient China was ruled by Dynasties during this period some of their leaders were of adolescent age; the Romans during ancient civilization were ruled by emperors and Etrusean. According to Jacobs et al. (2008), ancient Egyptians were the first to develop governments, while Ancient Greeks developed a government of city-states which were ruled by Chieftains. Ancient Egyptian’s development of a government influenced other
civilizations over time. Students learned about the Ancient Egyptian Goddess Ma’at who stood for *Truth, Order,* and *Justice* which should always be *Balanced.* The Goddess Ma’at represented *Harmony* as a means to deter chaos in society. These are all part of the principles of Ma’at that the schools’ mission embraced. Therefore, students can make logical connections of their school’s principles to their origins which make it easier for them to realize their ancestral heritage.

During the interview session, participants were shown the picture in figure 11, and asked what it represented. **Steve** stated that it was “an Egyptian God”; **DaMar** viewed the picture as “an Egyptian lady”; while **Derrick** commented that “it represents Egyptian beliefs, life, and equality”; **Lorell** stated that it was “a Black spiritual image of the culture”; **Geno** concurred with Lorell claiming that the picture was “a spiritual type of thing”; **Benjamin** said the picture represented “a past tense of India”; the final response from **Darnell** was that the picture represented “an Egyptian Queen”. None of the participants recognized the image as the Ancient Egyptian Goddess Ma’at.
When the participants were informed that the picture represented the Goddess Ma’at, they were able to point out some of the principles of Ma’at that was learned. **Benjamin, Thomas,** and **Geno** said they saw the principle of *balance* because of the scales; **Steve** commented that “the picture represents chaos” but **Darnell** said “no, it is *harmony.*” The image of the Goddess Ma’at can be linked to the judicial system in the U.S. because outside of many courthouses is a stature of what is referred to as “Lady Justice”, holding a scale. During the interview session with Saunders who was involved in the establishment of this school, he addressed the Goddess Ma’at which led to the enquiring of students in order to understand whether or not each could comprehend her image. Saunders explained that:
The story with Ma’at is that it’s the Goddess Ma’at and the goddess is the African goddess of Ma’at; you will see her as the symbol of Justice. You will see her standing straight and strong eyes wide open with the scales on her shoulder. On one scale is a heart, on the other scale is a feather; you’re supposed to live your life with your heart. Your heart should be as light as a feather in terms of how you treat people, treat yourself, and treat everyone.

Well, you’ll see that symbol has come out of Africa to America to other places; you’ll see the lady symbolized as justice. She has a blindfold on and the balance scales are tilted; they’re not balanced. So, it’s like how your justice is blind; justice can’t be blind; justice sees all and is the guiding force. You have to have your eyes open to be able to see, so Ma’at principles say live your life in that way. To have balance, order, harmony, reciprocity, truth, honesty, that you have in your life and you live in that way. (personal communication, July 29, 2010)

The students were able to draw inferences and similarities as well as possible influences of the Goddess Ma’at from Ancient Egyptian times in today’s society. Although the participants did not recognize that this image was of the Ancient Egyptian Goddess Ma’at, what she stood for was significant as it related back to their ancestral heritage.

The third development of ancient civilization was a method for writing. People living in ancient civilization developed their own system of writing with ancient Egyptians leading the way, their form of writing was hieroglyphs, see figure 12; ancient Greeks used clay tablets for writing, see figure 13; ancient Chinese developed cuneiform which was recognized as the first structure for writing, see figure 14. The figures below are provided for examples of ancient Egyptians’, ancient Greeks’, and ancient Chinese’ formula of writing.

Figure 12. Hieroglyphs Writings
Source: Featurepics.com
Jacobs et al. (2008) further indicate that ancient Egyptians began a system of recording information of events to communicate or preserve knowledge for future generations in conjunction with oral tradition. The similarities in writings can be viewed in the carving of information inscribed, how the information was carved from left to right with a sharp object, and writing information on one line under the next. African American seventh-grade students being educated with this type information would view the contradictions and the notion of ancient Chinese having developed the first form of writing. The students can examine the commonalities of hieroglyph writings of symbols, which were developed by ancient Egyptians, against clay tablet and cuneiform writings.
In summary, from an African-centered perspective, other ancient societies have several commonalities with Ancient Egypt. Greece, China, and Rome all learned how to and depended on the rivers to fertilize the soil, enabling cultivation of the land. People were ruled by emperors, faced numerous wars, invasions by neighboring enemies, and civil unrest. Each society has statues or temples that represented the images of leaders, goddesses, or emperors. Ancient Greece and China were ruled under dynasties. Students can relate these events to Ancient Egypt and in this way feel a part of what they were learning. Based on observations conducted at the Columbus Africentric Early College, what Tennant, Kambon, Kelsey, and Saunders wanted implemented into the school’s curriculum actually provided African American students with the knowledge of their history. This was a brief look into what Asante (1991) argued for — African American students to see themselves as the subject of what they are learning.

*Surviving Hitler: A Boy in the Nazi Death Camp* by Andrea Warren, (2001) was another book read by students at the Columbus Africentric Early College. This book described the Holocaust from the perspective of a character named Jack (see Appendix P). He and his family had to leave the village of Gdynia because Hitler was planning an invasion of Poland. Jack, his mother, older sister, and younger brother stayed in another village in Poland with their paternal grandfather. Upon arriving, Jack faced discrimination from neighborhood children who constantly called him anti-Semitic names. Jack was about twelve years old when Hitler invaded Poland. The children were not allowed to attend school and forced into slave labor. The families were broken into two groups, one group that included adults were sent to the gas chambers while the other
group which were mostly children and a few adult men were sent to concentration camps. Jack was stripped of his identity over time and no longer in touch with his Jewish heritage, culture, or traditions. Before the invasion of Hitler in Poland, Jack had 80 family members, when Hitler’s reign was ended, he only had five.

The participants were asked how they viewed or understood the events that Jack had experienced. Their responses based on an African-centered perspective were:

**Thomas:** It’s like slavery of Blacks, like when the Blacks were slaves of Whites.

**DaMar:** It’s just like Blacks in slavery because they didn’t have much to eat, but they worked hard for everything and they fought to survive.

**Lorell:** I think *Surviving Hitler* is very interesting because the same thing that happened with them happened with our ancestors. The White people still like to talk about us, especially our past, because it was really bad.

**Geno:** The people were mean to the Jews and the Jews could not go anywhere.

**Derrick:** I compared it to slavery of Blacks. The Nazis took the grown-up Jewish kids and put them in separate camps and cut their hair off.

**Steve:** I think of slavery when I read the book because the Jews were treated like dogs and never ate. That’s how slaves were treated.

**Terrance:** When I read the book, I pictured that it was a Black person because the same thing that happened to Jack happened to us because we had to work for White folks, we had to do all the work.

These participants were able to connect what happened to Jack and his family with slavery in America. They also discussed how families were broken up and sold to other slave owners, forced into laboring for White people, and treated as less than human.

When Hitler’s reign ended, Jack and some of his family members did survive just like African slaves in America when slavery ended. Although the characters in this book endured maltreatment over a long period of time just like enslaved Africans in America, they eventually obtained their freedom.
Benjamin: No matter how you live, you can always end up in a bad situation. You’ve got to fight to get yourself out of that situation. But we are perseverance. You’ve got to struggle to get out of a situation.

Darnell: The message I got was, if you play the game by the rules, then you will always survive.

Although this part of African American student’s history was oppressive, learning about slavery did not make these participants feel inferior. As a matter of fact, each appreciated what his ancestor accomplished in order to survive the institution of slavery. Learning about how their ancestors overcame psychological domination was something which made these participants proud. This event did not embarrass them or make them feel inferior (Cross, 1971).

The participants were able to make some connections between the events that Jack had experienced and slavery in America. By analyzing this book, the participants noticed that Europeans were involved with the holocaust and slavery. It is also evident in their responses that Jews and enslaved Africans were brutally mistreated and yet were able to survive. Although these events were demeaning to the Jewish and African cultures, resiliency played a major role in their desire and ability to withstand and overcome this oppressiveness. The participants’ African-centered perspective enabled them to see such similarities and understand that no matter what obstacles people faced in life, there was a history of overcoming oppressive situations.

Chapter Summary

For this study, the Columbus Public School District’s personnel demonstrated support for the ideology of an Afrocentric school. To ensure that this type of education would produce well-rounded African American students who were grounded in their
culture, an ad hoc committee was formed. This committee included people from the field of education and the business sector. This was to ensure that different perspectives would bring vital viewpoints to the establishment of an Afrocentric school in Columbus.

After researching other Afrocentric schools, the Columbus Africentric School (this was the original name) opened for the 1996-97 school year. The mission of this school was to develop an educational community that provided an African-centered holistic perspective for students. The seven principles of Nguzo Saba and seven principles of Ma’at provided guidance in an African-centered perspective, which was infused in to the Columbus City School District’s curriculum. This was a goal of Tennant, Kambon, and Kelsey, to have a curriculum that would guide African American students into developing a positive sense of self, thus becoming well-rounded individuals.

This study focused on African American seventh-grade male students, to understand how they developed their self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity, which was grounded in an African-centered perspective. African American students embraced the ideology of Nubian Pride, as each participant expressed his desire of trying to act like young kings and pharaohs. This was demonstrated when they discussed respecting their elders, themselves, and following the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at.

Although the seventh-grade teachers, middle school principal, school’s lead principal, and council of elders/committee members had different educational backgrounds Tennant argued that:

The staff believed in the total concept, the staff now is basically all White and I’m totally against that I’m not against White teachers, my belief is if you’re going to infuse something into what you’re doing then the staff should look like the children I believe that, I totally believe it.
Baba Jeffries stated:

I’ve met some teachers who’ve taught at Afrocentric African Americans and White teachers who just did not agree with the whole concept of Afrocentrism and if you come here with that attitude you’re not going to open your mind to it some people have looked at it as that’s a religion or that’s this or I’ve heard Black I’ve heard Black people say what are they doing over there with that ole African mumbo jumbo stuff these are Black people saying this it shows to me that they are not aware, even if you don’t agree or you don’t know, to open your mind to listen. He said that the “concept definitely works”.

Baba Taylor supported this concept because “it teaches [students] a lot about their history and how that fits into the bigger picture in our nation and world.” Baba Stevens liked “what it does and how it changes kids.” Baba Morris believed that what teachers “are doing at this school is important.” At first, Baba Noll “didn’t know anything about the concept, was a little afraid to speak about it”, he said, “but I learned and am now able to speak about it to the kids.” Mama Fairbanks said she “loves the philosophy behind the concept.” Mama Cole “likes it because it is holistic.” Mama Hall thought the concept would “give students a strong background.”

Each staff member assisted African American seventh-grade male students while incorporating the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at with excelling academically, emotionally, and socially as they were trying to balance school, their identity, and the stages of adolescence. The Afrocentric perspective was grounded in African history as the reference point of African American students’ “Blackness” and not the oppressive history of slavery in America. It was important to note that the participants acknowledge the positive and negative issues associated with their history, which would assist them in becoming educationally balanced in their culture, traditions, and heritage.
In the seventh grade, students learned about ancient civilizations in which they could see the influence ancient Egyptians had on other ancient civilizations, (i.e. Rome, China, and Greece). Students were able to understand the plight of others — for example, Jack, the character in the book *Surviving Hitler*. The participants were able to connect the system of Nazi camps with the system of slavery of Africans in American.

An Afrocentric education, according to such Afrocentric scholars and supporters as Asante, Akbar, DuBois, Karenga, Mazama, Shujaa, and Woodson, argued that it was vital and assisted African American students to build a positive self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity. This study included nine African American seventh-grade male students who were 12 or 13 years of age at the time of this study, seven middle school teachers, two principals, three parents, and three council of elders/committee members who provided data that assisted in the understanding of an Afrocentric education based on an African-centered perspective that was guided by the seven principles of both Nguzo Saba and Ma’at. In this study it was demonstrated and confirmed how this type of education was essential and guided students with the development of an African-centered perspective that assisted with his becoming a well-rounded African American young male.
Chapter 5: African-Centered Perspective and Self-Concept

Introduction

This chapter details a discussion of the data in response to the first research question, which was: “How do the educational experiences from an African-centered perspective influence African American seventh-grade male students’ self-concept?” It yielded four major themes. These were: 1) the emergence of psychological empowerment, 2) Africa’s inspiration influencing psychological empowerment, 3) perception of Nguzo Saba’s influence, and 4) mirror image: seeing self and future aspirations. These themes would be discussed in sequence using the data, literature, and theoretical perspectives where applicable. The first research question was developed to clarify which set of principles influenced African American seventh-grade male students’ self-concept and how such principles enabled them to view images in their likeness. It is important not to confuse or intertwine self-concept and self-esteem as they are two separate entities.

Furthermore, the seven principles of Nguzo Saba were found to be most applicable in explicating how they guided African American seventh-grade male students’ in developing their self-concept. For purposes of reference, the principles and their meanings are restated here. They are: *Umoja* (Unity), *Kujichagulia* (Self-determination), *Ujima* (Collective works and Responsibility), *Ujamaa* (Cooperative economics), *Nia* (Purpose), *Kuumba* (Creativity), and *Imani* (Faith).

Self-concept, based in the African-centered perspective, enabled a person to relate to the African culture and to have a preference for this group (Akbar, 1996; Asante, 1991, 1998; Cross, 1991). The African American viewed him or herself as a part of the groups’

The history of African Americans did not begin with the history of slavery (Asante, 1991; Eyerman, 2001; Latif & Latif, 1994; Lee, 2005). According to Hilliard (1989), Asante (1992), Karenga (1995, 2003), and Binder (2000), an Afrocentric education in which the principles of Nguzo Saba were based does not focus on the history of West Africa, this type of education focused on the culture of Africa, beginning with Ancient Egypt and the Egyptian culture, which was the first civilization to emerge in the world.

Hilliard (1989) suggested that understanding the African culture was essential as it provided the African American culture a means of creating “unity, cohesiveness . . . and group mobility” (p. 204). The seven principles of Nguzo Saba as stated by Harvey (2001) were based in an Afrocentric approach that was “holistic and naturalistic [in] orientation to the world — that the value system and behavioral patterns of African descent has its roots” (p. 160).

The seven principles of Nguzo Saba, when taught from an African-centered perspective, apply to all African American children in this Africentric School. This research focused on African American seventh-grade male students. Harvey (2001) contended that the seven principles of Nguzo Saba, when applied to African American seventh-grade male students, was used to teach “spirituality, culture, family, education, economics, and community” values (p. 162). The objective was to help them “understand
themselves, others, and the world in which they live” (p. 162). At the time this study was conducted, the school had no explicit way of infusing these principles. No reason was given as to why, but based on observations it was evident that some teachers did not know how or would take the time to infuse the principles into their class’ lesson plan. This could be due to the fact that teachers were readily assigned to this school, removed, and placed in to other school when or if needed.

This type of system effected the mission statement of the Columbus Africentric Early College, because some teachers were not implementing the principles, therefore, students were not always learning about them. Mama Fairbanks and Baba Jeffries wanted more workshops for teachers, especially in the areas of Afrocentric and educational development. In the meantime, some teachers sought to infuse the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at based on their knowledge learned through self-education and/or workshops.

The Emergence of Psychological Empowerment

This theme explained the formation of psychological empowerment based on African American seventh-grade male students reciting the Pledge on a daily basis. The Pledge was analyzed by using the principles of Nguzo Saba and how these principles guided the students in viewing themselves.

The Pledge encouraged students to learn, think for themselves in a positive manner, and always excel in whatever they did. This was part of Kelsey’s definition of and Africentric perspective (see Appendix N). Knowledge was based on learning and constructing information one day at a time. What was learned yesterday guided students
in a process of building upon that knowledge. It was just like progressing through the
different grade levels in school. What was learned in the sixth grade was built upon in the
seventh grade and so forth. This was important because in the African American culture,
most people suffered from what Akbar (1996) and Bulhan (1985) called psychological
oppression, which was passed down from Africans enslaved in America.

Bulhan (1985) explained that over time, Africans’ past was basically erased from
their minds and their history was replaced with untruths about their culture and heritage.
In this way, there was nothing of cultural relevance to pass down to future generations to
build upon, appreciate, and live by. Africans in America and their descendants were
mentally forced into abandoning collectivism, based on a Eurocentric philosophy. They
were reared in the ideology of individualism, which went against their cultural norms
(Bulhan, 1985).

The Columbus Afrocentric School provided a way for African American students
to develop an Afrocentric philosophy. The school offered a curriculum to educate African
American students about their history, culture, and heritage enabling psychological
empowerment. This curriculum guided students into becoming well-rounded, thus
developing a strong sense of self. Baba Taylor said, “It is a way of building our way up
toward success.” What was taught had to be practiced on a daily basis.

Every day around 7:20 a.m. during the time of this study, the daily ritual of
middle school students began and it lasted about 10 minutes. This was called the Morning
Ceremony and all middle school students were to participate. Blumenkrantz and Hong
(2008), and Coon (2010) explained that rituals, when practiced on a daily basis and
supported by the school, enabled a person to become mentally strong as he or she developed into a responsible person. This observer perceived the event to be a community gathering that prepared young people to get into the mindset of having a productive day. The students began the day by singing what was known as the Black National Anthem: “Lift Every Voice and Sing”. Baba Taylor explained that the words of this song “are the tools to help students get through the day.” During the focus group interviews, Benjamin explained that they “did not sing this song at my other school”; Geno added “at my other school they did not talk much about Black culture or African traditions”, Derrick concurred.

As the morning ceremony continued, it was followed by another song, “Where Else Can I Go?” which is followed by reciting the school’s “Pledge”. The words of the Pledge were associated with a form of psychological empowerment because students were reciting how to be a better person as they pursued their dreams. Words in the Pledge demonstrated some of the characteristics of the Nguzo Saba principles, which are discussed in this chapter. The song Where Else Can I Go? was associated with the principles of Ma’at which will be addressed as part of the self-esteem discussion in Chapter 6.

During observations from the back of the auditorium, both male and female students were reciting the Pledge, see figure15; it was noticed that the male voices were louder and more powerful than the female voices, they appeared more enthusiastic.
Today I pledge to be
The best possible me.
No matter how good I am,
I know that I can become better.

Today I pledge to build
On the work of yesterday.
Which will lead me
Into the rewards of tomorrow.

Today I pledge to feed,
My mind: knowledge
My body: strength, and
My spirit, faith.

Today I pledge to reach
New goals, new challenges, and
New horizons.

Today I pledge to listen,
To the beat of my drummer.
Who leads me onward
In search of my dreams.
Today I pledge to believe in me!

Figure 15. The Pledge

Middle school students in the school were pledging to become better young men and women in order to enhance the current day. Several versus and the students’ behavior was analyzed and the literature applied for clarification.
The first four lines of the pledge were “Today I pledge to be the best possible me. No matter how good I am, I know that I can become better.” Reciting this encouraged the student to practice the principle Kujichagulia (Self-determination) to establish who you are, determine what it would take to make you a better person, and decide for yourself how you would reach those goals. The students learned or were learning to determine for themselves who they were and how they would accomplish goals which would make them better.

The words of the “Pledge” implied Umoja, which means Unity; “Today I pledge to build on the work of yesterday. Which will lead me into the rewards of tomorrow.” Umoja is working together as a group in the community. Although Umoja represented Unity and the Pledge cited individualism, each person individually committing to work together as a unit, builds up the community. The Afrocentric worldview is based in communal activities (Asante, 1998; Mazama, 2001). Benjamin stated, “If they [our ancestors] didn’t fight for freedom, then people would still be picking cotton.” That the works of yesterday were to be built upon can be interpreted as the continuation of the fight for freedom. According to Harvey (2001), Umoja provided an adolescent with a “concept for developing his spiritual self. The principle of unity provides the youth with a sense of togetherness and collective action among family, community, nation, and one’s ethnic group” (p. 162).

According to Asante (2006), a careful analysis of social history enabled psychological liberation, and this prevented the formation of notions contingent on White society for liberation. Knowledge of African Americans’ fight for freedom in America
was traced back to gaining a connection to the African cultural history as Ancient Egypt’s pharaohs fought to keep from being invaded. “Every immigrant who came to America from another country brings (sic) along a language, a style of dress, family traditions, and many memories of home. An intact culture and identity [provided] the immigrant’s family a foundation to build upon” (Latif & Latif, 1994, p. 155).

The Pledge was viewed as a rite of passage for African American adolescent males as it shaped the “character and builds trust within the group of young males endeavoring to become men; [the Pledge] also includes committing principles . . . to memory, reciting them, and ultimately living them” (Fenwick, 1995, p. 18); rituals were a means of “revitalizing shared sentiments and beliefs” (Hermanowicz & Morgan, 1999, p. 199). Students started the day by pledging their desire to work as a community; this created a community environment in the classroom, which was characterized by “inquiry, discourse, personal involvement, and novelty” (Gay, 2000, p. 186). The “principles of Nguzo Saba maintained a form of community base,” said Baba Stevens, a science teacher, and students tried to live by these principles. The demonstration of the principle *Umoja* (unity) in an all-male math class, as African American seventh-grade male students assisted one another in figuring out some of the math problems assigned the previous day for homework. Those who correctly solved a particular math problem appeared eager to sit and walk another male student through the steps in arriving at the correct answer. This action demonstrated how the students maintained *Ujima* (collective work/responsibility) as they worked together in the classroom unit.
All seven principles revolved around the self and community. This laid the foundation for what Solomon (1976) considered a form of empowerment because students were beginning to build mechanisms which would assist them in warding off negative valuations that were placed upon them in society.

Another principle implicit in the morning’s ritual was *Imani*, having faith in self and what you do. Through reciting, “*Today I pledge to reach new goals, new challenges, and new horizons*” on a daily basis, students were taught to develop faith in their abilities and in their pursuits. Baba Taylor explained that students “really embrace *Imani* which is faith . . . we talk about having faith in yourself.” When a person believed in self, it led to high-achieving performances, also in an ability to accomplish set goals (Myers, Willes, & Villalba, 2011; Woodman, Akehurst, Hardy, & Beattie, 2010). During the time of observation in the field for this research, it was observed that African American seventh-grade male students were interacting with their teachers. On one occasion, as the students were going over the day’s lesson, Baba Noll, a math teacher, had given an incorrect answer. An African American seventh-grade male student said, “Baba Noll, you put the decimal in the wrong spot.” Harvey (2001) explained that *Imani* had “the potential to provide the adolescent with a sense of group pride, faith provides adolescents with a means for believing in the African American individual” (p. 162). Although this student worked the decimal problem out himself, he displayed the principle *Imani* (faith) in his ability to solve the problem; he also appeared to have faith in himself to discuss with Baba Noll that when solving math problems, he, too, could make a mistake. He challenged Baba Noll’s equation in what appeared to be a respectful manner. Baba Noll
acknowledged the error, thanked the student, and went over the steps to solve the problem again and to offer a complete explanation of the steps necessary to arrive at the correct answer.

The Pledge can instill a positive sense of self for African American students. Bamberg (2011) claimed that “the students feel a sense of uniqueness and a sense of direction, as they “pledge to feed, my mind: knowledge, my body: strength, and my spirit, faith.” The participants were building upon and seeking the true history of their culture because every single subject taught in the typical American school system reflected the philosophy of White supremacy (Latif & Latif, 1994).

Tina Long, a parent, whose son was in his 20s at the time of this study, said she believed that these morning rituals led her son to develop a strong concept of self. She reported that he was proud to be an African American male and this can be seen in his demeanor. Long indicated that her son attended the Africentric School from the first to the fifth grades. Because there was no middle school in place at that time, she enrolled him in a middle school elsewhere. Although he was away from the Africentric environment for grades 6-12, Long stated that her son could still recite the Pledge, and he did it with a conviction that indicated it was still meaningful to him: “Today I pledge to listen, to the beat of my drummer. Who leads me onward in search of my dreams. Today I pledge to believe in me.” Long’s son did not have the support of “the village concept” at his new school, nor did he have the continuation of the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at being infused into the school’s curriculum. However, he had, in part, the foundation of the Pledge, which continued to encourage him in the belief that he can
reach his dreams. Her son attended college right after high school, earning an associate degree. Long explained that “people view him as arrogant, which is mistaken for confident” (personal communication, February 7, 2011). The Pledge helped to teach students that they needed to make a commitment to themselves by seeking knowledge that would enhance their lives and make them better people. One way of enhancing their lives was by seeking knowledge about their culture.

African American children had been educated away from their culture, history, and heritage; they have been, basically, mis-educated (Woodson, 1998). This was a way of leading African American students into admiring and mimicking Whites in American society, a means of indoctrinating African American children into the White culture, where they begin to form a Eurocentric worldview (Latif & Latif, 1994). Geno and Derrick explained that they were not receiving an education based on their culture at their former school. According to Saunders, students in the Columbus City Schools were not “receiving a true history about themselves” (personal communication, July 29, 2010). The Columbus Africentric Early College can be perceived as an avenue for reversing this injustice through teaching African American students, including seventh-grade male students in this study, about their history from an African-centered perspective. This was accomplished by the infusion of African and African American history into the curriculum and providing books (i.e. The Pact and History of Our World) in which the students could see themselves.

Akbar (1996) insisted that “slavery should be viewed as a starting point for understanding the African American psyche and not as an end point” (p. 3), when
teaching African American students about their cultural history. Learning from an African-centered perspective can eliminate White supremacist ideologies and support the African American in becoming psychologically liberated (Asante, 2003). White racial supremacy can be viewed as a perceived “right to establish and maintain a hierarchy over [B]lacks by force of arms or customs or laws or habits” (Asante, 2006, p. 152). As African Americans become psychologically liberated, they begin to view the world from a different perspective (Latif & Latif, 1994), an African-centered perspective (Asante, 2003). When African American seventh-grade male students experienced a worldview in which Europe was not the centerpiece, they were learning about the works and contributions of their ancestors, dating back to Ancient Egypt (Asante, 1991, 2003; Nobles, 1998), ancestors like Imhotep, who was the father of medicine (Latif & Latif, 1994). Asante (2003) and Latif and Latif (1994) argued that Imhotep was credited with being the first architect in Africa; he was, however, portrayed in white movies as a demon. But from an African-centered perspective, students learned the absolute “Truth” about Imhotep and his contributions to the world of medicine and architecture. Students learned that the first architect did not originate out of Europe nor did medicine, but that they developed out of Africa. Students learned this information from their textbooks.
The seven principles of Nguzo Saba are linked to the Kwanzaa celebration. During this festival, which begins on December 26 and lasts until January 1, each principle of Nguzo
Saba is recognized in the order and celebrated, see figure 16. It is a cultural celebration grounded in the first fruits of harvest. But at the Columbus Africentric Early College, these seven principles were used on a daily basis inside and outside of the classroom as a mechanism for guiding students.

Although the purpose of this section was to analyze the theme of psychological empowerment among African American seventh-grade male students, the daily ritual of reciting the Pledge was perceived as a way of guiding young men away from the Eurocentric ideology of individualism and toward the African conception of collectivism (Asante, 1988, 2003; Cook & Koni, 1977; Schiele, 1990). African American seventh-grade male students were engaging in a “collective experience for self-determination and self-definition” (Asante, 2006, p. 148), as they were being guided by the principles of Nguzo Saba as a means of psychological liberation. There is a “history of assaulting our dignity because we are Africans or the descendants of Africans” (Asante, 2006, p. 149).

It must be understood from an African-centered perspective that “Africa is at the center of our existential reality” (Asante, 2006, p. 151). European-centeredness, which is taught in the public schooling system (Woodson, 1998) is an attack on the African American’s psyche and prevented psychological liberation. This is a fight for empowerment because “never in human history has freedom ever been given to an oppressed people without a struggle, and the most intense struggle is always the struggle for the minds of the oppressed” (Asante, 2006, p. 153). The participant learning from an African-centered perspective:

Represents a concept which categorized a “quality of thought and practice” which is rooted in the cultural image and interest of people of African ancestry
and which represents and reflects the life experiences, history and traditions of people of African ancestry as the center of analysis. (Nobles, 1998, p. 190)

Based on being guided and empowered by the principles of Nguzo Saba, the participants were familiar with the African culture as they learned about Ancient Egypt and the rise and fall of great civilizations in Africa through the textbook in their history class (Asante, 1991; Parham, White, & Ajamu, 1999).

Cross’ (1971) theory explained the necessity of living a lifestyle that complemented their “Blackness” in order to maintain being psychologically liberated. When African Americans are psychologically liberated, they will not easily believe in being inferior to Whites’ ideological mental frames. Cross (1971) emphasized that the celebration of Black power can be effective only when a person had successfully “passed through a series of well-defined stages, because the Black experience is a process” (p. 15), that led to psychological empowerment. Recitation of the Pledge provided a psychological means of not depending on White society to liberate African Americans. As Delgado and Stefancic (2001) explained, storytelling narratives guided the perception of African American seventh-grade male students to develop their own realities of who they were and what they could accomplish.

Psychological empowerment is a means by which the participants developed resistance to mental attacks against their psyches, based on having a foundation built on an alternative paradigm that sought to provide authenticity to the African American community. The participants understood that they have a rich and vibrant history that could dismantle the falsehood of European superiority, “the first causality of [psychological warfare] must be the truth” (Morrow, 2003, p. 53). The curriculum in the
educational system in the United States does not provide the fundamental information necessary to guide African American students away from the psychological damages wrought by the history of slavery. The “Truth” of African American’s history was beneficial to African American seventh-grade male students (Morrow, 2003).

In summary, reciting the Pledge led to a form of psychological liberation. Students had learned about the oppressive state of slavery which their ancestors were victims of for centuries. They also had learned about the great contributions their ancestors in ancient Egypt made to society. Students had developed a positive self-concept of who they are, based on the knowledge of their ancestors and their ability to determine for themselves what tomorrow could bring if they worked individually as well as together to build upon their dreams.

The principle of Kujichagulia (self-determination) embedded in the Pledge provided African American seventh-grade male students with the knowledge of defining oneself in relation to the African American culture and history, which they learned in their classes. Reciting the Pledge and understanding its meaning instilled the ability of becoming a better person. The Pledge led them into striving to become mentally strong and confident. These words were ingrained in their psyche as they recited it from memory and these words provided them with the desire to set and achieve goals.

**Africa’s Inspiration Influencing Psychological Empowerment**

This theme addressed how learning about the history of Africa from an African-centered perspective, influenced how African American seventh-grade male students
viewed the history of Africa, particularly Ancient Egypt. Students discussed how they viewed themselves in the context of being African American males.

Akbar (1996) asserted that African American students “should seek to enlighten [their] path today by better understanding where and how the lights were turned out yesterday” (p. 3). According to Latif and Latif (1994) and Woodson (1998), African Americans’ “lights” were turned out when they were systematically led to believe that their African ancestors had no viable history; that they should forget about any connection to the African continent; that people from the continent were savages, a characteristic of which African descendants should be shameful. All of these “beliefs” crushed their intellectual desire to learn about their African heritage.

In the literature reviewed, Woodson (1998) argued that African Americans were being mis-educated away from their history and were being taught from a Eurocentric perspective (Asante, 1991). Wilson (1991) contended that the genius of African American children was not being awakened. They are left to feel inferior in the schooling system based on a hegemonic curriculum which does not address their culture, as the system was established to address the culture of White Anglo Saxon Protestant children (Gillborn, 2005). African American seventh-grade male students must be directed to strong and resilient images in which they can see themselves to assist in developing self-respect and a positive self-concept because the typical schooling system is antagonistic toward African American male students (Akbar, 1996; Latif & Latif, 1994).

African American seventh-grade male students must be directed toward strong and resilient images in which they can see themselves. This would assist them in
developing self-respect and a positive self-concept because the typical schooling system is antagonistic toward African American male students (Akbar, 1996; Latif & Latif, 1994). They were often exposed to an educational system which did not assist them in developing a sense of self and what they were actually capable of achieving. “The Africentric School they are attending does extremely well because students were not excelling in other public schools” (Saunders, personal communication, July 29, 2010).

The education system was a means of liberating human intelligence (Latif & Latif, 1994) as this study’s participants, Steve, Benjamin, and Geno referred to Africans as “very smart and powerful”. They traced their perception of Africa back to Ancient Egypt because it “is more of our culture and the United States is not about our culture”, said Benjamin. Similarities in culture can be viewed as, but are not limited to, shared “meanings, values, symbols, practices, rituals, and shared beliefs that characterize a particular community” (Bahl, 2000, p. 6). According to Mama Fairbanks, she had the students read the novel *A Treasure Within: Stories of Remembrance & Rediscovery* by Chike Akua, (2002). She explained that in this book, students learned about modern day issues and developed the ability to relate them back to Ancient Egypt. For example, in this book the Washington Monument is based on the architectural design of ancient African obelisks. In this way, African American students develop the ability to make connections with their African history.

Akua (2002) described Africa as the Motherland and stated that an estimated 80,000 people from all over the world came to study at the Temple of Ipet Isut, which he described as being the first university built by Ancient Egyptians. African American
students were taught about Queen Hatshepsut, who was a pharaoh, and how during her reign there it was peace throughout the land in Egypt. This was important as Akbar (1996), Asante (1991), and Woodson (1998) explained that it gives the participants a point of reference in which they can see their history in a positive manner, thus guiding them away from the Eurocentric worldview that Africans were unintelligent. Akua’s book laid a foundation for psychological empowerment.

Intelligence was “widely regarded to be a product of heredity, environment, and education. Europeans [were] able to convince Africans born in America that their foreparents were dumb and therefore they too, were dumb” (Latif & Latif, 1994, p. 184). The participants in this study did not believe in this perspective because they had been learning about the continent of Africa and were able to relate the history of African Americans to Ancient Egyptians. This was discussed when the question, “What does the history of Africa have to do with you as an African American male?” was posed. The participant’s responses were:

**Benjamin:** Africa is like where we come from and our origin.

**Steve:** Africa is the basis of our heritage and it shows how we grew.

**Derrick:** Africans are the ones who took the pains for us to be free.

**Terrance:** Most of our ancestors are from Africa.

**Geno:** That is where we came from and African American history.

**DaMar:** We can have pride in ourselves. They have all types of declarations and different types of languages and we have those signs on our doors.

All participants in the focus groups appeared to believe strongly that the history of Africa influenced their beliefs about the African continent. They understood that Africa was the birth place of their ancestors and this made them proud. The acceptance and appreciation
of their culture had laid a foundation for the participants to develop pride in their “Blackness”. This was grounded in the knowledge of their history and ancestors (Cross, 1971). DaMar pointed out that Africa had numerous languages and the classrooms at the Columbus Africentric Early College had a flag outside each door that represents the theme of the room, see figure 17.

![Figure 17. The Country of Cameroon Picture](source: The Columbus Africentric Early College Hallway)

The principle *Kujichagulia* (self-determination) was demonstrated in their responses, which was the ability to define, create, and speak for yourself. Because there were numerous negative stereotypes about Africans and African Americans, it was important to obtain an understanding of how the participants felt about being descendants of Africans. Therefore, when the question, “What do you want people to know about you as an African American male?” was raised, each provided similar responses:

**Steve:** I’m very smart.

**Geno:** I’m going to make sure I be something in life, something good.

**Benjamin:** I’m smart because people think all Black people just want to play sports.
**DaMar:** I’m smart and I’m good at things.

**Lorell:** I’m no different than anyone else, I’m a smart person.

**Thomas:** I’m a smart person that knows how to play sports.

The participants, who were 12 and 13 years of age at the time of this study, defined themselves based on what they had learned from an African-centered perspective. Mama Grace felt that being educated in this type of school was good and that students were learning about Africans and African Americans, she added “I think it’s good, it shows the people of color in great positions with power, and they were smart.” The belief of African Americans being unintelligent did not factor into these participants’ comments as an identity of self. This coincided with the meaning embedded in *Kujichagulia.*

As the participants had learned that they could trace their history of African Americans to the continent of Africa, Steve implied that “In Egypt, there were slaves, but not like slavery in the United States.” Characteristics of slavery in Ancient Egypt consisted of prisoners captured in wars and foreigners. Slaves were also considered to be servants to their owners and held many duties (Falola, 2000; Latif & Latif, 1994; Meskell, 2005). Slaves were brought into childless homes to produce children for the couple. There were state slaves who could receive a small payment for their services. Any misuse of a state slave was punishable by legal prosecution (Meskell, 2005). Finally, a child born to a slave was the responsibility of the slave owner and was required to be educated, and could be freed from his status (Ikram, 2010). In general, slaves in Africa were treated with some dignity, allowed to marry, and could work off their debt (Falola, 2000); some slaves were also “integrated into their owner’s families and thus into the community” (Falola, 2000, p. 179); some slaves were prisoners of war, but they had
rights, in which they could inherit from their master and on most occasions be set free (Jacobs et al., 2008). African American history does not originate from slavery in America (Akbar, 1996). This type of information was what the council of elders/committee members (i.e. Tennant, Kambon, and Kelsey) wanted to rectify by developing a curriculum infused with Africans’ and African Americans’ history.

On the other hand, a brief overview of slavery in America, pertaining to identity, self-concept, and inferiority complex, entailed Africans being captured and treated as domestic property; they had no rights, could not marry or become educated, and were treated like barbarians (www.history.com/topics/slavery). Slavery in the Americas was based on the domination of the White society and violence; Africans were ripped away from their cultures, the development of personality, and social bonding (Bulhan, 1985). Within the system of slavery in America, Africans were intentionally stripped of their culture and identity. Over time their descendants were taught to be ashamed of them, especially when new slaves were brought to America looking dirty, ignorant, and inferior (Latif & Latif, 1994).

These students may be considered young and immature; however, Baba Taylor insisted on the empowerment of African American seventh-grade male students: “I tell them don’t wait until you are 18, 19, or 20. You got power at your age right now — their knowledge is power.” The principle Kujichagulia provided the psychological tools for students to recognize and connect with the history of Africa. This principle also guided African American students into determining for themselves who they were, how they should act, and what they can become in life.
As the participants continued responding to the interview questions, they made a connection between the struggles in African countries with the struggles of African Americans in the United States:

**Benjamin:** We’ve got privileges to come to school and get our education.

**Derrick:** We have the right to do whatever we want to.

**Lorell:** Because of Africa, we can have pride in ourselves.

The participants understood that their ancestors made sacrifices in which they may now take advantage of by becoming active in their educational process. The participants recognized that they have more rights and privileges than their ancestors had based on them having to fight for freedom and equality during a time of serious oppressive situations. According to Meskell (2005), self-concept, was influenced and empowered by how prosperous and rich ancient Egyptian society was considered. The rise of diplomacy emerged out of Ancient Egypt when pharaohs decided not to use military force against their enemies but to instead campaign for marriage with the daughter of their perceived foe (Brewer & Teeter, 1999).

The history of Ancient Egypt can be perceived as a guiding force in developing a positive self-concept for these African American seventh-grade male students. The participants can see themselves in young pharaohs who once ruled the kingdom (Jacobs et al, 2008). Their culture gave birth to historic landmarks, unseen in other part of the world (i.e. pyramids, sphinx) (Woodfork, 2000). African people cultivated the land using the Nile, and Africa is considered the birthplace of civilization (Brewer & Teeter, 1999; Ikram, 2010; Meskell, 2005).
After being introduced to the history of Africa, students reported being influenced by Africa’s populace and discussing African Americans roots — traditions based on the African culture and African and African American history. Also, a few of the participants did acknowledge that some countries in Africa,

**Benjamin:** Need a little work.

**Steve:** People need to go back and help.

**Lorell:** People need to go back and help with starvation and purification of water.

Here the participants exhibited *Ujima* (Collective Works/ Responsibility), and *Ujamaa*, (Cooperative Economics). *Ujima* can be viewed as African Americans working together to restore Africa after colonization, the slave trade, and the redistribution of their land. Africa’s development was interrupted by these issues and others (Ake, 1996; Rodney, 1972; Wafula, 2008). *Ujamaa* can be seen in African Americans investing in African countries to assist in building up particular areas that are still struggling economically because of political corruption and Westernized ideology of capitalism (Bahl, 2000; Ongoro, 2008; Rodney, 1972).

The participants were able to make a connection between Africa, themselves, and the guiding principles of Nguzo Saba. They had learned about the greatness that emerged out of Ancient Egypt and how such greatness influenced other parts of the world, with information based on their textbooks. The principles of Nguzo Saba guided them into believing in their abilities to make a difference in the world as African American males when they indicated that they were “smart”.

These participants expressed positive attributes toward the continent, particularly the history of Ancient Egypt. They “build upon the work of [their] ancestors who gave
signs toward [their] humanizing functions” (Asante, 2003, p. 11). The participants recognized the sacrifices and contributions of their ancestors, whether it was through the history of slavery in America, the rise and fall of kingdoms in pre-colonial Africa, or the fights for equality in the United States. This recognition empowered them to foster and appreciate the opportunities available to them today. They also recognized that they were intelligent, no matter how White Americans perceived them. The principles of Nguzo Saba guided them into determining for themselves who they are and what they can be in life if they put in the hard work. What they needed above all was to be grounded in their history.

In summary, there was nothing shameful about learning that Africans were enslaved in America, because the participants had a history that originated from the continent of Africa. A history of intelligent Africans living in a land where people had come long distances to become educated as discussed in Akua (2002). Having learned that their African ancestors were intelligent and not ignorant as Gall, Spurzheim and Binet implied (Guthrie, 2004).

Guthrie (2004) uncovered flaws in the intelligence tests of African Americans disproving that they were unintelligent. This type of information about their ancestors empowered African American students into appreciating their histories in both America and Africa. Exposure to this information and their self-perception of being intelligent; it fostered pride in their ancestral history.

Learning about the history of Ancient Egypt did not shatter the participants’ feelings about themselves, nor did this information make them wish they were not of the
African American culture, which occasionally occurred in the encounter stage of Cross’ (1971) racial identity theory. The participants developed an understanding of the events that had occurred in their history. This, in turn, led to more curiosity about the continent of Africa. Applying Cross’ (1971) racial identity theory to the characteristics of the participants would place them at the encounter stage because they had encountered information that pertained to their “Blackness.” This knowledge allowed them to connect to their racial identity as descendants of Africans. Also, Cross’ (1971) internalized stage applies here because the participants had expressed the importance of African Americans’ going back to countries in Africa. They had recognized that some countries were in need of water development and needed help in becoming economically stable. The participants had demonstrated that they were a part of the African American culture (self-concept) and had accepted the negative and positive of the African and African American history.

**Perception of Nguzo Saba’s Influence**

This theme explained which Nguzo Saba principle African American seventh-grade male students tried to practice often, followed by information provided by their teachers and their perception of how the principles influenced the students.

The seven principles of Nguzo Saba are community-oriented, which provided the participants with the tools of working collectively, and the ability to determine in the process how their image would be viewed in American society. The seven principles of Nguzo Saba had enabled African American seventh-grade male students to rescue the
African history from the years of negativity and to re-establish their lives within a strong African American community (Karenga, 1977).

Steve stated that the principles of Nguzo Saba “don’t influence my life” and that “Egypt doesn’t influence what I think about America today.” Although Steve had been attending this school since kindergarten he still confused which principles were for Nguzo Saba and Ma’at. However, he could name all the principles and describe how they could be applied to his daily activities. Steve also later revealed during the interview session that he was proud about the history he had learned pertaining to Africans and African Americans. Although his views were different from the other participants in the focus group, his “voice” must be heard and added to this study. According to Wick (2010), Steve’s response may be considered negative, especially in relation to the other participants. Steve’s response was different from those of the other participants as they expressed how the principles of Nguzo Saba influenced them.

In reply to the question, “Which principle of Nguzo Saba do you practice most?” Steve chose the principle Kujichagulia, stating that he “earned better grades than other students in my classes and I have a better grade point average.” As Steve discussed his G.P.A during the interview session, he sounded very confident in excelling through school and not allowing the negative stereotypical sayings about African American males dropping out of school or being unintelligent affect his thinking. Geno and Lorell described themselves as being creative and identified with the principle Kuumba. Thomas, DaMar, Terrance, Darnell, Benjamin, and Derrick responded that the principles of Nguzo Saba influenced them but did not have a particular principle that was
practiced most. After observing African American seventh-grade male students over several months, Steve had demonstrated most of the principles of Nguzo Saba, based on which class he was in.

In Baba Phillips’ math class, Steve was one of the first students to help one of his classmates who appeared to be struggling with solving a math problem, *Ujima* (collective work/responsibility). In Mama Mehl’s science class, Steve was very talkative with his peers on a few different occasions; he was given lunchtime detention. Based on my observations Steve was not practicing *Harmony* or *Order* because he was being disruptive. He acknowledged during the interview session that he was disruptive but as long as it did not affect his G.P.A it was not a problem. As Steve reflected on this information he stated that “other students probably wished he would be quiet so they could listen to the teacher, learn, and do their work.” In Mama Fairbanks’ language arts/reading class, Steve did not participate in any side conversations with his classmates and actively participated in classroom discussions by raising his hand to speak instead of the verbal outbursts that occurred often in Baba Phillips’ and Mama Mehl’s classes. As a matter of fact, most of the African American seventh-grade male students displayed similar behaviors, depending on the teacher. In some classes, African American seventh-grade male students paid close attention to the day’s lesson and they eagerly participated. During days of observation, they would take down notes, answer questions that were asked by the teacher, and asked whether they could help his classmate when a student was having difficulty solving classroom problems.
In the Columbus Africentric Early College, students were taught these principles regularly and shown how to apply them to everyday situations or issues. In the hallways of the school were posters listing all seven principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at with examples of how to implement them on a daily basis. Steve addressed the posters in the hallways of the school as he explained “I feel great about the posters I see on the walls about Nguzo Saba and Ma’at because it’s good to study for when you get to college, if you didn’t know about your history you can find out more.” But as the students progressed through middle school, the verbal repetition of hearing these principles and their personal applications lessened. Baba Stevens the science teacher, acknowledged that the influence of the Nguzo Saba principles on African American seventh-grade male students was “a little tougher because Nguzo Saba is more community-based.” He commented, “How can I implement collective-work and responsibility or economic development, all those types of things, inside a science class?” Baba Stevens later admitted that the incorporation of these principles was possible but that it would be a great deal of difficult work. He said, by “adding having purpose, collective work and responsibility . . . cooperative economics into my class lessons could work, but it would be difficult.” It is understandable that Baba Stevens’ felt implementing some of the principles would be difficult work but it was important to provide an Africentric perspective which was a goal of this school.

Mama Cole, another science teacher stated, “I’m not very familiar with the Nguzo Saba principles.” As observations occurred in Mama Cole’s class it was apparent that she did not know most of the principles as she did not incorporate them into the class’ lesson
or as a reminder of how to act in class. It appeared as though this was an unfortunate situation because Baba Jeffries, a social studies teacher, believed “most of our seventh-grade males don’t know the principles of [Nguzo Saba].” He said, “I think part of that is — no, all of that is — our [teachers’] fault. I know we talk about the principles at the beginning of the school year.” Baba Jeffries further stated, “I can infuse them in my lessons every day, I need to do that more . . . in my social studies class.” In order for teachers to reach the goals laid out in the school’s mission statement and definition of an Africentric perspective (see Appendix N) they need to work more on infusing these principles into their classrooms.

Math teacher Baba Noll’s response to the influence of Nguzo Saba principles on African American seventh-grade male students was, “We teach it [Nguzo Saba principles], but I just don’t see them [African American seventh-grade male students] using the principles in what they do.” Based on observations and interviews with teachers it was difficult for some students to believe in these principles or be influenced by them when some teachers did not know how to or implement them into their classrooms.

Mama Hall the English teacher, suggested that the principles of Nguzo Saba did influence African American seventh-grade male students. She asserted, “It gives them a sense of their culture, a sense of entitlement, a love for their heritage.” According to Harvey (2001), the principles of Nguzo Saba particularly *Umoja*, “provides the youths with a sense of togetherness . . . *Imani* provide the adolescent with a sense of self and group pride” (p. 162). A sense of their culture could be seen in the participants’ responses as appreciating African and African American history and the contributions their
ancestors had made to society. The history enabled African American seventh-grade males to feel entitled to education and to the prospect of developing to become whatever they desired in life. African American seventh-grade male students had a “sense that they deserve what they want” (Lippmann, Bulanda, & Wagenaar, 2009, p. 197). The love for their culture could be seen in their appreciation for the resiliency that Africans and African Americans have displayed throughout history; they were faced with horrific issues and yet prevailed (Asante, 1991; Bulhan, 1985; Feagin, 2001). Mama Hall was one of a few teachers who knew the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at and implemented them into her classroom. Based on her comment that she has seen African American seventh-grade male students behave in a manner where he was proud of himself and his African American culture. Apparently, having an understanding in these principles aided in some teacher’s ability to utilize them in their classroom.

Mama Fairbanks the language/reading teacher said that she had students “rewrite the principles in kid’s language, so that they could understand Nguzo Saba a little better.” Mama Fairbanks provided two examples of how the Nguzo Saba principles influenced African American seventh-grade male students, noting, “If we are reading an article or autobiography, apply those principles to that individual.” She commented, “If you apply the principles so students understand, they actually have to live and walk it until it’s in their head, then after a while, it will be automatically applied to what students are doing.”

Baba Jeffries a social studies teacher, cleared up the contradictions of whether or not the Nguzo Saba principles influenced African American seventh-grade male students, he acknowledged that teachers “need to really hammer down on those principles.” Baba
Jeffries argued that “they are some powerful principles” if the principles were constantly and consistently implemented. What was observed in the classroom setting supported what teachers said about the influence of the Nguzo Saba principles and African American seventh-grade male students. Following is an explanation of what was witnessed, and in which teacher’s classroom, when various events occurred.

In Baba Stevens’ all-male stream science class, African American seventh-grade students demonstrated respect for one another. During this observation when two students were trying to talk at the same time, one student said to the other, “Oh, you can go ahead with your question.” The classroom had a relaxed atmosphere, but it was intensely based on African American students’ eagerness to ask questions and to try to get a clear understanding of the day’s lesson, Baba Stevens stated that “they want that competition.” When Baba Stevens asked for participants to read a section from the textbook, several students raised their hands. The principle of *Ujima* was playing out in this situation as students appeared to be eager to work together in reading the lesson.

When a number of students began to talk aloud and out of turn, Baba Stevens said, “Hold up,” in what appeared to be a strong forceful tone, and all of them became quiet. On this day, a student sat in class with his head down. Baba Stevens gave him a couple of warnings to sit up and pay attention, and told him that if he didn’t he would have to stand up in class. When the student failed to sit up and pay attention, Baba Stevens told him to stand up and the class proceeded with the lesson as the other students appeared to pay attention. This student, although he was standing, was made to participate in the activity by reading a section of the textbook. After a few minutes, he asked whether he could sit
back down in his chair and his peers said, “No, you should have been paying attention and not trying to go to sleep.” A few minutes after this, Baba Stevens, asked the student if he was now awake, and the student responded in the affirmative. He was then allowed to sit down. On this day of observation, the principles of Nguzo Saba did not appear to influence this young man, as he was not fully participating in the class activity of reading. It is the student’s responsibility to pay attention and participate in class; therefore, attempting to fall asleep lessened his opportunity to exercise and practiced the principle of *Ujima*.

Mama Cole’s science class was of mixed gender. The class was noisy and appeared chaotic. African American seventh-grade male students were told by Mama Cole to have a seat, but her directives were not heeded. There were a number of side conversations going on with four African American seventh-grade male students sitting quietly and trying to pay attention to the day’s lesson. Several students said that they did not have their homework assignments as Mama Cole attempted to go over it. She appeared frustrated as she spoke, and a majority of the African American male students ignored her.

Mama Cole continually said “Agoo (aah-go), which means “I respectfully ask for your attention” and students responded in a loud tone, Amee (aah-mee), which means, “I respectfully give my attention.” Agoo and Amee, according to Mama Williams, the middle school principal, are Kiswahili terms; however, a check with the Kiswahili instructor at Ohio University, proved that they were not terms found in that language. The advisor for this research, upon reading it, said they were Akan language terms from
Ghana in West Africa. Further investigation and crosschecking confirmed this and was then corroborated by many Ghanaian students and the Akan instructor at Ohio University. Whatever the source, the problem was that the students did not follow through by showing respect and paying attention.

On this day, when class was over, Mama Cole apologized for the class’ behavior. Unfortunately, this happened on several days of observation. In her class, she had posted on the wall: “come prepared; stay seated; stay quiet; keep your hands to yourself,” all of which were totally ignored by the students according to observations during this research. The sign posted on the wall was meant to remind students of the principle *Ujima* — taking responsibility for coming to class prepared, keeping quiet in order for students to hear, learning the day’s lesson, and not disrupting classmates by being unruly. The principles of Nguzo Saba were not influencing some students on several days of observation.

Baba Jeffries had an all-male stream in his class. One male was sitting and talking to another as Baba Jeffries began to talk. Baba Jeffries asked him to move to another seat; the male replied, “Why?” Baba Jeffries said, “Move or get out. Don’t ask why.” The student moved to another seat. The students were very noisy, as they were settling into their chairs. A number of them slammed their book bags on the floor; they picked them up and retrieved their books, then slammed the book bags on the floor again. After this, several began to slam their textbooks on the desk and started laughing. Baba Jeffries began the day’s lesson and reminded them that he would repeat the directions twice, meaning they needed to focus and listen.
After explaining the lesson, Baba Jeffries had a student come up front to tell the class what they were supposed to be doing. After the student reiterated the day’s lesson, his classmates gave him praise by saying “good job.” It would take a few minutes for students to settle down and begin their work. There were no side conversations as everyone did his work. Students were practicing the principles of *Umoja* as they worked together in unity. Although students were working individually it was in collaboration as a team: *Nia* because they appeared to have a purpose of completing the lesson assigned for the day and *Ujima* through working collectively and keeping quiet as not to disturb one another.

Baba Noll taught math; in this class it was mixed gendered. There were 19 students in this class; 15 were noisy and holding side conversations, while the other four were trying to pay attention to what Baba Noll was saying. Baba Noll had a sign posted on the wall stating, “Pencils must be sharpened in the first 5 minutes of class.” Normally, Baba Noll would announce at the beginning of the class period for students to sharpen their pencils. On this day of observation, a male student got up and sharpened his pencil after playing for several minutes. Baba Noll reminded him that he should have had his pencil sharpened within the first five minutes of class. The student said, “Okay,” sharpened his pencil, went back to his seat, and continued playing with a classmate. Side conversations were loud and continued throughout the class period on a regular basis. Baba Noll continually asked the students to pay attention; unfortunately, the majority of the students did not listen. He threatened to start calling parents and that did not deter the students from being disruptive.
Baba Noll attempted to incorporate the principle *Ujima* (collective work and responsibility), as he tried to get students to be quiet while he went over the homework lesson and proceeded with the day’s in-class assignment. Also, he reminded students to be *responsible* and to sharpen their pencils during the allotted five minutes at the beginning of class. Another principle that was applied to Baba Noll’s class is *Umoja* (Unity), because the class should have been working together to take advantage of the class time for learning the new mathematical problem that they would have to practice for homework.

Mama Fairbanks had an all-male gender stream language arts/reading class. On this day, she immediately told them as they walked into class, “Don’t you come to my class without a belt on”; “Don’t forget that sidebar will get you in trouble.” The principles of Nguzo Saba were observed on this day, as well as several other days of observation. These two were *Umoja* (Unity) and *Ujima* (Collective Work / Responsibility). Students worked on a class assignment and appeared to be paying close attention to what Mama Fairbanks was instructing. No one was having any side conversations, which displays *Umoja*. A few students did not have their homework assignment; they did not give an excuse but, rather, would take responsibility for not having their homework, a sign of *Ujima*. This is how her class ran on several different days of observation.

Mama Hall has an English class was all males. As the students entered the class, they were talking; then Mama Hall said in a stern voice, “Be quiet,” and immediately the students were quiet. The students would take their notebooks and textbooks out of their
book bags and were very quiet throughout the process. When two students got up to retrieve a dictionary out of the cabinet, they did not disrupt the class. After a few minutes, a couple of students started side conversations. When Mama Hall asked “Why y’all talking?” the students quieted down and continued with their assignment. Mama Hall’s class was always quiet on the days of observation and the students were not disruptive, as was observed in a few other classes.

Students were very disruptive in which ever teacher’s class did not demonstrate classroom management skills. Schoolteachers had to face numerous challenges in the classroom. According to Guercio-Del (2011), Milner and Tenore (2010), and O’Ferrall, Green, and Hanna (2010), in an urban setting, there are sometimes a disconnection between the language of African American students and the teacher. The teacher’s ability to manage the classroom is essential in middle grades as they, too, attempt to build a teacher-student relationship. A positive student-teacher relationship could determine how African American students conduct themselves in the classroom. In order to build a positive relationship, the teachers must explain the rules as clearly as possible on the first day of class. To maintain a positive relationship, the teachers should not treat students as their equals.

If the teacher had effective classroom management skills and students were reminded in a forceful tone to demonstrate the principles of Nguzo Saba, some principles emerged in their actions. The classroom was a miniature society where teachers and students interacted. The teacher was viewed as the leader and facilitated the interactions with students to enhance academic and social growth. The classroom climate must be
discussed at the beginning of the school year, especially the rules and principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at. The classroom climate should reinforce positive social interactions between students and the teacher, based on the rules and principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at (Peter & Dalbert, 2010; Pierce, 1994). This is necessary, as adolescents in middle school already perceive school as boring and uninteresting (Pierce, 1994).

According to Shibinski and Martin (2010), to relieve the negativity of a dull classroom climate, humor could be implemented to motivate and enhance positive views of school. Humor should elicit a respectful and open interaction between the students and teacher. Ratcliff, Jones, Costner, Davis, and Hunt (2010) and Shibinski and Martin (2010) suggest that if humor is perceived in an incorrect manner and the student misbehaves, the teacher should redirect and reengage the student to the task at hand immediately. It would be futile to pose idle threats, such as detention, as students may not take the teacher seriously, which can strain the established rules and principles laid down at the beginning of the school year. Most teachers observed in this research were not on the same page when it came to infusing the principles of Nguzo Saba into the classroom.

Mama Grace, a parent, also noticed this and commented that:

> Teachers who have been here for a while talk, and from what they say, when the school first started it was so Afrocentric. It really was based on the principles and I think it has gone outside of that now. I’m hoping that Baba West can bring it back to its foundation of everyone teaching from an Afrocentric perspective. (personal communication, October 29, 2010)

During the observations at the Columbus Africentric Early College, a couple of the teachers mentioned that they knew which teachers had trouble with their classes because they all talk with one another. Baba Stevens a science teacher, said, “I had to go to Baba
Noll’s math class on several different occasions, take disruptive students out of the class, and bring them into my classroom.” Baba Stevens said that he “talked with these students about their behavior. When I asked them why they are disruptive, the students say it is because they can be.” Baba Stevens told the students that “this is not the way to behave” and advised them to show respect to teachers in general.

Three of the nine participants from the focus groups, and those observed on several different occasions in Baba Stevens’ class, said that he was their favorite teacher and they had a lot of respect for him. Baba Stevens was a good role model for African American seventh-grade male students because he had a strong positive relationship with them. Based on classroom observations, Baba Stevens had good rapport with his all-male streamed class. He had an approachable demeanor and a firm, empathic tone when communicating with students.

In summary, observations, focus group interviews, and individual interviews showed that the principles of Nguzo Saba were demonstrated by African American seventh-grade male students at times but not consistently. As Mama Williams explained, it was difficult for seventh-grade males because they are also dealing with hormonal issues. Some participants had displayed the principles in the classrooms at times and explained to me how these principles guided their lives, but most of the time their behavior was based on who the teacher was. As Baba Jeffries suggested that, the seventh-grade teachers were not on the same page in implementing these principles in their classroom. This made it difficult for students to consistently implement them into their lives.
Some teachers, such as Mama Fairbanks, Mama Hall, Baba Morris, and Baba Stevens, often implemented the principles into their classroom lessons. Mama Cole did not know the seven principles of Nguzo Saba which made it difficult for her to teach them in her lessons. Steve said, “The principles are only implemented when teachers are punishing you. That’s when they call on you to practice them.” On the other hand, these seven principles enabled African American seventh-grade male students to see themselves in their school environment and inspired them to recreate and to follow the image of some African Americans to whom they have been exposed. For example, all the participants looked up to Baba Taylor, some also admired Baba Stevens, others Baba Jeffries, and Baba Morris.

**Mirror Image: Seeing Self and Future Aspirations**

This final theme of the first research question, described how African American seventh-grade male students viewed their role models. The role model was described as a person of the African American culture who inspired him to develop from an actual-self-perception to an ideal self as he became a man later in life.

Self-concept emerged as African American seventh-grade male students developed; it was an essence of one’s core entity (Pascal, 1968; Smith, 1980). The seven principles of Nguzo Saba guided African American seventh-grade male students in how to view themselves — based on their perceptions, and not the perception of a White ideology. There were no limitations on what African American seventh-grade males can be in life: “Our limitations rest only in our ignorance” (Akbar, 1996, p. 29).
Three of the nine participants reported that their role model was President Barack Obama:

Derrick: He is the first African American president and he shows that if you try hard enough, you can be what you want to be.

Darnell: My dad is my role model, because he is a successful Black man and he showed me that even though I am Black, I can make something of myself.

Terrance: My grandmother is my role model because, we didn’t have much to work with, but she became a successful woman. He also mentioned President Obama.

Steve: My entire adult generation is my role models because they work and they own houses. They have problems and I see how they deal with those problems. Mention President Obama, too.

Four other participants added that their role models were Michael Jackson, Martin Luther King, LeBron James, their brother, Shaka Zulu and President Obama. As a child you are encouraged to dream and reassured that you could become whatever you want to be in life. It would take hard work, a sound education, and perseverance. President Obama demonstrated in the views of these three participants that working diligently to pursue your dreams could be accomplished, therefore, do not give up. Barack H. Obama was the first African American president to be elected as President of the United States during the time this research was conducted.

Darnell, Terrance, and Steve admired family members as their role model. Each elaborated on the hard work their family member’s dedicated into achieve their goals.

These participants mentioned African American males or the African leader of an African kingdom as a role model they admired. No one mentioned any Europeans; they have recognized that they have role models in their own culture to pattern themselves.
Mama Grace explained that her son’s father is his role model, affirming that:

His dad is a positive influence in his life. When we’re at home it’s like “Dad, hey Dad.” He wakes up in the morning, he’s in the room with his dad. His dad is everything to him. He loves football; his dad loves football. His dad is real supportive of him. We’re living check-to-check, but if his dad sees him doing something good, he’s like, I’m a buy you these gloves for football. He looks to his dad for everything too. He’s like, “Dad, what you think about this?” They have real close family conversations and I think that’s a positive. I know that’s the positive Black male role in his life. (personal communication, October 29, 2010)

Mama Grace added that it was imperative for students to “see more Black men in the school as teachers. The way Black men carry themselves goes a long way with students’ self-concept and how they see themselves.” She said, “Baba Taylor is viewed as a role model.” For as long as she has been at the Columbus Africentric Early College, she has seen African American male students look up to “Baba Taylor and Baba Stevens.” She was happy that “strong, positive role models like them are at this school. They can be role models for students whose fathers are not in the home situation.”

Phillips (1990) argued that “a person must be in contact with oneself mentally, physically, culturally, and spiritually as well as be confluent in his . . . interaction with the world” (p. 61). This connected with the book African American seventh-grade male students read, by Akua (2002), because to have complete Balance one must be in balance spiritually, mentally, physically, and emotionally. The participants appeared to be aware of their “Blackness.” They accepted who they are and a positive self-concept guided them in how they viewed the world based on inner direction (Smith, 1980). Some participants indicated they wanted to grow up and be like their fathers or their role models; this indicates that “children mirror the attitudes of society and of their families” (Tenorio, 1994, n.p).
Two participants aspired to walk in their fathers’ footsteps. **Darnell** expressed his desire to “open up my own business just like my father” and **DaMar** replied, “I want to open up a restaurant like Charles Barkley.” Each participant had aspirations of developing into a positive productive citizen of the community. **Geno** said he wanted to be a “basketball player, but if that don’t work out, I’ll be a policeman.” **Lorell** stated that his desire is to be “a football player, and if that don’t work out, then I’ll become a lawyer.” **Thomas** said he wanted to become a “football player and then retire as a sports commentator.” The remaining five participants indicated that they wanted to become either a football or basketball player. The participants viewed figures such as their father, brother, the president of the United States and athletes as their role models. This is the formation of mirror image — seeing self in other African Americans.

Mirror image is a person’s being influenced by another based on compatible social roles, personal goals, values, and ideals. The image can be shaped to fit the individual’s perceived “ideal self.” This image motivated the individual to aspire and develop goals for self-presentation beyond the “actual self.” Mirror image builds self-concept and enhances self-esteem, which is guided by self-defining attributes (Hannover, Birkner, & Pöhlmann, 2006; Higgins, 1987; Jin, 2010; Zentner & Renaud, 2007).

These participants had, according to Anselmi and Peters (1995), “internalized a positive valuation of self” (p. 7), based on an African-centered perspective. The participants discussed seeing themselves in and pursuing goals based on examples set by their African American role models. The guiding principles of Nguzo Saba enabled them to strive to achieve what contemporary African American role models have attained.
(Anselmi & Peters, 1995). The goals they desired are most likely attainable, DaMar, Derrick, and Terrance said, they were “hard-working”; Geno and Lorell described themselves as “athletic”; Steve defined himself as being, “confident”; Thomas and Benjamin said they were “competitive.” These young men viewed themselves in a positive and capable manner able to pursue their goals. The demonstration of Ujamaa (cooperative economics), Ujima (collective work and responsibility), Kuumba (creativity), and Kujichagulia (self-determination) were demonstrated in their responses.

As participants discussed going back into the community and opening up a business, they displayed Ujamaa; Geno’s desire of becoming a police officer, in order to protect and serve the community, displayed the qualities of Ujima; Geno, Lorell, and Thomas recognized that if their first goal does not work out, it is important to have a backup plan, which was a form of Kuumba. The participants recognized the need of going back into the community and build a business, like their role models had done. They understood that in order to reach their desired goals, they had to be determined and confident in their ability to achieve them. All of these participants named a role model who was African American, a person in whom they can see themselves, a mirror image. These young men displayed Imani (faith) in their ability to pursue their dreams and the importance of having a backup career goal if the original goal did not work. The participants displayed a desire of growing up and building what Phillips (1990) characterized as a “strong family and community relationship” (p. 59).

To demonstrate to African American seventh-grade male students that their desires are as obtainable, Baba Jeffries a social studies teacher, said to them, “Apply the
principles of Nguzo Saba to such role model as Jay-Z, not the entertainer, but the entrepreneur.” Baba Jeffries stated that in his classroom, he “would take the principles of Nguzo Saba and apply them to everyday and current situations.” He said it was important for African Americans to “collaborate economically, put money in our community, savings, building wealth, having ownership, all these things”.

Baba Jeffries further indicated that teachers “need to bring in African American men such as lawyers, dentists, and professional football players to tell their story.” He said teachers “have to do a better job of providing and setting examples.” Baba Jeffries had the right ideology: bringing African American professional men into tell their stories of the trials and tribulations they had to overcome in order to reach their goals (Anselmi & Peters, 1995; Bricheno & Thornton, 2007; Carrington, Tymms, & Merrel, 2008; Maylor, 2009; Yancey, Siegel, & McDaniel, 2002) in order to give African American seventh-grade male students an idea of the hard work they needed to put in to achieve their desired goals.

In the classroom setting, teachers played a major role in the behavior of students. Teachers needed to continually show that they were still supportive of students who misbehave in the classroom (Hale, 2001; Milner & Tenore, 2010). The participants understood the principles of Nguzo Saba, but observation showed that they did not constantly implement them in classroom settings. This could be attributed to the lack of classroom management and the typical characteristics of adolescence. This group of young men was still going through developmental stages and adjusting to middle school.
Cross’ (1971) racial identity model, particularly the stage of emergence, was seen in the data specific to this research question. Participants displayed a sense of pride in their heritage and an appreciation of learning about issues relating with their “Blackness.” The participants discussed role models who were African American; each one could see himself in one of these role models and viewed him as his hero. The participants demonstrated a sense of pride in their heritage by discussing giving back to the community in the form of entrepreneurship, in lieu of leaving the community and seeking individual gratification. Also, the participants had an ideal image of who they wanted to become once they became adults. This was based on their perceived actual selves. Typically, who they were and who they hoped to become was based on someone from the African American culture. Cross (1991) emphasized that an African American builds a strong self-concept when he has a positive identity and can identify with his racial group. This could be seen in the responses and in this study’s observation of African American seventh-grade male students. Based on their responses to questions posed thus far, the participants had not made negative comments about themselves as African American adolescent males or the culture they had learned about.

This research revealed that the participants viewed being young African American men as a wonderful and positive phenomenon. Although some teachers did not believe that African American seventh-grade male students understood the principles of Nguzo Saba or how to apply them to everyday situations, the participants were on what appeared to be a path of becoming grounded in their heritage and of continuing to develop a strong,
positive self-concept. Teachers needed to be on the same page and implement the Nguzo Saba principles more fully in their lessons.

The Pledge was an influential mechanism in grounding African American seventh-grade male students in what they could become, but the words must be nurtured outside of the auditorium. These were still young developing minds that needed constant guidance from all teachers and staff. To properly function, as mentioned in the African proverb “it takes a village to raise a child,” the members of the community will have to continue to act their part wholeheartedly.

In summary, the seven principles of Nguzo Saba, based on an African-centered perspective, provided the guiding tools of making African American seventh-grade male students aware of their self-concepts. Therefore, when asked the question, “Who Am I?” the participants identified with being African American.

These seven principles were viewed as a means of psychologically empowering African American seventh-grade male students into knowing and appreciating the history of Ancient Egypt and African Americans. These provided them with the tools necessary for making a connection to where their ancestors originated. The participants noticed that Ancient Egyptians had slavery, but pointed out that it was different from slavery in America, and that slavery in Ancient Egypt was the method through which indentured people paid off their debt. They were able to view their learning experience from an African-centered perspective. They also viewed their ancestors positively with attributes that can be seen in their role models as well, therefore, learning about Africans and
African Americans enhanced their knowledge and provided heroes in which the participants could mirror themselves.

**Chapter Summary**

African American seventh-grade male students were able to form their self-concepts based on the Cross (1991) formula, \( SC (+) = GI (+) = PI (+) \), a positive self-concept depends on the African American seventh-grade male students having a positive group identity within the African and African American cultures. This will be reflected in the person’s having a positive personal identity.

The participants discussed Africa as the place which their ancestors had come from and the origins of their heritage. They had pride in their history within the United States, appreciated that their ancestors fought for their freedom against oppressive institutions, and that their history did not originate with slavery in America, but they had a rich history that began in Ancient Egypt.

Reciting the Pledge provided guidance toward self-determination (Kujichagulia), the ability to create their own path (Kuumba), having a purpose (Nia), of building upon the previous day’s work that will lead to a better tomorrow, to have faith (Imani) in their ability to set and reach new goals, having to work together and become responsible (Ujima) as a group working toward a common goal of becoming better young men.

Classroom observations revealed that students were confident in their knowledge especially when correcting a teacher who had made a mistake while solving a math problem. Students worked together to help one another solve math problems, thus demonstrating their intelligence and ability to work collectively. During observations, the
student-teacher relationship was at times positive as students eventually showed respect for their teacher no matter their behavior at times.

The book *A treasure within: Stories of remembrance & rediscovery* by Akua (2002) provided information about the African continent being the motherland, how ancient Egyptians built a university to which people near and far came to become educated. Based on learning from an African-centered perspective African American seventh-grade male students demonstrated the African-perspective definition of self-concept.
Chapter 6: African-Centered Perspective and Self-Esteem

Introduction

This chapter addresses the data in response to the second research question: “How do the educational experiences from an African-centered perspective influence African American seventh-grade male students’ self-esteem?” which generated two themes. The themes were: 1) *Ma’at brings inner peace* and 2) *growing in the seven principles of Ma’at*. Each theme would be discussed one after the other using the data, literature, and theoretical perspectives where applicable.

This second research question was developed to address which set of principles influenced African American seventh-grade male students’ self-esteem and how these principles assisted them with developing confidence in their abilities, as each dealt with issues within the African American culture. The seven principles of Ma’at were applicable in clarifying how they guided African American seventh-grade male students’ in improving their self-esteem. According to Ani (1994), Asante (1990), Imperato (2001), Karenga (2004) and Martin (2008), these principles of were related to building and improving self-esteem.

The participants were taught through the seven principles of Ma’at (Columbus Africentric Early College Handbook, see Appendix N):

- *Balance*, I will work to achieve equality among my school, home and social life.
- *Harmony*, I will work with others peacefully.
- *Justice*, I will work to set things right.
- *Order*, I am in control and organized.
- *Reciprocity*, What I give is what I get.
- *Righteousness*, I do the right things and I am proud of it.
- *Truth*, I believe in myself and I am honest.
Self-esteem based in the African-centered perspective was rooted in the personal high evaluation of one’s ability to deal with social issues (Asante, 1991; Madhere, 1991; Maslow, 1943). Satisfaction of personal evaluation improved the person’s confidence as a result of favorable outcomes and contributions within the African American culture (Blash & Unger, 1995; Maslow, 1943; Osborne, 1995; Ross, 1995).

Ma’at Brings Inner Peace

Within this theme, a textbook used by Mama Fairbanks the language arts/reading teacher, was used to demonstrate to African American seventh-grade male students how to deal with issues in life as they progressed through the stages of adolescence. Students discussed being educated in their culture and how the significance of high self-esteem guided them in feeling good about their “Blackness” in the United States. The song “Where Else Can I Go?” was analyzed in this theme with the principles of Ma’at.

African American seventh-grade students read the book *A Treasure Within: Stories of Remembrance & Rediscovery* by Akua (2002), for their reading class. In this book the character Marcus was an adolescent African American male who met with his spiritual guide, Ptahotep, who discussed knowledge that would provide guidance in living his life. The first fruits of knowledge are to control his thoughts, to have order, to be who he is, and not to follow another person’s actions that may lead him into trouble.

Ptahotep encouraged Marcus to seek the truth in whatever he did, to look at the consequences of his actions based on decisions, and what he does in life. Ptahotep also taught Marcus about respecting people, especially females, and to treat females like queens. He explained that Marcus should seek and understand his purpose in life, and he
should follow his own dreams, not the dreams or desires of others. Mama Fairbanks said, “I had the class read this book because there is a section just for the males which discuss the peer pressures a male goes through. This section talks and walks them through life in general, and how they need Ptahotep, which was considered as an ancient God.”

Ptahotep provided Marcus with real role models such as Marcus Garvey, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, and Harriet Tubman — those who followed their dreams. Marcus must have faith in himself and his dreams, and he must trust his teachers, who would assist by guiding him toward fulfilling his dreams. Marcus must be able to seek the Truth, which can be found in people who really care for and about him. Marcus must be able to distinguish between what was right which was grounded in the values he has learned.

Based on document analyzed all the seven guiding principles of Ma’at were indicated throughout this novel: Marcus must be able to bring Balance in his life by connecting with his “Higher Self.” Bringing these principles to order and having balance would lead to peace, especially, inner peace which enabled a person to feel good about him or herself. Balance can lead to the development of high levels of self-esteem. This could be seen in the interview with Mama Clark. She said, “My son’s esteem is high when he can bring Balance to schoolwork and hang-out time with his friends. As a teenager, he still needs that time with his friends” (personal communication, October 28, 2010).

The seven principles of Ma’at guided African American seventh-grade male students into believing in self and empowering them to develop pride and respect for
themselves that was aided by a positive self-concept. Building self-esteem is crucial during adolescence. Ma’at assisted African American seventh-grade male students in understanding that their history was just as significant as that of any other race, and this enabled positive self-esteem to grow. According to Butler and Gasson, (2005); Harper, (1977); Hoge, Smit, and Hanson, (1990); Okech and Harrington, (2002) and Williams and Byars, (1970), learning from an African-centered perspective had an influence on African American seventh-grade male students’ self-esteem and aids in “Black conscious awareness.”

As the participants learned about Ancient Egypt from an African-centered perspective each discussed how this knowledge affected them. Here are their responses:

**Benjamin:** I feel good because here in the United States, Whites control everything and Blacks have to fight for what they want. Not having things always handed to you makes you appreciate it that much more when you get what you want.

**Steve:** I have to do my part as an African American male to rebuild African history and what they have already become in Ancient Egypt society.

In Egypt, there were Nubian kings and queens that these students were learning about. The participants in this research perceived themselves within the paradigm of what they were learning in an Afrocentric school; it enabled some to realize, as Terrance said, “We’re not living the way Ancient Egyptians lived.” Which meant that, African Americans are not living in harmony with peace and enhancing the community as Ancient Egypt’s leaders and citizens did and he felt it is not impossible to work and live in Harmony with one another.

Geno said, “I feel good because we’ve come up from a lot of bad situations like slavery, the Civil Right era, and we are resilient.” It was apparent that the participants
appreciated, valued their history, and wanted to take advantage of what their ancestors fought for. Therefore, they do not want the sacrifices of their ancestors to be in vain (Asante, 2003). During the Civil Rights Movement, people lost their lives as others continued the struggle for equality and freedom. What Benjamin pointed out was working hard and fighting for what you wanted would be better appreciated, because you understood what obstacles you had to overcome in order to obtain what you achieved. Geno’s elaboration of these accomplishments made him feel good because his ancestors were resilient, especially during the times of oppressive situations. It was this type of history that enabled the participants to develop a self-esteem grounded in the African-centered perspective. The participants were learning the authentic history of their ancestors, how Africans in Ancient Egypt were able to live in a peaceful nation, and how African Americans in the United States could work together to build a prosperous community.

Using Ancient Egypt as a foundation on which to build, along with the guiding principles of Ma’at, enabled African American seventh-grade male students to make a connection between being African American in the United States and their history in Ancient Egypt, as well as other countries in Africa. This connection led the participants to feel good about their history. As Benjamin said, “We’re free and most folks say White folks are smarter than Black folks, but we are smarter because we get better education and go to a better school.” Darnell’s statements concurred as he explained: “. . . we get better education and go to a better school” (the Columbus Africentric Early College), [I]went to another school before coming here and I like this one much better.” The better
education is learning about themselves and being proud of African and African American history. The participants suggested that their history was just as important as White students learning about European history.

Deducing from Bell’s (2005) claims that White students felt superior because they had better facilities and teachers, Asante (1991) found that in the classrooms, White students’ language is the language of the curriculum, which empowered them. Therefore, it was important for teachers to speak the language of their students. Asante (1991) discussed that in one of his classrooms, he demonstrated to his White students that he was knowledgeable in “Shakespeare, Homer, and Stephen J. Gould” (p. 29), in this way, he acknowledged that he had “no problem centering them [the White students] within their cultural framework” (p. 29). It was important for African American students to feel their cultural framework was significant in the classrooms in order to provide them with the same educational experience as White students have (Asante, 1991). Based on Asante’s (1991) Afrocentric ideal in education, the participants in this research felt that the education they were receiving and the school they attended were just as competitive as a typical public school. Learning about themselves, African American students were guided toward feeling good about their identity (Asante, 1991).

The goal of the Columbus Africentric Early College focused on African-centeredness, providing the student population with the tools to see and learn about themselves, which the participants equated to better education. During this research period, it was evident that the participants were learning from teachers who cared about them. They were learning about their history from an African-centered perspective and
were guided by the principles they gathered from learning about their African origins. As Geno said, “I feel good because we get a lot of education.” The education they were receiving allowed them to develop positive feelings about their images instead of learning solely about the images of Europeans. One image that the participants discussed was the president of the United States. DaMar said, “I feel good because we have a Black president”; Lorell perceived that African Americans “have accomplished so many things.” One example was President Barack Obama being the first African American president.

When contemplating the accomplishments of Africans and African Americans about whom they were learning, Darnell said, “I feel good, like I fit in, people fought so I can get an education and I’m going to do my part to fight for what they did.” Comments such as this were demonstrative of the application of the “emergence” stage of the racial identity model of Cross (1971) which addresses how the participants feel about learning their history.

The “emergence” stage materialized among all the participants in the focus groups, as they demonstrated immersion in learning about their history and wanting to do something to make sure the works of their ancestors was not in vain. The participants made a connection to their ancestors; their emergence into this knowledge propelled them into becoming proud of their “Blackness.” The participants, guided by the principles of Ma’at, found inner peace instead of developing rage against the White world that had oppressed African Americans (Cross, 1971). One should remember that the participants were adolescents and still developing mentally, emotionally, and physically. Terrance’s
comment about the principles of Ma’at was, “It teaches me how to treat other people and teaches me how to treat myself.” During the time of this study the participants commented on the issue with Black-on-Black crime in society, which they perceived as a form of mistreatment of one another. The principles of Ma’at taught African American seventh-grade male students to believe in their abilities and to feel proud of their “Blackness” and heritage. DaMar said, “I feel good about myself because I am Black.” Steve said, “I feel good about myself and I’m a proud African American male.” This is what participants are learning from an African-centered perspective. They were being guided by the principles of Ma’at, which provided “inner peace” as they learned about negative situations like the events of slavery in America, that their ancestors dealt with, and the rich history of their ancestors in Ancient Egypt.

These participants were able to make the distinction between their “Blackness” in the United States and their ancestral origins as descendants of Africans; in this way, they became proud of their heritage. Their history in the United States was deeply imbedded in the oppressive institution of slavery, but in Africa, especially during ancient Egyptian times, their history was positive. This was a main reason as to why, Tennant, Kambon, Kelsey, parents, and people in the community wanted to establish a school that would address Africans and African Americans history. The participants apparently understood that they “are a part of a larger group where they are not the minority; they are in a country that they happen to be a minority” (Ako Kambon, personal communication, March 17, 2011).
Darnell explained that the principles of Ma’at are “good to follow, because they can go a long way.” He further explained, “I like Reciprocity and Truth.” He understood that the efforts he made in life should be rewarded, what you give you will receive in return, and if he tells the Truth he could feel good about it, instead of feeling guilty for lying. Intentionally misleading a person produced negative emotions that would become distressing; it was a self-conscious emotion which could be alleviated by telling the truth — a form of personal enlightenment. This confirms the viewpoint of these scholars when they assert that adolescents promised or were taught to tell the truth, most will tell the truth to prevent the intense negative emotions that develop from lying (Evans & Lee, 2010; Gao, Wang, & Qian, 2010; Gardner, 2010; Gombos, 2006; Riek, 2010).

While observing the participants in the classroom, for this study, one male deliberately dropped a small amount of water on a female student. He appeared to immediately regret his actions and apologized. This was a demonstration of Justice — I will work to set things right. He admitted to the teacher that he did it, this was a characteristic of Righteousness — I do the right things and am proud of it. This student seemed uncomfortable because the female was yelling at him, in this case Harmony — I will work with others peacefully was implemented.

As mentioned earlier, students sang the song “Where Else Can I Go?” It would take a few days of paying close attention to the words of the song, to learn the words, and to wonder about the impression on African American seventh-grade male students’ development of self. Figure 18 below has the words to the song.
As I walk through the doors, I know that I have arrived.  
Its rich, calming spirit gives me a sense of pride.  
Its strength and its power, gives me courage to succeed.  
In the eyes of those before me, I see all that I can be.  

Where else can I go, where my soul can really grow?  
Where else can I go, where my love can truly flow?  
Where else can I go, where traditions abound?  
Where else can I go, where my culture is found?  

(Chorus)  
It’s the Africentric School; we’re the brightest and the best!  
It’s the Africentric School; we honor elders with respect!  
It’s the Africentric School, where learning is the key!  
It’s harmony and family inside of me.

Tradition has taught me, that we come from Kings and Queens.  
Tradition has taught me, we can realize our dreams.  
Tradition has taught me, we have a rich legacy!  
It’s harmony and family inside of me!  

(Repeat Chorus)

Figure 18. Where Else Can I Go?  
Source: The Columbus Africentric Early College Handbook
An analysis of the recital is to demonstrate how it is intended to guide the students. As I walk through the doors, I know that I have arrived. Its rich, calming spirit gives me a sense of pride. Balance is found as students try to bring together a balance between school, home, and their social lives. Its strength and its power, gives me courage to succeed.

In the eyes of those before me, I see all that I can be. Mirror image is seeing self in other African Americans who have made contributions to society during a time when many hurdles stood against their succeeding. Where else can I go, where my soul can really grow?

Where else can I go, where my love can truly flow? Where else can I go, where traditions abound? Where else can I go, where my culture is found? Baba Taylor explained that:

It’s just teaching them to our students. Not that we’re teaching our kids to be pro-Black or anything. I just want them to, and we want them to, be more conscious of how their ancestors have had a major impact on this society that we live in. So that’s what we want our kids to know: we’ve had this impact, we don’t want the impact to stop, so you go make the next impact. That’s what we try to instill in our children.

Truth in their history was emphasized in their learning about their ancestors before the time of slavery in America and seeing the contributions Ancient Egyptians made in society.

It’s the Africentric School; we’re the brightest and the best! It’s the Africentric School; we honor elders with respect! It’s the Africentric School, where learning is key! It’s harmony and family inside of me. Righteousness is seen in their doing what is right to represent their elders, to show respect, and to be proud of their righteous actions.
Tradition has taught me, that we come from Kings and Queens. One can perceive Truth, in the students’ learning about their true origin and the powerful people from whom they have descended. Tradition has taught me, we can realize our dreams. Justice was accomplished by working hard in an attempt to show that African Americans were intelligent and could make a positive contribution to society. Tradition has taught me, we have a rich legacy!

It’s really just empowering our students and instilling in them: we were kings and queens. Let’s focus back on being kings and queens. Let’s take the opportunities given to us and run with them, follow through and things of that nature. It’s really just instilling in them that you have the potential, it’s inside of you, said Baba Taylor.

Again, although Africans were enslaved in America; the history of Africans did not begin with the oppressive state of slavery in America. It’s harmony and family inside of me! Having Order, being in control of self and being organized, created a harmonious balance in one’s life.

In summary, learning about how to deal with peer pressure based on the character Marcus from the book *A Treasure Within* by Akua (2002) demonstrated to African American seventh-grade male students how to have Harmony in their lives as they progressed through the stages of adolescence. The students learned how to have Balance in their lives also, and this guided them into developing high self-esteem as they became appreciative of their “Blackness.” The students understood how their ancestors had to fight against oppressive issues in the U.S. society, thus becoming resilient in the process.

Students learned how to build upon the history of Ancient Egypt, how to treat one another with respect, and how to feel good in the process because they were evaluated in
a positive manner for their behavior. The song “Where Else Can I Go?” taught African American seventh-grade male students how to incorporate the principles of Ma’at into their lives, which aided them in seeing issues in relation to their “Blackness” and knowing that they cannot go anywhere else but forward within the African American culture. This was based on the accomplishments of their ancestors in Ancient Egypt and the United States.

Participants appeared to be developing a balance with the principles of Ma’at. This was guiding them in developing a positive self-esteem based on learning about their history from an African-centered perspective. As they were learning and being guided by these principles, it was important to investigate if and how they were applying these principles in their everyday activities.

**Growing in the Seven Principles of Ma’at**

This theme was based in part on seventh-grade teachers’ perception of how African American seventh-grade male students learned how to use the seven principles of Ma’at in their lives by balancing the stages of adolescence, peer pressure, and self-control. Students on the other hand, discussed how they felt about their behavior, the behavior of others, and the history of African Americans, as they were growing in the principles of Ma’at.

This theme emerged from the data from focus groups, individual interviews, along with classroom observations. After being exposed to the principles of Ma’at from an African-centered perspective for a number of grade levels (e.g. K-5), African American seventh-grade male students were expected to adjust to middle school and
mature mentally. These principles were intended to encourage a harmonious balance between development of adolescence and school life.

During observations and data collected from Baba Noll’s and Baba Phillips’ math class, and Mama Cole’s science class, it appeared that students rarely demonstrated the principles of Ma’at. On an almost daily basis, African American seventh-grade male students were disruptive. Only a small number of them made an attempt to do the in-class assignments and take notes. These disruptive actions led Baba Noll to comment that, “They don’t think about the principles of Ma’at. Really, we teach it, but I just don’t see them using the principles in what they do.”

The math teacher, Baba Noll tried to maintain Balance between the disruptive African American seventh-grade male students and the few who were trying to pay attention in class. He wrote down the student’s name, on a piece of paper while informing the student that his parent would be receiving a phone call. Baba Noll then said, Agoo, “I respectfully ask for your attention,” in an attempt to get the class’ attention. As always, the African American seventh-grade male students responded by saying Amee, “I respectfully give my attention,” but the students continued holding side conversations. Baba Noll pulled out his cell phone and called a parent. He proceeded to inform the parent how their son was misbehaving in class. The student appeared to be in disbelief as he was handed the phone. After he talked to his parent, his demeanor changed, as he appeared embarrassed. The student held a brief side conversation, and then appeared to pay attention. A family member can be contacted anytime during the school day to assist teachers with discipline issues with his or her child.
During another day of observation in Mama Fairbanks’ class, a mother entered her classroom and asked if she could speak with her son. She took him into the hallway and began chastising him about not having his homework for class. This assistance from this parent enabled the teacher to achieve the classroom goal, which was going over the previous day’s homework and maintaining Harmony and Order.

The science teacher, Mama Cole said, regarding the principles of Ma’at, “Well they’re just good principles for living and if we operate out of those principles in the classroom, a lot should get done. It shouldn’t be time-consuming as much as it is time saving.” Time saving was seldom visible in Mama Cole’s classroom because she was busy trying to get the students to quiet down and become organized. She continually had to talk over the disruptive students and ask them to give their respect by stating Agoo, and again they replied Amee. Mama Cole said to the class, “You’re not practicing Order or accepting responsibility for yourself.” After several more minutes of Mama Cole’s talking over the disruptive students, she said, “We need to practice Order, so we can move forward,” but students were still holding side conversations. Mama Cole then asked the class “Is that how we practice Order?” They responded by saying, “No,” and most appeared to be paying attention and participating in class. But there were still a few side conversations that occurred.

Another math teacher who was unable to participate in an interview session because of the numerous conflicts with time was Baba Phillips, but he granted observations in his class. The class appeared to be chaotic, as a number of students were walking around to talk with other students. On one particular day, his entire class period
of math was spent trying to go over the previous day’s homework and to quiet down the all-male class. Baba Phillips did manage to go over the homework problems; during this time a number of students eagerly participated. But the chaos continued and on one occasion, Baba Phillips said, “Don’t say another word until the problem is done. Y’all just keep talking out of turn.” Obviously, some students were very competitive in answering questions, while others were being disruptive. Holding side conversations that did not pertain to the class’ subject or homework assignment was characteristics of disruptive behavior.

These disruptions happened in the classes of all three teachers’. In Baba Noll’s math class, he continually threatened to call the disruptive student’s parent. In Mama Cole’s Science class, she threatened lunchtime detention, as did another math teacher, Baba Phillips. It should be noted that these warnings were not idle; on several different days, the disruptive students spent part of their lunchtime in detention. The detention was served either in the classroom where the offense occurred or in the auditorium. The principles of Ma’at rarely manifested in the behavior of African American seventh-grade male students while in these three teachers’ classrooms. When one student was given an after-school detention, then others stopped being disruptive. This student started to cry in the classroom and became very quiet after receiving the detention. Other students appeared to feel bad for him; one walked over to him and said, “Don’t cry.” Baba Phillips had a little more Order in the classroom once he had assigned the after-school detention. Apparently, after-school detentions would require the parent to be notified of their child’s pending lateness arriving home.
To reinforce positive behavior in the classrooms, teachers use the Guide to Student Conduct as a means to reprimand negative actions (see Appendix N). Based on what was continually observed in the classrooms of these three teachers, a question about “How the students felt when other students are disruptive in class” was asked during the focus-group discussions. Responses to this question from the 12- and 13-year-old African American seventh-grade males in the focus groups were surprising:

**Geno:** I feel bad; they are taking advantage of Black people.

**DaMar:** They make the White folks think we’re stupid.

**Lorell:** Every time someone is told to be quiet by another student, you get into trouble for being disrespectful.

**Thomas:** They take advantage of time and they are being disrespectful and wasting time.

**Derrick:** Sometimes, but not all the time, I am disruptive in class, too, but it’s like when someone is disruptive in class, they just need to be quiet.

**Benjamin:** Black people seldom had the chance to learn and they are just wasting it.

The participants did not appreciate the disruption of their peers in the classroom setting, especially when the teacher was White. It projected a negative image among all the African American seventh-grade students. When the teacher was African American, Geno pointed out that disruptive student was exploiting the teacher. They felt that the disruptive students were not taking advantage of the struggles of their ancestors in order for them to obtain a better education and was wasting the opportunities afforded them.

Overall, disruptive students were disrespecting the teacher and their classmates.

The last two participants, below, were constantly viewed as being disruptive during observation in the classrooms.
Terrance:

I feel that sometimes, they need to be quiet. I am disruptive in class sometimes, but not often. When other students disrupt class, I just feel they need to be quiet because I’m trying to learn. But I think they feel the same way when I disrupt class.

Steve:

I won’t lie, I talk a lot in class and be disruptive. Other people are disruptive in class also. The only thing I have to say is I have a 3.0 since the sixth grade. I’m smart enough to do the work even if someone is talking, but I guess they feel the same way about me being disruptive.

The frankness in the responses to the question indicated that the participants knew the principles of Ma’at and could apply them to their actions. The following was a discussion of the application of the principles as they were applied in other teachers’ classrooms.

In Baba Jeffries’ social studies class, students were given strict instructions. “Don’t flip through the book for answers. Read. You need to increase your reading skills.” There were no side conversations. African American seventh-grade male students sat in their seats quietly working on the day’s assignment, which was to write how each would honor the Nile River. Several principles of Ma’at were observed in Baba Jeffries’ class that the African American seventh-grade male students were practicing: Balance, Harmony, and Order. After an adequate amount of time had been given for the completion of the assignment, Baba Jeffries asked, “Who wants to read their response?”

All of the students appeared eager to read their responses aloud. Several said “Shh” to another student because Baba Jeffries was trying to talk. This was a demonstration of Order, being in control of their behavior. Baba Jeffries told them, “If you are good readers and writers, you can do anything, so when you get into high school,
you don’t have any problems, so you can go on to college like Columbus State and get some scholarship money.” The African American seventh-grade male students appeared to listen intensely. No one talked, flipped through his textbook, or packed his book bag. All eyes were on Baba Jeffries. Harmony was observed as students paid attention and did not fidget with things. After Baba Jeffries’ commented about college, African American seventh-grade male students began to read their responses to the assignment. Some of the principles of Ma’at emerged in this classroom. Baba Jeffries suggested that, “If you’re following in the principles of Ma’at, then your esteem should be high, because you feel that you can do anything.” He further explained that following the principles of Ma’at:

. . . doesn’t mean life is going to be easy for you, but in my opinion, it does mean that you are equipped with some tools to get you through whatever ordeal you are going through; and the stronger you are, I tell the kids, through these principles, the stronger you are academically and socially.

Baba Jeffries briefly explained the differences between his all-male versus all-female classes. He implied that his “all-male class is quieter-than his all-female class.” He emphasized, “The females just don’t keep quiet.” One day, while standing outside of Baba Jeffries’ class, which was his all-female class, he could be heard yelling, “Ladies, if you can’t be quiet, get out of my class.” There were still some side conversations, but they eventually became quiet.

In Mama Hall’s English class, African American seventh-grade male students sat quietly and looked up the assigned words in their dictionary. One student raised his hand and Mama Hall walked over to assist him. Their conversation was soft-spoken in tone. After she answered his question, he continued with his work. Once again, the emergence
of Ma’at’s principles could be viewed in the behavior of African American seventh-grade male students in Mama Hall’s classroom at work: Balance, Harmony, and Order.

The same was true for Baba Stevens’ science class: there were no side conversations at all on the day of observation as the students were working. After a few minutes, an African American male turned around in his seat and said something to another student. Immediately, Baba Stevens told the student to turn around, and he did. He assigned the class two pages of reading from the textbook and said, “Let’s go.” The students appeared to start reading. One male student was playing with his fingernails; another male student had his face very close to the book when Baba Stevens noticed and said, “I know you’re not reading.” The student then took the book from his face, placed the book on the desk, and appeared to be reading.

Observation showed that students practiced the principles of Ma’at in Mama Hall’s English class, Baba Stevens’ science class, and Baba Jeffries’ social studies, Baba Morris’ social studies, and Mama Fairbanks’ language arts/reading classes more often than in Baba Noll’s math, Mama Cole’s science, and Baba Phillips’ math classes.

Baba Jeffries affirmed, “That’s our own fault.” What he was implying was that teachers “need to show those principles more and more.” The principles of Ma’at surfaced in African American seventh-grade male students’ behavior in the classroom when there was respect for the teacher and when the teacher displayed the ability to manage the classroom. If teachers can band together and show African American seventh-grade male students how to implement these principles, they should have no problem growing in the principles of Ma’at and using the principles as a constant guide.
The principles of Ma’at, after being analyzed, seemed universal. Baba Stevens agreed, stating that the principles of Ma’at are not “an Afrocentric thing; it’s a universal concept. Therefore, they should not be difficult to implement in the classroom lessons.”

What Baba Jeffries said about the principles of Ma’at was that he:

. . . can infuse them in my lessons every day — yes, I can, and I need to do that more. I know most teachers do that more. The principles of Ma’at talk about Righteousness, Justice, and Reciprocity, all those things, especially myself teaching history. I haven’t done it as often as I should have; I actually put some lessons together and have said this is an example of Righteousness, Reciprocity, in some of the stories in history.

Baba Stevens, explained that “all the principles come into play in the class; you just have to have teachable moments.” He gave the example of what he would say to African American seventh-grade male students for not practicing Reciprocity, stating, “Come on, man, you’re not being respectful. If he did that same thing to you, would you appreciate that?” Baba Stevens said he “believe those principles you just bring them into your class and just make sure that you reinforce them — that’s when you have teachable moments.”

Moments like the ones Baba Stevens and Baba Jeffries discussed would guide African American seventh-grade male students in growing in the principles of Ma’at.

In Baba Morris’ social studies class, there were a couple of side conversations going on when he said, “I appreciate y’all who’s working; man, and I really appreciate that.” The side conversations stopped and everyone appeared to be working. Baba Morris then commented, “I do appreciate the students who stopped talking and got back to work.” Baba Morris does not believe that the principles of Ma’at are practiced by African American seventh-grade males. He said, “Teachers don’t live it, and we don’t teach it, so they’re not getting it.”
In Mama Fairbanks’ language arts/reading class, there are a few side conversations when everyone was supposed to be reading. She asked, “Do I hear any talking?” The class then quieted down. The emergence of Ma’at was always prevalent in Mama Fairbanks’ class, as had been observed. African American seventh-grade male students practiced these principles when the teacher acknowledged Ma’at in the classroom lessons and their behavior. African American seventh-grade male students appeared to understand these principles and knew how to apply them. An understanding of how African American seventh-grade male students viewed their ancestral history based on the principles of Ma’at, from an African-centered perspective, was desirable.

African American seventh-grade male students addressed their history class and their learning about history. The comments from the 12- and 13-year olds were:

**Benjamin:** I feel real good, because we have a good history.

**Geno:** I feel good when I’m learning about my history and that I should do better than my ancestors.

**DaMar:** I like being an African American male, because I get to learn what my ancestors did and I should do better when I get that age where they did things.

**Steve:** I love being African American, because my ancestors went through a lot to get me here.

**Terrance:** I get to learn that if I want to make the world change, how I can make it better.

**Derrick:** A person who discovered some things are from Europe, but it don’t really matter.

**Thomas:**

I like being an African American male, to show people that we are better than White folks, because they always think we’re stupid. They call us the “N” word; they think we’re lazy, and we can’t do anything. We got good people in our history.
Building African American seventh-grade male students’ self-esteem is important, and learning the principles of Ma’at from an African-centered perspective allowed them to grow mentally toward appreciating their “Blackness.” Baba Stevens confirmed this by noting that Ma’at offered:

... a lot of principles to live by and those things, *Justice*, *Balance*, and *Order*. You want those things in your life. They instill self-discipline in you because you understand yourself, you understand your limitations; you understand how far to go and how far not to go. You understand that if I do this, then this can possibly happen and you understand the consequences and so forth. I think it leads you to have good self-esteem about yourself.

Baba Jeffries maintained that “if you understand *Justice*, you must do the right thing, and you believe that if you do the right thing you will be rewarded if you have those principles of Ma’at in life.”

One parent, Mama Grace, discussed how the principles of Ma’at enhanced her son’s confidence and self-esteem. “I’ve seen that boy’s self-esteem go from ‘Why am I bigger than everybody else?’ (he is 6’2), to really being confident. From the sixth to the seventh grade, his confidence and self-esteem has really grown a lot.” The principles of Ma’at based on an African-centered perspective, could help in guiding African American seventh-grade male students in maturing. Saunders a committee member, added, “These principles are the guiding principles of how you live your live. I’m not going to say it’s 100% of the credit; parents have to teach those kids also. But you can see a difference” (personal communication, July 29, 2010).

Mama Williams, the middle school principal said there are “actually 42 principles of Ma’at, but we only use seven of them.” When asked to clarify why only seven principles were in usage, her response was, “We use seven that kids can easily understand
and apply in their everyday educational setting.” Mama Williams then proceeded to give examples:

I tell the Truth; I can work together, Reciprocity; I can be responsible for my actions; I can have Order in my life. So things can be easily infused. The other 35 are not bad, but it’s not something the kids can easily understand and infuse into a day-to-day educational setting.

Baba Taylor, the lead principal, said, “Now, do they think about that every time? No, it’s difficult going through middle school because they’re going through so much; but we keep honing into them. So by the time they are seniors, they’re like, ‘I know.’” He explained that, “My seventh-graders right now, I say, ‘Hey they are bouncing off walls.’ But, I know the fruits of our labor will be shown in four or five years, when they become juniors and seniors.” If African American seventh-grade male students grow into the principle of Ma’at, then, “when you get into a difficult situation, think back to these principles. Think through the principles of Balance, Harmony, Righteousness, Justice, and Reciprocity. Baba Taylor stated that teacher “really try to instill that in our students.”

Chapter Summary

Based on observations, focus groups, and individual interviews, the principles of Ma’at provided guidance to African American seventh-grade male students in building and maintaining a positive self-esteem. They were developing the ability to deal with social issues pertaining to their “Blackness” by understanding that their ancestors faced oppressive issues, fought against them, had favorable outcomes, and made contributions to the African American culture in the process.

The teachers may think students are not grasping the principles, but the students who participated in the focus groups could name all the principles and tell me how to
apply them to their behavior. It was apparently difficult to balance these principles and at the same time deal with the complexities of the onset of puberty as alluded to by teachers and administrators. The seven principles of Nguzo Saba, which influence the development of self-concept; Ma’at’s seven principles provide direction in the progression of a positive self-esteem; it was now important to obtain an understanding of how the two sets of principles influenced the participants’ racial identity development based on an African-centered perspective. The next research question addressed this issue as reported in Chapter 7.
Chapter 7: Racial Identity Formation

Introduction

The discussion of data in response to a third research question was the focus of this chapter. The research question: “How is African American seventh-grade male students’ racial identity formation influenced by an African-centered perspective?” produced three themes. They were: 1) identity affirmation: becoming racially aware; teacher’s impact on racial identity formation, and 3) perceived racism. These themes would be discussed one after the other using the data, literature, and theoretical perspectives where applicable.

This third research question was probed to obtain an understanding of how the principles of Nguzo Saba — *Umoja* (Unity), *Kujichagulia* (Self-determination), *Ujima* (Collective works and Responsibility), *Ujamaa* (Cooperative economics), *Nia* (Purpose), *Kuumba* (Creativity), and *Imani* (Faith); and the seven principles of Ma’at — Balance, Harmony, Justice, Order, Reciprocity, Righteousness, and Truth, influenced racial identity formation of African American seventh-grade male students. This chapter addressed how the sets of seven principles, when combined together assisted in the formation of African American seventh-grade male students’ racial identity development.

For this study, the principles of Nguzo Saba were a major guide for African American students in developing a positive racial identity, thus reversing any negative identity issues brought on by racism and a Eurocentric worldview (Johnson, 2001). African American students should live by the principles of Nguzo Saba in order to reconstruct, rebuild, and relate with one another. This enabled African Americans to
organize their lives in order to create an image in which they can see themselves
(Karenga, 1977).

Sellers et al. (1998) explained that racial identity was formed when characteristics of the African American culture were formed. This formation was the result of psychological unification. Self-concept was related to racial group preference based on the guidance of the seven principles of Nguzo Saba. Helms (1990) found that as a person identifies with a racial group the relationship assisted in the formation of a racial identity. As one develops his or her racial identity, a high evaluation of self, whether directly or indirectly, provides psychological well-being (Sellers, Linder-Copland, Martin, & Lewis, 2006). This was significant in understanding being African American (Phinney, 1989). Self-esteem influenced by the seven principles of Ma’at, provided African American adolescent males with the ability to develop and maintain a healthy psyche in respect to their racial identity.

**Identity Affirmation: Becoming Racially Aware**

Within this theme, seventh-grade male students discussed how they felt about being African American. The council of elders/committee members and teachers explained how they assisted students in dealing with peer pressure. Teachers also addressed their role in guiding students toward developing and maintaining a positive racial identity.

African American adolescents who had pride in their ethnicity did not manifest a preference for White culture. Although some African American adolescents seek acceptance into the White culture that causes identity confusion, as the person is unable
to understand where he or she fits into the social scheme of the culture (Phinney, 1989). African American adolescents who have a collective identity in relation to the African culture are aware of who they are and where they belong (Ogbu, 2004), and are proud of this association (Arce, 1981).

The questions “*Do you wish you were a White teenager? Why or why not?*” were posed in order to understand if some of the participants wished they were not of African descent.

**Lorell:** No, because Black people have more culture.

**Benjamin:** No, you know how you see some White dudes looking like Black teenagers? They are trying to be like us.

**Geno:** I wouldn’t because we have more history than White people.

**DaMar:** I wouldn’t because I love Black history.

**Steve:** No, because I am proud of who I am.

**Terrance:** No, a lot of White teenagers have a lot of things prepared for them, I want to be able to create a path myself.

**Thomas:** No, I’m proud to be Black; I get to make my own path.

The participants expressed being proud of and pride in their “Blackness” because they have a worthy history. In U.S. society, trying to pattern oneself after a European is what some African Americans strive toward, but for these participants attempting to emulate or wishing to be a White teenager was something they were not interested in accomplishing. The viewpoint they expressed above are explained by Hermanowicz and Morgan, (1999), Miron and Lauria (1995), and Wong, Eccles, and Sameroff (2003) that to know one’s self, a person must have a profound understanding of his or her racial heritage and culture. This knowledge developed when a person connects with the culture’s social practices, this enhances and confirms his or her racial identity. Further,
acknowledgment of ethnic identity can lead to a sense of pride and devotion to the African American culture, motivating the person to want to do something that enhanced the community (Arce, 1981). If African Americans were confused about their racial identity and desired to be included into the White culture, then it meant they had internalized White cultural values (Phinney, 1989), which were based in individualism and not the African philosophy of collectivism (Asante, 2003). According to Asante (1998, 2003) and Karenga (1977, 2003, 2004), the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at, viewed from an African-centered perspective, can guide African American adolescents toward a positive racial identity, and in the case if the participants above it seemed to be producing a favorable impression.

Adolescence is a critical point of development (Erikson, 1968), as African American seventh-grade males “are actively exploring and seeking out information related to being a member of” (Seaton, 2009, p. 137), developing “Black consciousness, they begin to realize distinct physical characteristics that are unique to the African American culture and different from other cultures (Clark & Clark, 1939).

During the period of adolescence, most African American males are developing a psychological orientation (Carter & Goodwin, 1994), in which they ascribe to the African American culture (Seaton, 2009). It was important for a positive racial identity formation to be grounded in an Afrocentric worldview (Akbar, 1996; Asante, 1988, 1991, 2003; Cokley, 2005; Woodson, 1998). Knowing about one’s ancestral history can guide him or her toward who or what you can become in life; this is, in part due to having heroes and heroines in the African American culture who have made great contributions to society
(Anselmi & Peters, 1995; Asante, 1991; Cross, 1991; Tenorio, 1994). There are also people in the African American culture who have made negative impact in society, which may also influence African American adolescent males’ behavior (Hanlon, Simon, O’Grady, Carsswell & Callaman, 2009; Rodkin, Pearl, Farmer, & Van Aker, 2003).

Saunders, committee member, provided an example of this negativity, explaining:

There are roughly 15% of African American males who are caught up in the prison system. We have more kids in college now and what people say is there are more African American males in jail than there are in college. In certain states, that may be true, but in most states it is not. You have to look at what you are comparing.

A person can go to jail in most states at 12 years of age. In some states, you have 16 to 34 year olds in jail. If you reduce this down, you have from this group 16 to 28 year olds in jail. Now let’s look at college age; think about the age limit on college and how many people go to college. You’re really talking about 19 to 22 year olds. So you take and measure kids 14 to 28 and say, you got a whole group of people to select from. Now you come to the issues of college and you have 19 to 22 year olds, what type of measure is this and what is the message that goes behind this? This is a powerful message because you are saying African Americans 34 and under is in prison.

Now take a 15 year old African American male, he may think, I am supposed to be in prison because that is the norm in the African American community. I believe, when you start identifying yourself and say wait a minute, is that me, or is this me, or is this what I want, or who do I want to be? Prison is not the norm for us. (personal communication, July 29, 2010)

Saunders pointed out that African American males were more than likely to be victims of the judicial system; more so than attend college. He argued that the perception was more African American males were in prison which could lead this group into questioning being college material. There are a higher percentage of African Americans in jail than there in college (Barbarin, 2010; Yates, 2007). African Americans were punished more harshly, because of their Blackness, for the same crime as non-African Americans (Coker, 2003; Fenning & Rose, 2007).
Adolescents in the judicial system have become a social phenomenon. Juveniles were being sentenced and transferred over to an adult judicial system. There were negative effects for these delinquent children being confined in the adult jails once they become of legal age (Chessman & Waters, 2010; Fedders, 2010; Rodríguez, Franco-Rodríguez, Cepero- López, & Bringas, 2010). The ages of these adolescents range from 10 to 17 years. In some cases, when the offender was convicted as a juvenile and sentenced, the sentencing flowed over into the adult judicial system, where the juvenile offender was then placed in state or federal prison. There are 42 states that participate in such a system; Ohio had incorporated this into its judicial system since 2002 (Chessman & Waters, 2010; Fedders, 2010; Katner, 2006; Rodríguez, Franco-Rodríguez, Cepero-López, & Bringas, 2010).

This was one reason why Mama Fairbanks, the language arts/reading teacher, had students read *A Treasure Within: Stories of Remembrance & Rediscovery* by Akua (2002). As she stated, “There is a section just for males dealing with peer pressure. This boy [Marcus] is being pressured by his friends to do certain things that he knows is wrong.” Mama Fairbanks continued her assessment of the significance of the book and what it taught the students:

African American male students have few males in their homes, so here [at the school] males use that Afrocentric piece [principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at] in order to relate to them, to help them get through whatever it is they’re going through.

Using the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at as our guide, we’re slowly but surely strengthening and helping African American seventh-grade male students to go into a different direction, as opposed to the violence and the disruptions they cause.

I can see a lot of these changes in seventh-grade African American male students. I have had them since July 2010 and I have actually seen a lot of them
turning situations around. They are using the Afrocentric piece to guide them or to deter them from doing certain negative things.

Mama Fairbanks was suggesting that most households were headed by single mothers with no father figure or male role model around to provide guidance to African American adolescent males. She pointed out that at the Afrocentric School teachers help the students use the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at to assist them with some of the issues they face.

The Africentric School taught African American seventh-grade male students how to incorporate the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at into their lives. This provided African American seventh-grade male students the tools to move forward and become resilient (Fenwick, 1995). Another book that Mama Fairbanks had students read was *The Pact: Three Young Men Make a Promise and Fulfill a Dream* by Davis, Jenkins, and Hunt (2002). *The Pact* centered on the lives of three African American males who set out to pursue their adolescent dreams of becoming doctors (see Appendix Q). Mama Fairbanks said, “It teaches young African American males that there is another way to deal with negativity.”

In *The Pact*, the three young African American males faced many obstacles that led two of them into the juvenile system. With the right support, guidance, and influence, they managed to create a path that led them toward a positive outcome. Each male reflected on what happened to him around the seventh grade, to which the participants might be able to relate. The principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at can be viewed through the actions of the three main characters.
The stories of these three young men demonstrated the principle *Kujichagulia*, (self-determination). Because they came from what is considered broken homes, low-income neighborhoods, one-parent households, or drug-addicted parents, none allowed these circumstances to identify him. Although Sam and Rameck were in trouble with the juvenile justice system, they were able to turn their lives around with each other’s support, time to reflect on their lives, and the moral meaning of the pact agreement they had made with each other and with George. The young men were able to define themselves and pursue a dream with positive outcomes. The principle of *Balance* can also be seen in each young man’s life. As they tried to balance their future dream of becoming doctors with the issues of being adolescents, as well as the issues of finding positive peers with whom to associate.

One reason to have participants read such a book was, as Baba Morris pointed out, “We try to do the best job we can to assist African American seventh-grade males with identity. To have the kids have a strong sense of their identity as African Americans in terms of a positive identity.” When the students developed a favorable self-concept based on the education they received at the Afrocentric School, it elevated their self-esteem in such a way that made them proud of their race.

African American adolescent males are disproportionately arrested, three times more likely than White adolescent males (Fite, Wynn, & Pardini, 2009; Smith, 2008). Puzzanchera (2009) found that African American adolescents between the ages of 10 to 17 were involved in 51% of the nation’s violent crimes and that the majority of African American adolescents from low-income neighborhoods with inadequate schools have a
higher rate of being jailed (Abrams & Hyun, 2009). Since some African American adolescent males have friends who are juvenile delinquents, they are stereotyped in a negative manner for associating with them and are viewed as delinquents (Leiber & Johnson, 2008; Preveaux, Ray, LoBello, & Mehta, 2004; Puzzanchera, 2009). Therefore, the work of the school is set against other agents of socialization in the student’s life.

Baba Morris, a social studies teacher addressed this when he said that “teachers in the Africentric School are losing in a terrible way to other things African American adolescent seventh-grade males see at home, in the media, their neighborhoods, or other outside forces.” He clarified this statement by arguing that the media are “stronger than what we do here, but we still can’t give up the battle.” Mama Cole, a science teacher, said she thinks the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at “can protect African American adolescent seventh-grade male students from the stresses of racism, because issues of racial identity resulting in racism are going to happen in their lives.” Mama Hall, the English teacher, stated that if the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at “is applied in each classroom, I think it will give them a stronger background, but unfortunately, I don’t think it’s applied in each classroom.” The phenomenon of college-bound versus the juvenile system results in cultural trauma.

Eyerman (2001) explained that cultural trauma is the backlash effect of “a dramatic loss of identity” (p. 2), which affects African American people’s ability to achieve cohesiveness. Cultural trauma does not have to be experienced by each individual in the culture, but the collective memory impacts even the definition of the African American culture (Eyerman, 2001). What does cultural trauma have to do with
identity affirmation and becoming racially aware? Eyerman (2001) discussed the issues of slavery, not just the brutality of the slave system, but its effect on identity of enslaved Africans and their descendants. He argued that “cultural trauma always engages a ‘meaning struggle,’ a grappling with an event that involves identifying the nature of pain, the nature of the victim and the attribution of responsibility” (p. 3). This is a form of collective experience that disrupted the formation and meaning of the African American identity (Eyerman, 2001). One means of addressing this particular effect of cultural trauma was to learn about the African culture that predated events associated with the oppressive system of slavery. Baba Jeffries, a social studies teacher, said:

> Things won’t be as hard as they always are and I don’t like to always present that the African American experience has always been a struggle. Yeah, the majority of history has been a struggle, but in this day and age, if we’re doing the right things, the struggle shouldn’t be as great as it used to be.

There was more to the African American culture than struggling in life. If a person lived their life in a productive manner, then he or she would not have to struggle as much as their ancestors did.

Mama Grace, a parent, discussed the reciting of The Pledge, and how the words should be used to assist her son with a situation or a crisis that he may be experiencing. She said, “You don’t really know if they are paying attention and learning, until what they have learned is used when a situation calls for it.” She was implying that her son was paying attention while attending school and learned how to implement the seven principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at into his life. These principles guided him in how to deal with issues of racism, inequality, and the stresses of being an adolescent.
Saunders explained that these two sets of principles were “a way of life” which guided a person. He discussed his childhood and how his mother “taught him about supporting Black businesses” — *Ujamaa*. He said that she taught him “about having faith in the creator, the family, and neighbors” — *Imani*; how she reiterated that he should “be creative” — *Kuumba*. Although “my mother would say she’s not from Africa, she taught me the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at. We just did not have those words” (personal communication, July 29, 2010). It was this type of philosophy that was aimed at guiding African American seventh-grade male students in developing a path that would not lead to a life in the criminal justice system. There was a history of oppressive situations in the African American culture, the Afrocentric concept encouraged them to take a different avenue that could direct them toward college and a chance to give back to the community.

In summary, the participants seem to be grounded and appreciative of their history and racial identity, as each stated that he did not wish to be a White teenager. The participants recognized that racism existed in the United State, but through storytelling narratives, did not want to abandon their African American culture, and were grateful to acquire knowledge pertaining to their ancestors (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Although there were numerous issues involving the juvenile judicial system that African American adolescents seem to be prone toward, the participants of this study knew that they could still make a positive contribution to society. This was seen in the lives of the three doctors in the book *The Pact*. It was important for juveniles involved with the juvenile judicial system to know that this was not the end of their lives. Knowing this will enable
them to make a path for themselves and to be productive citizens in society, in much the same way as the characters in *The Pact* did. The classroom was a major entity in supporting and maintaining the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at and in this way, it provided an understanding of racial identity development.

**Teachers’ Impact on Racial Identity Formation**

Within this theme, teachers discussed how they could impact students’ racial identity formation based on student-teacher interactions in the classroom, students shared their story of facing racism, and teachers discussed the benefits of an Afrocentric education. The teacher’s knowledge and belief about African American adolescent male students influenced the teacher-student relationship in the classroom (Milner, 2005b).

Baba Taylor, the lead principal explains that:

> You’ve gotta be a learner yourself (teachers). You’ve gotta be reading up and understanding the clientele you’re dealing and working with. I think for the most part of my staff have a good rapport and good teaching relationship with my students.

It was essential to know and understand African American adolescent males and not to make assumptions about them (Delpit, 2003). Negative assumptions can be viewed as the teacher’s being racist toward the student given the long history of racial tension including relationships within the U.S. school system (Stevenson, 2008).

It was important to obtain an understanding from the teacher’s perspectives to see how each one viewed his or her interaction with African American seventh-grade male students, because the students were participating in frequent activities that were focused on self-identity and need to be assisted in clarifying and providing knowledge to address the question “Who am I?” (Nakkula & Toshalis, 2006).
Baba Stevens said “I view it (student-teacher classroom interaction) positively. I enjoy African American seventh-grade male students. I enjoy the questions that they give me. I enjoy teaching them. It’s a very enjoyable class for me. I love it when they come to class.” During the classroom observations of African American seventh-grade male students for this research, they seemed to have a positive relationship with Baba Stevens. Each one appeared to respect him and each other as they work on class assignments. The classroom environment was quiet, representing the principles of Harmony, Order, and Balance; each student would do his work without having side conversations.

Three of the nine participants implied that they had a stronger more favorable teacher-student relationship with Baba Stevens: Derrick said “Baba Stevens, he’s a cool teacher. He teaches well, he’s interactive with the other students, and he’s the basketball coach.” Steve added that “I guess that’s why he’s good with students; he helps with stuff.” Geno said, “Baba Stevens is just a real good teacher.” Baba Stevens characterizes his classroom interaction with African American seventh-grade male students as being:

... very positive between us. We have open dialogue. We talk. It’s not real regiment where they have to be polite and respect one another for the most part. I want them to be curious. I don’t want to crush any curiosities that they have. So, it doesn’t bother me when they blurt out questions they want answered. They just want it answered real bad. That type of stuff really doesn’t bother me, and they appreciate that. It makes them feel like whatever they are saying is important. If it’s important to them, it’s important to me.

Baba Stevens had a relaxed demeanor and was not considered strict with punishing students. It was acceptable for the students in his class to have moments of outbursts. He did not view verbal outbursts as a form of disrespect but rather as a sign of excitement to have a question answered.
Mama Hall explained her perception of the student-teacher relationship in her class, “I have a relationship with all my students. I believe without having that, I wouldn’t be able to come in the door.” While Mama Hall’s class was being observed, the students worked on their assignments, and when a side conversation was in process, she would immediately silence the classroom by asking, “Do I hear any talking?” The principles of *Order, Harmony, and Balance* could be seen in the actions of the students on several occasions in Mama Hall’s classroom. The students did their work quietly most of the time and participated in class when the lesson called for participation; they answered questions.

Two of the nine participants said they get along well with Mama Hall. Lorell said he got along better with Mama Hall “because she’s easy to get along with, but people just don’t follow the rules and get in trouble; but she’s just easy to get along with.” DaMar said that he, too, got along with Mama Hall “because, if you needed help or something, she’ll help you, and if you need something repeated on a spelling test, she will repeat the word for you. She’ll just guide you through certain assignments that you don’t like or can’t figure out.”

Baba Morris said, the student-teacher interaction in his classroom “is genuine, face-to-face. It’s competitive in my classroom because they want that competition, no matter what it is. It’s almost like a challenge.” When Baba Morris’ classroom was observed, there were times when African American seventh-grade male students would become talkative, engaging in conversations that did not pertain to the class lessons. The principles of *Harmony, Order, and Balance* were noticeable in Baba Morris’ class, as
students would work together in figuring out problems. The students would have homework assignments ready to turn in to the teacher and complete their in-class assignment within the allotted period, with enough time left to go over the assignment. Baba Morris, on occasion, allowed some talking to occur but after a few minutes he guided the students back to their assigned work.

Terrance, Thomas, and Benjamin stated that Baba Morris was the teacher they got along with the most. None would elaborate on this opinion. Baba Morris explained the characteristics of his student-teacher relationship as “above average. I think they gravitate to me because I can get down to their level. I can talk their talk. I can walk their walk. It’s almost like having street cred, except I have teacher cred. I think they’ve given me that and that’s why the relationship is above average.”

Baba Jeffries stated:

I think my interaction is actually very good. I think I have established a good rapport with African American seventh-grade male students. The administration has me teaching the middle school kids this year. One reason is the assistant principal said he felt it would be good to have a strong teaching validity in the middle school level.

I feel comfortable because seventh-grade African American boys are just one year away from my own son. I have a sixth grade kid at home so some of the things, I can kind of relate to real quick. I truly look at those kids as if they are one of my kids; that’s the way I treat them as much as possible. Sometimes, as difficult as that can be, it can be good or bad, I try to treat them like they were my own kids, if I get on my own kid about something that’s constructive; it’s the same thing here in terms of my classroom interaction.

I think I get along with African American seventh-grade male students pretty well. We have our days, but, for the most part, I could have just gotten on a kid, could have chastised him very harshly. The next day it’s “How you doing Baba Jeffries?” and I’m the same way, with him, “How you doing?” Every day is a new day. I don’t take it personally, especially at that age because, they may have forgotten what they’ve done five or six minutes after it’s done. To be honest with you, if I were to stay at the middle school level, I wouldn’t have a problem.
teaching all male stream, I wouldn’t have a problem at all. I think I’d do better than I do with the female stream class.

Baba Jeffries would treat the students as if they were his children. If the student needed to be chastised or praised for his behavior, he had no problem with this. If he chastised the student, it was rare for the student to hold a grudge or develop mal-feelings toward Baba Jeffries. During the observation of Baba Jeffries’ class, it was noticeable that African American seventh-grade male students paid attention to what he was instructing because he would repeat the instructions only once. Baba Jeffries would then have a student explain the assignment, and then ask if there were any questions. If there were no questions, the students would begin to read and work on their assignment. Sometimes there would be side conversation and, like other teachers, Baba Jeffries would allow some talking, but then quieted the class.

Mama Fairbanks explained her teacher-student classroom relationship stating that:

With African American seventh-grade male students, I always look at it this way: Mothers have always loved their sons and they raised their daughters. So with my male students, I’ve always given them the instructions. You almost have to map things out for them from the beginning and show them that this is what I want. You really have to model with male students, if you don’t, they will always expect you to do things for them. So I’m showing you this is the way we’re going to do this assignment. On Monday, I will model it for them. On Tuesday, when we come back, this is what I’ve expected from you because I’ve already shown you what I expect you to do. I don’t wanna be your mommy. I need you to understand that this is the role you have to take on; you’ve got to stand up for yourself. You can’t expect anyone else to carry you. You’ve got to carry yourself. So with the male students, whatever I’ve explained to them or I ask of them, they know in advance they need to follow the instructions.

During the days of observation in Mama Fairbanks’ class, students were held accountable for homework and following directions. Sometimes African American seventh-grade
male students asked what the assignment was, as if they did not hear the instructions. Mama Fairbanks encouraged them to listen, to read over the instructions, and to think about what they are supposed to be working on. It appeared, at times, that some students were preoccupied with something else and just did not pay attention. On many occasions the principles of Order, Balance, and Harmony could be viewed in the classroom. Mama Fairbanks expected students to come to class prepared by having done their homework assignment, having read whatever was assigned the day before, and having turned all work in on the day it was due. If not, a parent was called and informed that the student was falling behind in his assigned work.

Mama Fairbanks elaborated further about the characteristics of her teacher-student relationship stating that:

As African American seventh-grade male students, really any student, they have to feel that you care about them. My male students know that they can come to me and tell me just about anything. And if they’re wrong, I’m going to tell them they’re wrong. I’m going to tell them how they should have done it and that the next time you need to make sure you handle it differently. Showing that you care is very important to African American seventh-grade male students.

She viewed this group as needing to be nurtured and cared for. Students understood that they could discuss anything with her; and that she would guide them toward a better way of dealing with his issues.

Baba Noll viewed his teacher-student classroom relationship this way: “Kids who are not insubordinate, I have a better relationship with. We just did an arm wrestling tournament and I helped them prepare for that. Kids who are insubordinate, I have to have an ‘I’m in charge’ attitude and be more stern with them.”
On numerous observation days, Baba Noll appeared to have difficulty facilitating the classroom. Students were walking around, talking with one another, and did not look at the board as he was trying to explain math problems. It was rare for any of the principles of Nguzo Saba or Ma’at to emerge in his classroom. Baba Noll characterized his teacher-student relations as “friendly, to develop mutual respect, and to be their advocate.” There were a few occasions when a male student was asked to leave the classroom and go to the principal’s office. Once the student returned, he apologized after class was over.

Finally, Mama Cole briefly discussed her teacher-student classroom relationship as being “a real trick, because I wanna be warm and kind and generous; but at the same time I have to be seen as firm and in charge.” Although Mama Cole was observed as being friendly and kind toward the students, she appeared to become very frustrated with the class on a few different occasions during observation. Students appeared not to be paying attention to what she was demonstrating during class lectures and rarely participated in class discussion by answering questions. Students were up, walking around, and talking with other students. Again, the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at did not appear in most students’ behavior in her class.

Mama Cole said of her teacher-students relationship:

Well, there’s humor and there’s power, because they don’t want me to be the one that’s right. I understand that because they are becoming young men and they don’t want to be seen as vulnerable. They don’t want to be seen as wrong or needy, but yet you see that some of them will be leaning on their partners. They are all those things, too.
Two participants did not view Mama Cole in a favorable manner.

**DaMar**: I don’t do anything and she always calls my dad for no reason.

**Lorell**: You’ll be sitting there, learning and wanting to do your work, and she wants to give you lunch detention for no reason.

During observation, it was noticed on two occasions that Mama Cole would give a detention to a student who rarely held a side conversation, especially when compared to the few students who had side conversations on numerous days.

Three participants mentioned Baba Phillips, a math teacher, who was not interviewed for this study, as their least favorable person.

**Geno**: I’m good at math but it’s not my favorite subject. I would like to learn it better.

**Terrance**: Baba Phillips can’t teach and he’s an awful teacher.

**Steve**: I feel parsed that some of the students in that class are smarter than Baba Phillips in math.

On a few days of observation, Baba Phillips spent the majority of the class time trying to get the students to pay attention. He continually threatened to give lunchtime detention, which students did not appear to take seriously because they continued to hold loud side conversations.

Mama Hall said:

I think some of the teachers that are here feel like they don’t want to be here and African American seventh-grade male students know the teacher don’t want to be here. They start to feel like, if the teachers don’t want to be here, I don’t want to be here. Why should I be here? What’s wrong with my culture? If the teachers aren’t in tune with what the students are feeling, it would definitely be an impact on their racial identity development; and some teachers don’t want to be here.

Mama Hall suggested that some male students would notice that a teacher did not want to teach at the Afrocentric School. This perception led students to wonder why and began to
question what is wrong with their culture; since the teacher did not want to teach at the school.

The student-teacher classroom relationship is crucial for African American seventh-grade male students because they need to be understood, nurtured, and bonded with (Hale, 2001; Kunjufu, 2002) while they develop a sense of who they are (Willem-Lannegrand & Bosma, 2006). Teachers need to have and build a nurturing relationship with them that will enable them to understand African American adolescent male students (Cooper, 2003). Teachers must be comfortable educating African American adolescent male students in self-knowledge, thus making students aware of their racial identity. This knowledge will enable African American adolescent male students to be cognizant of their history (Kenyatta, 1996; Milner, 2005a).

Baba Jeffries reported:

I think we’re still not on the same page in regard to teaching African American seventh-grade male students about their history and racial identity. You have some people who are uncomfortable teaching this. For example, a White male or female teacher, and they’ve told me this. They have been very honest, these are people who like working with kids and who love kids. They are saying sometimes they will feel a little intimidated and uncomfortable because they are not a Black male. They say, what can I teach these Black kids about Afrocentrism? I can teach math, English, history, or whatever. I can do my job and do it well. That goes to the lack of training in Afrocentrism.

You have to really prepare that person more and do some more in the form of workshops. If you ask people who’ve been here for years, they will say, we did a lot better teaching Afrocentrism when the school first started. But we’ve kind of gotten away from that.

I think with our new principal, Principal West, who believes and embraces the idea of Afrocentrism, I really believe we are going to be going back in that direction of teaching more on Afrocentrism. It’s not going to happen overnight but I really feel confident in what he’s doing with this school.
Some teachers, especially White teachers, had expressed not feeling comfortable teaching African American males about their race or teaching from an African-centered perspective. This type of philosophy made it difficult for teachers at the Afrocentric School to be on what he considered the same page. Some of the teachers felt that since Principal West had been reassigned as lead principal, he would be able to guide all the teachers back to having their lessons taught and grounded in Afrocentrism. They remarked that this was how teachers originally educated students and they were knowledgeable in how to implement an African-centered perspective in the classrooms. Teachers are viewed as powerful characters, who can affect positive racial identity development, among African American adolescent male students. Teachers must feel and be comfortable teaching African American learners (Cooper, 2003).

Mama Cole stated:

I guess my first impression would be — aren’t they already aware of their racial identity? Maybe this type of school will help them more fully understand their Blackness and add on some dimensions that could make them feel good about themselves, rather than how other people perceive them or how the media portray them.

She suggested that because she had been at this school for one year, the students had no concerns about their “Blackness.” Her opinion was based on the premise that the Afrocentric School educated the students about awareness and guided them to act as young African American males. This awareness could make the issue of racism disheartening as reaffirmed by (Duncan, 1996). Facing racism can also lead to feelings of hopelessness (Nyborg & Curry, 2003). Racism imposed by White society was a means of preserving their superiority ideology. Therefore, the task of the school in raising Black

The participants discussed their exposure to what each perceived as racism. Geno reminisced about being on crutches explaining that “I was on crutches and I couldn’t open up the car door. I accidentally hit this White woman’s car door and she got mad.” Lorell and Terrance discussed their issue of facing racism while at a pool. Lorell (when he was at a recreation center) said, “I was at the swimming pool and I was swimming. I was arguing with this White girl and she said, ‘At least I don’t swim like a Black person.’ I said, ‘I don’t care because Black people accomplished more.” Terrance described his incident as:

We were in Zanesville in a White hotel and we went swimming, our whole football team, and every White person got up and left. They started complaining and the owner kept calling the hotel room, saying we were making too much noise. We were all in the pool, only one person was in the room and we weren’t making much noise.

Benjamin had a more blatant experience involving racism as he was called a derogatory name. He said, “I was on the bus and this boy, he’s White, called me a half Nigger. I got mad and started hitting him.” DaMar and Thomas had experienced racism while playing football. DaMar explained, “I was at this football game in Zanesville. I think they called a penalty and then they gave the White team (players) the ball at the 10-yard line. We didn’t deserve a penalty.” Thomas described being at a relative’s house, stating:
I was at my grandmother’s house and there were a couple of White kids outside playing and we were playing football. And when we tried to tackle the person with the football, one of the kids said, Can I say the word?, he said,” Move Nigger. I felt mad because, well, I shouldn’t be mad, but I felt mad because Black people call each other Nigga, but it’s not the same when a White person says it, because we Black people have about the same color skin and a White person’s skin is a whole different color.

Derrick:

The time I experienced racism, I was riding on the Greyhound to Alabama and when we got on another bus to head to Tennessee, these White people was saying all these little boys. They kept calling us boys.

Steve:

When I went to the store with my friends, only like two of us was allowed in at one time. I felt disrespected like I’m going to steal something. And then four White kids came and all of them went into the store at one time. I really felt disrespected like I am going to steal something from you. I don’t steal and I am not going to steal anything from you. All Black people don’t steal. They [the workers in the store] just did it because I’m Black.

As already discussed, facing issues of racism can lead to psychological stress, impacting negatively self-concept and low self-esteem (Bulhan, 1985; Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999; Feagin, 2001; Nyborg & Curry, 2003). Racism includes, but is not limited, to “beliefs, attitudes, institutional arrangements, and acts that tend to denigrate individuals . . . because of phenotypic characteristics or ethnic group affiliation” (Clark et al., 1999, p. 805). Afrocentricity in this school, guided by the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at, aims to empower students, thus providing a means to deal with issues of racism. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2001), racism and racial issues will not become an acceptable norm when a person is grounded in the knowledge of his or her culture.
Based on the participants’ responses, it was apparent that their experiences were characteristic of Cross’ (1971) *encounter stage*. This stage addresses any verbal or visual events dealing with racism. As each participant encountered what he perceived to be a racist event, each discussed how it made him feel; this ranged from uncomfortable to physically attacking the “racist” person. No participant felt any guilt about being African American. As a matter of fact, one acknowledged that he had more history than the White person who was attempting to make him feel inferior. The state of mind indicative of this response points to Cross’ (1971) *emersion stage*, because the participants have been exposed to their history from an African-centered perspective and have no feeling of inferiority. None of the participants self-identified as a “Nigger,” because they have identified with the African American culture and not this inferior identity imposed by White ideology. The emergence of *Kujichagulia* (self-determination) is seen in this section because each participant who discussed what he perceived as racism was able to determine that this derogatory term was not a part of their identity.

Through the application of Critical Race Theory in the form of storytelling, Delgado (1989, 1990) explained that through the participants sharing of their stories of racism, they formed a mutual understanding of racial issues they have faced and may continue to face in the future. Although the African American seventh-grade male students’ stories were based on their perceptions, sharing them is a form of liberation because the participants do not feel oppressed by these events. They understand that Africans and African Americans have been historically oppressed, but they also know that within this history group solidarity was formed; this solidarity understood and
supported making White America aware of racist events in order to make changes in society.

African American adolescent males who self-identify with the African American culture were knowledgeable in their history and were committed to their ethnicity (Wakefield & Hudley, 2007). This knowledge, in the form of an Afrocentric education and a commitment to the culture, provided the tools to handle racist issues in a manner that does not affect African American adolescent males’ self-concept or self-esteem, as two teachers and a parent from the Columbus Africentric Early College explained.

Baba Stevens said, an Afrocentric education:

. . . is positive for African American seventh-grade male students, in which they gain a sense of self-esteem and they feel proud of being African Americans. That pride of being African Americans, gives them a little bit more pride about themselves.

According to Mama Hall, an Afrocentric education:

. . . primarily trying to get African American seventh-grade male students to develop a love for their culture. If they don’t have a love for their culture, they don’t have a love for themselves. If they have love for themselves, it will push them to do better and in the long run they will develop into better positive young men.

Mama Grace, a parent, said:

I think the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at give African American seventh-grade male students pride and I like it. I may say something like these Niggas are getting on my nerves, and my son will say mom, we don’t say that. Mom, promise me you won’t use that word. They actually know the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at and what all that means.

Kambon said, the “principles guide you to what you can do” (personal communication, March, 17, 2011). According to Kifano (1996), an Afrocentric education provides culturally relevant knowledge that is based on an African-centered perspective. This can
assist African American seventh-grade male students in dealing with the ideology of White superiority, because it provides a positive sense of identity that is grounded in the collectivism of the African and African American cultures (Asante, 1991; Bekerie, 1994; Karenga, 1995).

In summary, teachers had acknowledged that their classroom relationships were, most of the time, positive. This enabled to a large extent a learning environment that fostered mutual respect between the teacher and student. Teachers viewed as having “teacher cred” were empowered as they interacted with African American seventh-grade male students, because they were seen as credible, understanding toward the students’ needs, and caring about the students’ well-being. Teachers are “empowered if they walk into class and there is an air of credibility” (Asante, 1991, p. 29). Teachers who have displayed these characteristics in their interactions with students provided a learning atmosphere with minimum preconceived biases present.

The few White teachers, who felt uncomfortable teaching African American seventh-grade male students about their “Blackness”, need to re-educate themselves or enhance their knowledge regarding Afrocentric education. This knowledge can assist White teachers in preparing African American seventh-grade male students to face issues of racism in a positive manner based on guidance from the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at. According to Kambon, you “must understand your history in order to understand your future. African American seventh-grade male students can survive and develop against all adversities that come against them” (personal communication, March 17, 2011) when they are empowered by these principles.
Growing in an African-Centered Perspective

For this final theme of the third research question, seventh-grade teachers shared their perceptions regarding the differences observed in participants between sixth and seven grades. The students discussed the difficulties of being a pre-teen or teenager, teachers shared their views of the Nguzo Saba and Ma’at principles, and what they want society to know about African American seventh-grade male students.

Baba Jeffries said:

Sometimes, I don’t see a big difference that I should see. I see some of the same shortcomings in some of our high school students that I see in the middle school students. Even though I haven’t taught middle school in a while, I’m quickly seeing that this is where some of this starts. I see some academic gaps, some achievement gaps that have been overlooked, not identified. We’ve kind of just pushed them through.

I had some 12th graders last year asking some of the same basic academic questions that they should know, that some of my seventh-graders ask. I definitely see that at the seventh-grade level. They don’t have their identity yet, so they are still in the shaping and molding way.

In terms of differences in the seventh grade, I think you can do a little more shaping and molding of self-esteem issues. But at the same time, I don’t want to put in a bad light that all these kids have self-esteem issues. I’d say a majority of our kids don’t have identity issues. I think every kid we have is aware that he is an African American male. I’m sure he’s been told a thousand times that he’s endangered. You’ve got it in posters, you’ve got it on television, and you’ve got parents talking to them. I think they know who they are, but the thing that too many of them don’t have is all the tools to get where they need to get to. Even though we have everything here at the Afrocentric school that they need, I think self-esteem comes in because, particularly our males, don’t take full advantage of what we have at the Afrocentric School. I see that starting in the seventh grade.

It’s ironic because I sit back in the seventh-grade class and I say, man, this is similar to what I see in the ninth-grade class, in the 10th or 11th-grade class. I think a part of that is, I don’t think people like me saying this but, I just don’t believe that much in the K-12 concept. I love Afrocentrism, I love it to death, but I really think for our kids, there needs to be a separate middle school, separate elementary, and a separate high school. It can be on the same campus. Our elementary kids don’t get it as bad as our middle school kids, especially our seventh-graders.
I think seventh-graders get cheated the most in school, period; because they are kind of overlooked and that’s the most crucial age that you have, *it’s like the middle-child syndrome*, the preadolescence. They need more attention than anyone else. A lot of our middle schoolers look to our high schoolers whether it’s positive or negative to get their identity. Middle school is the most crucial, especially, seventh-graders, because they are coming into their own.

Baba Jeffries suggested that seventh grade was the stage to mold African American seventh-grade males but, they were often overlooked. He compared this to the middle child syndrome. Sixth-graders received a good amount of attention from teachers because they are still at the nurturing stage. On the other hand, eighth-graders received a good amount of attention because they were preparing for high school. Seventh-graders were often times left to proceed on their own in the schooling system; this was the time they need guidance from their teachers.

It is critical that in this school they are not overlooked in terms of how they are impacted by the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at. It will be important to discuss the perception of significant others had about their growth and adjustment within the framework of the African-centered perspective. The seventh-grade teachers and administrators shared their perception of seventh-grade male students since they transitioned from the sixth-grade.

Baba Stevens explained:

Seventh-grade African American male students are much more independent and much more adventurous. They are willing to try, willing to fight more, willing to be more physical, and willing to be a little more talkative. They are more aggressive and in a lot of ways, they are more confused than they were when they were in the sixth grade. Sixth-grade boys are kind of waiting for you to help them and seventh-grade boys feel like they already know, so they don’t want your help until they actually need it.
Students were viewed as more independent, although they were characterized as aggressive and a little more talkative. Most of the time they did not want help although they appeared to be confused with completing the assigned lesson.

Baba Morris said:

If I can say this, seventh-grade African American male students, their swagger, the way they carry themselves is different. Sixth-grade boys are very humble, very at ease, confused. Seventh-graders, it’s like “Man I’ve been there and done that. I’m not no sixth grader anymore.

Baba Noll reflects that:

Well, I have not taught many sixth graders, but they do become more mature. Some still act like sixth graders, some being immature, but seventh graders are more confident and know that it’s okay not to do what others are doing. It’s okay to do your own thing, to be different, not following the crowd of peers who are disruptive.

Baba Morris and Baba Noll suggested that seventh-grade male students were more confident which could be viewed in the way they carried themselves. Also he knew that it was alright not to give into peer pressure.

Mama Fairbanks adds:

We’ll, let me say it this way, because I just had these guys this year and I can look at the seventh-grade males I had last year who are now in the eighth grade. The maturity, you can actually see them maturing in the seventh grade as opposed to sixth grade. They are so goofy, they have no clue and all they want to do is play. My males, sixth grade on down, know that mommy is gone save me every single time. My seventh-grade boys last year are now eighth-graders. They were a handful, but with constantly implementing the different Afrocentric programs and reminding them that this is not the way we act. This is the way an African American male ought to be doing things. This is what we expect from an African American male. This is what society sees you doing; this is what you’re actually showing them; this is what you need to show them.

The students are more mature and becoming aware of how they should act; because society would judge them based on their actions. She pointed out that they (teachers)
taught them positive ways to behave as a means of avoiding negative stereotypical perceptions.

Mama Hall noticed this difference in seventh-grade male students basically:

It depends if the African American seventh-grade male student was here at the Africentric for the fifth grade and then passed to the sixth grade. If they were, then they are a little farther along in knowledge as far as their culture or heritage is concerned. Most of the time, from elementary, they know the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at, but if they were not here, for the elementary years and they are here now, it’s really difficult for the teacher to get them to want to know about their culture.

The principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at are implemented in the elementary grades, students are able to build on them, and inculcate into their lives. However, when the middle level grades are the first time student encounter these principles it was more difficult to understand and implement them into their lives.

Teachers want people to know a few things about African American seventh-grade male students: “They are extremely intelligent. That they are full of energy and if that energy is directed in a proper way, they can be some of your most gifted students that you have,” said Baba Stevens. Baba Morris said, “They are aggressive, competitive, and short-tempered. They can be confrontational and honest, and they will give you their all if you got that connection.”

Baba Jeffries wanted people to know that:

All African American males at our school are like any other kid, like most kids. We have a mix from the lowest socioeconomic to middle class. I want people to know that we should not look at these kids like they’re all poor, they all have single moms at home, everyone’s doing drugs, which are not the case. We do have some situations like that, unfortunately, a lot more than what we would like to have.

I like people not to look at our kids all the time as a victim because they take on that victim mentality and I hear kids say it. It’s really sad; they will say,
“Aaaww, man, kids at the Africentric School are crazy. So-n-so is trying to be smart, trying to do all their work trying to be white.” That to me is like the victimization thing. Our seventh-grade males, most of them I think are going to do well.

Unfortunately, some are not going to do well because of home situations and the decisions they are going to make as they get older; but I look at our seventh-grade males and I think they’re the most promising group between them and the eighth graders. They’re silly, loud; hey they’re seventh-grade boys.

Out of all my classes, I have three eighth-grade classes, two seventh-grade classes, one seventh-grade all girls and one seventh-grade all males, and the seventh-grade boys have the best grades out of all of them. I think they’re going to be some of my better students. They’re going to make it to Columbus State. They’re going to get college credit and they’re going to move on. In what I see now, the vast majority will do it, I’m pretty positive about it.

I don’t want people looking at our kids as victims, we have some real issues and we’re trying to get them some real help. For the vast majority, seventh-grade boys are well-adjusted.

Some people did not believe in the Afrocentric concept. To his knowledge, people just did not understand the concept and criticized it, especially African Americans. The students in attendance at the Afrocentric School were going to be guided by both sets of principles and become successful. These sets of principles would prevent student from being a victim of negative stereotypes because they were grounded in the concept.

Baba Noll said, “They are just looking for a relationship with you. Some may act like they don’t want that teacher-student relationship, but they do. It’s good for you to try to build a positive, strong teacher-student relationship with them.” Mama Fairbanks wanted people to know that:

They’re really very silly boys; they really are. They’re not men; I’m not trying to make them men. I’m trying to strengthen them as a male right now. If you get them to trust you, you can get anything out of them. They have to feel that you’re in their corner, no matter what.

Sometimes you’ll get a male student saying “You’re mean,” and I say, “So why are you in here talking to me about your problem?” And they say, “But you’re a different kind of mean. You’re mean, but you care.” I say, “I’m not really mean, I’m stern.” They’ll say, “What’s stern?” I’ll say “Someone who’s not
going to put up with your foolishness.” They’ll say, “Oh yeah, that’s what you are then.”

Mama Cole said, “They are delightful; they are really deep as far as their personality goes. Even though they are all different, I just find that there’s more to discover about them all the time.” Mama Hall said, “That they actually really want to learn. That they actually want to be a benefit to society and at this point, I think they are going to strive to do that.”

Jerry Saunders, a committee member, said:

If African American seventh-grade male students follow those principles and really follow them, I’m talking about Unity — Unity with your creator, by whatever name you call your creator, with your family, and with your community, and with your race. We talk about that — how you stand up and be proud about who you are, so that when you go into places being strong Black males.

I think that those principles add to your life. Kujichagulia — I talk this principle with my son. It’s more important that you impress your family than your friends and I talk to him about that now, whether he understands it or not. I do ask him about it, if he understands it, he says, “Yeah,” but I keep at it. It’s more important that you’re honest. A lot of our young folks, it’s more important to impress your friends, that’s across the spectrum, but typically, those who fare well academically, they have a strong desire to impress their peers. (personal communication, July 29, 2010)

Saunders was arguing here that it is important for students to learn that what the family perceive of them was more important than their peers. Being grounded in these two sets of principles would make African American seventh-grade students proud of who they are but, these principles needed to be reinforced at home and not just in the classrooms.

Mama Grace, a parent, said with regard to the difference she has seen in her son from the sixth to the seventh grade, “His self-esteem and maturity level have improved. He was always the one I had to push the hardest and watch, but his grades have just actually jumped up. He works harder than I think he does.”
Learning from an African-centered perspective educates students based on an Afrocentric ideology, which is relevant to their culture. This form of education was a means of reaching descendants of Africans, to construct their identities, to assist in sustaining them, and to develop a sense of order in the African American community (Asante, 1992, 2006; Cokley, 2005; Shockley, 2010). An African-centered perspective is not meant to alienate or to degrade others, nor is it to make the African culture appear superior (Asante, 1991).

African American seventh-grade male students have acknowledged that they have seen a difference in themselves since transitioning from sixth to the seventh grade.

**Steve**: I work way less in school.

**Lorell**: I’m much more lazier.

**DaMar**: I talk a lot more.

**Benjamin**: Since I’m older, I am learning more about myself.

However there were times they confused the principles as seen through these encounters. The participants could explain the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at, but they got them mixed up when asked, “Which principle of Ma’at do you practice most and why?”

**Steve**: *Kujichagulia*, ever since I started getting better grades and better grade point average, I learned that I can do good.

**Benjamin**: *Kuumba*, because I’m creative in everything I do.

**Geno, Lorell, and DaMar**: Made the same comment as Benjamin.

**Derrick, Darnell, Thomas, and Terrance** did not have a favorite principle.

The only problem with these answers was that the question addressed the principles of Ma’at and not Nguzo Saba. As one can see, the participants were still confused about
which set of principles represented Nguzo Saba or Ma’at; although the participants could explain the meaning of the principles. The principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at, based on an African-centered perspective, were used to guide the participants in school and home life. Some teachers perceived that African American seventh-grade male students did not understand these principles.

Baba Noll said, “It’s a joke to them. They don’t get it. But as the years accumulate, they will get it.” Baba Morris said:

I think coming from an Afrocentric school and trying to instill African American culture, it’s not balanced. I think teachers get away from teaching African concepts; it’s not balanced. The kids aren’t learning that aspect of it. Like the principles of Ma’at and Nguzo Saba, they are not learning that. They use it every day in the classrooms but they don’t comprehend; because, if they did understand the principles of Ma’at and Nguzo Saba, they would act totally different. They’d do things totally different and their grades would reflect that, but it’s not balanced.

Baba Morris argued that the students did not comprehend the concepts of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at. According to Baba Jeffries, since the U.S had become more diverse, the students needed to understand their uniqueness within the scheme of things.

Baba Jeffries response was:

I don’t want them to look at everything African or African American, because it is more global these days. But at the same time, they can recognize that there is uniqueness about themselves and they need to carry that on as they go throughout the world. The outcome is, they have a better sense of self and if they carry that out when they get to high school or college, they will have that background.

Baba Stevens said:

I think the principles are great. I think it’s beneficial but once again, these kids aren’t buying into it. Why aren’t they buying into it? I don’t know, maybe because as teachers we are not living it ourselves. Quite naturally, we are African Americans; we came up in a different system, not this system, so it’s not embedded in us to live.
If teachers were to model these sets of principles on a daily bases, it would be easier for students to be able to incorporate them into their lives. Until then, the principles appeared to be unbeneficial.

Mama Fairbanks said:

I think the principles make them feel good about themselves. Some other schools that I have worked in or my kids have gone to, when you are in an Afrocentric school and you see people who are just like you and you see teachers who are just like you, and you see these teachers reaching out to you it makes you feel good about yourself.

She was suggesting that students may appreciate and understand these principles better if they were taught by teachers who looked like them. The ideology of African American students being taught by teachers who look like them can be perceived as racist, since there are non-African American teachers in the school system who can teach this population. It would be good for this type of school to secure African American teachers who are grounded in an Afrocentric worldview to educate African American children. Reason being, it would be less likely for an African American male student to perceive the teacher being biased against him for correcting his negative behavior as compared to a non-African American teacher.

Mama Cole said:

It’s a little too much all at once, if we’re supposed to teach Community Cooperative strategies. Sometimes they don’t have the skills; at the same time I think it’s a great way to go. I think they haven’t necessarily been prepared for that yet by life so I have to teach them how to work together as well as let them work together.
Baba Taylor, the lead principal responded:

I think it’s more in their thinking, you know, the thought process. I can’t really pinpoint it, but, I think that at times, they be like, “These principles should make sense,” but they are fighting against so much at times, so it is difficult at times for them to grasp onto our principles, because they’ve got so many other influences.

This doesn’t go well, this doesn’t look cool with this over here; so I think they grapple with that a lot because they want be with the in-crowd and things of that nature. I tell them, the in-crowd is walking across the stage getting that diploma and that is it, because it’s a fight. It’s like, “Okay, I’m walking right, I’m being focused in class, and I’m trying to uphold Justice aaaww you snitched on us,” that’s that back and forth. So it does affect them.

They’re still fighting each other; they’re still mistreating each other as far as gender. It’s still a challenge for them. But we will not stop our focus, we will continue. If we have an issue, we pull it out, handle it, and we get right back to our focus. It is a war at times.

The seniors now, I had them in seventh grade, so how did they turn out? Very, very, very, well, they’re still goofy at times. They are much more mature, they carry themselves with pride. Even the opening ceremony is more powerful because of their pride, because they want it, you just see from the maturing, they are educated and versed in our culture here and they uphold it.

At first it was difficult, because a lot of the kids had not been here so long. Now my seniors and juniors, they’ve been here a long time. So does an Afrocentric education pay off? I have some outstanding graduates here; my junior and senior class now, is very strong and focused. Challenging these young people, they are doing a lot of positive things, especially my males. People will say Baba Taylor always has his boys around him; it’s a blessing, it’s a great situation to see these young men who were taking white out and writing on my walls in middle school, to now staying to meet after school and help out three to four hours. Helping with parents without even having to be asked, you know, you see these young people who are going to really make a difference.

It’s like you gotta stick with them. It’s like no matter what you’re doing, I’m stick in the corner with you. No one threw me away and I preach that to my staff. I’m not throwing any kids away; we’ve got to work with them and challenge them. I’ve really seen them maturing since the seventh grade, so seeing them from five years ago, it’s been great. It’s been great.

At this stage in African American seventh-graders’ lives they were still grappling with peer pressure, such as doing what their friends were doing, or being independent and not following the crowd. It was important to emphasize the importance of these two sets of principles in order to guide them in positive directions.
As African American seventh-grade male students were trying to balance issues of adolescence and academics, it was important to obtain an idea of how they were dealing with adolescence and school. The question asked was, “Is being a pre-teen/teenager difficult? Please explain.”

**Lorell:** Yes, because sometimes, people expect certain things from you. For you to do this or for you to do that.

**Terrance:** Yes, because you have to do things you don’t care about.

**Geno:** Yes, you have pressure like peer pressure and girls.

**DaMar:** Yes, you have pressure when people ask you to go somewhere and your mom won’t allow you to go.

**Thomas:** Yes, you have more responsibilities. If you got a house, you got to help take care of the house.

**Derrick:** Yes, you’ve got to help take care of your sisters and brothers.

**Benjamin:** Yes, you can’t go outside much anymore. You’ve got to stay in the house and do homework.

**Steve:** Yes, you only have like 10 minutes to go outside after you do homework and you barely have fun.

As the participants reported, it was tough being a teenager. They had more responsibilities, were expected to carry themselves in a mature manner, and had to help out at home more. This meant less time to do what they thought was important and of interest to them. At this period in their lives, they perceived girls in a different light, but had no idea how to approach those they admired.

Basically, African Americans seventh-grade male students are dealing with numerous emotional upheavals (Ma & Hueber, 2008), as they transition from the sixth to the seventh grade (Duchesne, Ratelle, Poitras, & Drouin, 2009). It is important for this group to have a positive school experience (Elmore & Huebner, 2010). Although middle school students are more disruptive in the classroom, it is their way of testing new
territory and boundaries (Nakkula & Toshalis, 2006). There are also changes African American seventh-grade male students are dealing with, for example, socio-cognitive skills (Barr & D’Alessandro, 2009) and body consciousness (Yoo, 2009). Dealing with these changes emotionally and physically, teachers must be understanding, nurturing, and be more strict with disciplining African American seventh-grade male students (Duchesne, et al., 2009; Nakkula & Toshalis, 2006). According to Mama Williams, the middle school principal, “It’s challenging to teach African American seventh-grade male students. The more seasoned teachers understand that they are going through hormonal changes. Newer teachers have a hard time relating to them because they’re going through those changes.” This group expected teachers to provide assistance in guiding them to make the right and best decisions that will affect their development process (Klimstra, Hale, Raaijmakers, Branje, & Meeus, 2009; Maylor, 2009).

During this stage of African American seventh-grade males’ developmental process it is difficult for them to balance hormonal issues and academics. They do not want the additional responsibilities put upon them by their parents and teachers. Responsibilities added to their lives will assist in building character as each continues in the development of their self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development. This is the period when the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at should become a point of reference in guiding African American seventh-grade male students into young adulthood. Implementing these principles will be an anchor in grounding them in the realities that the days of no responsibilities are no longer an option. They are African
American young men capable of handling responsibilities which will add to them becoming well-rounded.

**Chapter Summary**

Each of the three themes, 1) identity affirmation: becoming racially aware; 2) teacher’s impact on racial identity formation; and 3) perceived racism emerged from the data collected when the third research question was posed, “How is African American seventh-grade male students’ racial identity formation influenced by an African-centered perspective?” African American seventh-grade male students were able to develop and appreciate their “Blackness,” that was grounded in the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at when learning about their culture.

African American seventh-grade male students appreciated their racial identity as they expressed being proud of who they were, based on their “Blackness.” These students recognized that some White teenagers tried to emulate them by dressing in a style that is the signature of the African American male culture. Although these students were faced with numerous obstacles, due to their “Blackness” reading about other African American males, such as the characters in *The Pact* and the character Marcus in the book *A Treasure Within*, provided knowledge in dealing with peer pressure and being an African American adolescent.

Each one has acknowledged some differences in his demeanor since he has transitioned into the seventh grade. It is still a balancing act to adjust to the developmental stages of adolescence and academics. This can be seen in their statements regarding being a teenager.
It was important for seventh-grade teachers to have a positive relationship in the classroom, to assist these students with their development, in a positive manner. Although teachers may think the participants do not understand the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at, they do pay attention and will implement these principles when the need arises. These principles of Nguzo Saba guided students in developing their self-concept as African American adolescent males. The principles of Ma’at provided influence in developing high esteem of self. This provided assistance in dealing with issues related to their “Blackness” in a positive manner.

Balancing being a pre-teen or teenager was tough for the group as they felt the pressure of more responsibilities while progressing through the stages of adolescence. But an Afrocentric education that was guided by the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at directed them toward positive outcomes in how to handle these issues.
Chapter 8: Sustaining an Afrocentric School

Introduction

This chapter examines the sustainability of the Columbus Africentric Early College and how it had remained a viable public school. Some other Afrocentric schools that were discussed in the “Background of the Study” section in Chapter 1 revealed that lack of funding was an issue in the survival of these types of schools.

There are seven themes that emerged from this research question. They are: 1) sustainability of the Africentric Early College, 2) middle school implementation, 3) politics of establishing an Afrocentric school, 4) Afrocentric school and resegregation, 5) achieving the vision of the community, 6) Afrocentric curriculum, and 7) support of the Columbus Board of Education. Each will be discussed incorporating data from focus groups, individual interviews, document analysis such as newspapers, the Ohio Report Card, books used in the school and the literature.

Sustainability of the Africentric Early College

The Columbus Africentric Early College has been maintained in the Columbus Public School District’s system since 1996, 14 years before this study began. Some Afrocentric Schools throughout the United States have not survived, but the one in Columbus has been stable.

Baba Taylor, the lead principal, said,

I think our school is really sustainable because we are one of a kind in the country, especially since we have a strong, strong community backing. We’re being successful right now. Our ratings aren’t great, but we are being successful because, I always tell folks, yeah, test scores aren’t everything to me; but our kids are safe, kids are being educated, every one of them are going across the threshold.
My graduation rate last year: out of 64 students, 60 of them graduated. That’s a major piece, two of them graduated with their associate degree from Columbus State. A lot more graduated with one credit to umpteen credits, going into college; so they’re being successful. It’s just a good program, when it’s teaching them about their history, their culture, and what they have possible within them. It’s going to be a school sustained for a long time, I think. Especially with us getting a new building the next school year. I think that’s going to be a big piece to our success.

Being taught about their culture and history had provided guidance to students to become academically successful. The “village concept” was a strong system in motivation and supporting students at the Afrocentric School. The students believed in themselves and their abilities to accomplish the completion of their high school diploma and a college degree. The tables below will display data from the Ohio School Report Card for three school years 2008 through 2011 (see Appendix B) for more detailed results.
Information within this table was to reveal the test scores for seventh-graders in comparison to tenth-graders — (Ohio Graduation Test) and graduation rates.

Table 2. Ohio School Report Card 2008-2009

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<th>7th Grade Subjects</th>
<th>CAEC</th>
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<th>State</th>
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<tr>
<td>Graduation Rate</td>
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<td>73.9%</td>
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</table>

Notes: CAEC is the abbreviation of Columbus Africentric Early College; CCS is abbreviation for Columbus City Schools. For this school year the Designation was Continuous Improvement.
Test Scores and Graduation Rates 2009-2010

*Information within this table was to reveal the test scores for seventh-graders in comparison to tenth-graders — (Ohio Graduation Test) and graduation rates.*

Table 3. Ohio School Report Card 2009-2010

<table>
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<th>State</th>
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</table>

10th Grade Subject

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10th Grade Subject</th>
<th>CAEC</th>
<th>CCS</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
<td>68.6%</td>
<td>80.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>78.5%</td>
<td>79.5%</td>
<td>84.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>46.8%</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>71.9%</td>
<td>79.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graduation Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduation Rate</th>
<th>CAEC</th>
<th>CCS</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>87.1%</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: CAEC is the abbreviation of Columbus Africentric Early College; CCS is abbreviation for Columbus City Schools. No seventh grade writing results were reported during this school year. For this school year the Designation was Academic Watch.
Test Scores and Graduation Rates 2010-2011

*Information within this table was to reveal the test scores for seventh-graders in comparison to tenth-graders — (Ohio Graduation Test) and graduation rates.*

Table 4. Ohio School Report Card 2010-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7th Grade Subjects</th>
<th>CAEC</th>
<th>CCS</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>77.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>50.9%</td>
<td>74.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th Grade Subject</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>81.5%</td>
<td>78.3%</td>
<td>87.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
<td>68.6%</td>
<td>82.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>81.6%</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
<td>74.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>75.4%</td>
<td>68.9%</td>
<td>80.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Graduation Rate    | 94.5% | 77.6%| 84.3%  |

Notes: CAEC is the abbreviation of Columbus Africentric Early College; CCS is abbreviation for Columbus City Schools. No seventh grade writing results were reported. During this school year, Principal West was reported as lead principal. For this school year the Designation was Continuous Improvement.

It is clear from the details of the report cards shown above that the Columbus Africentric Early College has demonstrated academic success, with students grounded in their history. This was what African American parents and the community wanted for their children (Giddings, 2001; Kifano, 1994; Ward-Randolph, 2002).

The Columbus Africentric Early College will have a new school building that will be 140,000 square feet. It will hold an estimated 1,000 students. The budget for this new school facility is $32.7 million (http://www.columbus.k12.oh.us).
Mama Williams, the middle school principal, stated:

The pillars who are still here: we have a couple of teachers, one in particular, who is in the middle school, who has been in the school since its opening. We have an art teacher actually who’s been here since its second year. Mama Fairbanks and the other teacher is Mama Wilson. They have been here pretty much since the inception of the program. Their legacy in the building, they build a relationship with a parent who tells another parent, who tells another parent, and I’ve noticed it’s them that keep the parents here, which keep the students here. We have a few elders in the community who make sure that they publicize what they believe in the school as well.

Building rapport with parents who were committed to the Afrocentric concept aided in the success and sustainability of the school. Duchesne, Ratelle, Poitras and Drouin (2009) and Akos and Galassi (2004) found when parents and teachers build rapport, trust develops between the two groups. Parents are concerned about their children’s adjustment to school, meeting new friends, having strong academics, and not being bullied. Teachers assist in facilitating these issues among students and reassure parents that the program is best suited to address the needs of their children. Conklin, Hawley, Powell and Ritter (2010) suggested that parents and teachers having rapport leads to a productive learning environment for children. This adds to the sustainability of the school.

Saunders, a committee member, believed that the school’s sustainability was based on “the people, and the people’s strong desire to have their kids enrolled in the school.” (personal communication, July 29, 2010)

Tennant, lead committee member /council of elder member explained that:

Basically, it’s the staff believing in the total Afrocentric concept. The staff is basically White, and I’m totally against that. I’m not against White teachers. My belief is, if you’re going to infuse something into what you’re doing, then the staff
should look like the children. I believe that, I totally believe that. (personal communication, August 19, 2010)

Tennant was not being racist or insensitive toward non-African American teachers but, argued the importance for students to see themselves in their teachers. Teachers who have an Afrocentric philosophy are vital in educating African American students (Asante, 1991, 2006; Cooper, 2003). Hudley (1997), Milner (2005b), Neal, McCray, Johnson, and Bridget (2003) explained that in order for a teacher to be effective in the classroom he or she must have been educated in the Afrocentric philosophy, which would enable him or her to understand others’ perspectives from a non-western paradigm. Teachers have to understand their own perceptions and transform to be more open to other cultures. The teacher’s teaching philosophy was important in determining how their pedagogy could be implemented in the classroom to assist in educating students. Although an Afrocentric perspective is a requirement for teaching African American students, Tennant strongly suggest that this ideology is not pertinent enough. It is essential that African American students see teachers in their likeness in order to have a better relationship and nurturing bond. Teachers who are grounded in an Afrocentric philosophy and acknowledge personal biases should be able to educate African American students without feeling guilty or uncomfortable about the subject matter. The teacher’s teaching philosophy is key to ensuring that African American students are being taught and grounded in their culture, heritage, and the values of the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at.

Baba Stevens a science teacher, had a teaching philosophy that was, “All students can learn.” Baba Morris a social studies teacher, had a teaching philosophy that was, “I
am not going to give up on you, even if you give up on yourself.” Baba Jeffries also a social studies teacher described his teaching philosophy as:

I don’t have any elaborate teaching philosophy. I do believe that all students can learn. Can learn at all levels, [I’m] not saying that every student can achieve what other students can, but I have a strong belief that if you meet kids where they are socially as well as academically, they can be built up. We can help them from where they are at. I strongly believe there is potential for all.

An elaborate teaching philosophy was not essential in educating students, according to Beatty, Leigh and Dean (2009), “teaching philosophy statements clarify why we do what we do in the classroom” (p. 115). The teaching philosophy of Baba Noll, a math teacher was:

I try to reach everybody, to improve them from where they are, to help them get further. I try to help every kid in math because I teach math. I try to connect with kids to let them know that I care about them.

The teaching philosophy of Mama Fairbanks, the language arts/reading teacher was to “reach all students, no matter race, color, or creed. To teach them, to reach them, and to nurture them at all cost.” That of Mama Cole, a science teacher was to be:

Basically, a translator of knowledge from resources to a language medium that kids can use, take in, and remember. So it’s not enough to have textbooks with information. They need somebody that can help them decipher it and then remember it.

Pryor, Sloan and Amobi (2007) explained that a teacher’s teaching philosophy is important in making decisions in the classroom that will affect students’ academic pursuits. These decisions should involve assisting students with learning classroom material. The teaching philosophy of Mama Hall, the English teacher was, “I am strictly old school and believe that, regardless, all children can learn.” Teachers’ teaching philosophies are based on their personal theories (Suissa, 2008). Their philosophies are
embedded in the commitment teachers have toward educating students (Tormey & Henchy, 2008). A teaching philosophy supports what a teacher think is important in contributing to and developing the needs of the student (Schönwetter, Sokal, Friesen & Taylor, 2002). The teachers’ teaching philosophies and staffs views of the Afrocentric School were being examined in terms of supporting the middle school concept.

In summary, the Afrocentric School had been sustained since 1996 because of a strong community backing. It was successful because of the close connection the school had with the council of elders in the community, who were very supportive of the operation of the school, its mission, and its commitment to students. The council of elders in the community was active in attending meetings, talking with students, and showing that they cared about each child’s education and well-being. As Baba Taylor discussed, the school provided a safe learning environment for the students. Believing in the Afrocentric concept was especially important because students were learning from an Afrocentric perspective. The teachers’ pedagogical philosophies were student-centered, which was complementary to the concept of the middle school which was at the center.

**Middle School Concept Implementation**

At the time of this study there were 14 characteristics addressed by the National Middle School Association (2003) that were analyzed. The National Middle School Association (2011) explains 16 characteristics that, if correctly and completely implemented, could provide a well-rounded and successful middle school for adolescents. Teachers and administrators must believe in an Afrocentric ideology in order to guide African American students developmentally (Asante, 2006; Baker, 2005; Rockquemore,
Below are the ways the Columbus Africentric Early College demonstrated the 14 out of the 16 characteristics.

**Curriculum, Instructions, and Assessment**

Educators value young adolescents and are prepared to teach them:

The teachers at the Africentric Early College had expressed their understanding about the needs of African American seventh-grade male students, both developmentally and academically. Each teacher had an understanding of teaching the lessons from an African-centered perspective, assisted the participants with developing critical thinking skills, and prepared the participants for passing the Ohio Graduate Test (OGT). Each teacher was licensed to teach his or her particular subject at either the middle or high school level. Licenses must be renewed either every two or five years (see Appendix O). Teachers had expressed their roles as advocate, role models, or supporters of African American seventh-grade male students, along with collaborating with other teachers to assist in promoting each student in becoming a lifelong learner.

Students and teachers are engaged in active, purposeful learning:

Based on the teacher-student responses, teachers’ classrooms were student-centered. In one classroom, the students reiterated what the instructions were in order to assist them in remembering the day’s assignment. Teachers had provided detailed instructions to students along with step-by-step visuals to assist in learning the material. This also enhanced critical thinking skills. It was important not to continually provide repetitive instruction because students needed to actively listen in the classroom.
Curriculum is challenging, exploratory, integrative, and relevant:

The participants were able to ask questions relating to the day’s lesson. An example of this was seen in the science class when students were discussing the water treatment plant and why it smelled bad. Because of this bad smell the students were able to pinpoint which communities in the Columbus area the water treatment plants were located. In another class, students were discussing buying pop at McDonald’s and whether or not to have ice added. The class discussed that ice in a drink reduced the volume; therefore, when a person brought a 32-ounce cup of pop, if he or she did not add ice, that person would get 32-ounces of pop. But, if another person added ice he or she would get less than 32 ounces of pop because ice takes up space in the cup. The students were able to relate to this because unanimously they said from now on they will not ask for ice.

Educators use multiple learning and teaching approaches:

The students had hands-on experiences in the classroom when they were trying to determine, during one assignment, which would become saturated the quickest: small rocks, sand, or marbles. The students read about saturation and how long it would take for some things to become saturated. An experiment was conducted in class using small rocks, marbles, and sand to see which would become saturated soonest. One student held a glass filled with sand, while the other slowly poured water into the glass, as the teacher timed the process. Another student wrote down how much time each process took. A different student held a glass filled with marbles and, again, a different student slowly poured water into the glass. For the final experiment, a different student held the glass
filled with sand and a student slowly poured water into the glass to see how long it would take for the sand to become saturated. This was just one example of teachers and students engaged in the learning process in the classroom.

Varied and ongoing assessment advances learning as well as measure it:

Students were observed preparing for a writing simulation test. The teacher gave each student a scantron sheet to circle in his or her response and a booklet to practice answering questions by writing out their responses. Students had access to an online site to check their grades, attendance, and feedback from teachers regarding their progress in the classrooms (See Appendix N). Parents also have access to this website in order to keep track of their children’s academic progress.

**Leadership and Organization**

A shared vision developed by all stakeholders guides every decision:

The Columbus Africentric Early College had a vision based on the mission statement and on assisting all students in attending college in order to obtain at least an associate degree. The mission statement explained what the school was striving toward accomplishing it for the student population. This shared vision was also supported by the community due to the “it takes a village” concept that was implemented into the school’s activity. Each party — teachers, staff, and the council of elders worked together ensuring that students were on a productive academic and developmental road to becoming well-rounded citizens. Whenever there was a meeting, it would not start without the verbal consent of the eldest person in the meeting. During the school year’s opening ceremony, the council of elders attended the function and provided words of support for students to
have a productive academic school year. These elders were also present throughout the school year to provide continuous support (See Appendix N).

Leaders are committed to and knowledgeable about this age group, educational research, and best practices:

This could be viewed in several teachers’ philosophies, in which teachers expressed their commitments to assisting students’ learning. Although the students were progressing through the stages of adolescence, the teachers were not going to give up on them because of some behavioral issues they may be dealing with. This was an example of how they understood the stages of adolescence and displayed their commitment to the students. The school was also student-centered. Students were active in their learning and would take responsibility for not completing assignments or not turning them in on time.

Leaders demonstrate courage and collaboration:

Courage can be demonstrated in Principal Taylor’s actions on Wednesday, October 27, 2010, when Columbus, Ohio, was under a tornado warning alert. Around 2 p.m. all the students were taken to the hallway, told to sit, face the walls and be quiet. Baba Taylor appeared to be preparing students and staff, in case a tornado would hit the school building. From his office he retrieved a bullhorn, and then began to instruct the students. Once the tornado warning had ended, Baba Taylor thanked the students who were quiet and asked them to let him know of anyone who talked during this drill. The purpose was to discuss with students the importance of keeping quiet during these important situations in order to hear instructions that would keep them safe (See Appendix N).
The Columbus Africentric Early College’s lead principal, Baba Taylor, does not micromanage his staff. The teachers and students had an understanding that, if there was a problem and it got to the lead principal, the students involved would be dealt with fairly based on the situation. On one occasion, several students were having side conversations when Baba Taylor opened the door and looked inside. He was accompanied by a parent. He did not intervene by commenting on the students’ disruptiveness, he just continued talking with the parent and closed the door. He said, “If the students are referred to me, they know that they will most likely be suspended because the middle school principal already tried to resolve the issue at that level.” Baba Taylor said, “I don’t interrupt the teacher’s classroom because it is their class.” There was a committee of middle school teachers in the Afrocentric School that met to discuss learning issues middle-level students may have had in their classes. The purpose was to inform the new teacher of concerns the present teacher had with developmental or academic issues before the student transitioned to the next grade level.

Ongoing professional development reflects best educational practices:

The Columbus City School District provided professional development workshops that all teachers must attend over the summer. Workshops pertaining to the Columbus Africentric Early College consisted of enhancing teachers’ knowledge in the field of Afrocentric education. Baba Jeffries and Mama Fairbanks discussed professional development workshops and how these workshops assisted in enhancing their pedagogical skills in the classrooms. Baba Jeffries said, “Baba Taylor is working on these workshops and bringing back the Afrocentric foundation which this school was based
“on.” Teachers and other administrators looked to Baba Taylor to bring the school back to its basics of being guided by the mission statement, the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at, and on everyone’s being on the same page pertaining to teaching from an African-centered perspective (See Appendix N).

Organizational structures foster purposeful learning and meaningful relationships:

The Columbus Africentric Early College used a block schedule consisting of 42 minutes for each subject. Teachers had time each day to plan out the next day’s lesson for classes. African American seventh-grade students also had a period for tutoring if needed, and every day the students met during homeroom for mentoring and advising.

**Culture and Community**

The school environment is inviting, safe, inclusive, and supportive of all:

The environment at the Columbus Africentric Early College had an inviting atmosphere. There were numerous signs of encouragement throughout the school, both inside and outside. A few signs were selected for a visual effect, these were located inside of the school; Figure 19 encouraged students to perform well in whatever they were doing; Figure 20 focused on how to resolve a conflict with others.
Students were reminded that the school community was important. They were encouraged to do their best and that the faculty and staff believed in them and would always be there for them.

School Conflict Resolution Plan
1st Address student respectfully that you are having a problem with.
2nd Let closest Teacher know that you are having a problem.
3rd Talk with your MS Counselor
4th Talk with your Administrator/Principal.
5th Let your Parents know.

Figure 19. You Can Do It—Sign of Encouragement
Source: The Columbus Africentric Early College

Figure 20. Conflict Resolution Plan
Source: The Columbus Africentric Early College
This poster provided information to middle school students on how issues could be dealt with in the school’s environment. Each student could see that respecting one another was key in trying to solve problems. It was important that a teacher be informed first to assist with solving disputes. If the dispute was not resolved, the student should take the matter to the school’s counselor, then to the principal, and always to inform their parents to keep them abreast with school issues.

Outside of the school were signs posted to encourage learning and a safe environment.

Figure 21. Entrance to School Building Sign

This was a picture taken from outside of the entrance door of the Columbus Africentric Early College. It represented an environment of learning. Middle school students come to learn as a community.

Figure 22. Exit from School Building Sign

This was a picture taken from inside of the exit door of the Columbus Africentric Early College. It represented going back into the community to serve and share what was
learned. Once students had entered and obtained knowledge, it was important for them to pass the knowledge along to others.

![Figure 23. Safety Zone Outside of School Sign](image)

This was a picture taken outside near the front of the Columbus Africentric Early College. It represented a place where safety was first. This sign informed the community at-large that the school wanted to keep the students away from harm. Therefore, no illegal activities would be tolerated near the school, especially drug dealing and weapons.

Health and wellness are supported in curricula, school wide programs, and related policies:

The school’s lunch menu was based on the Columbus City School District meal plan; this was designed by the Wellness Initiative Program Committee and became effective in 2006. The program sought to improve meals at schools (i.e. breakfast and lunch), as well as to have healthier choices in the vending machines from which students obtain snacks. The Wellness Initiative Program encouraged teachers to be models for students by eating healthier foods and choosing healthier snacks (www.columbus.k12.oh.us).
Students participated in after-school sports activities and physical education while in school.

The school actively involves families in the education of their children:

The Columbus Africentric Early College encouraged parents to participate in school activities through having raffles and giving away prizes. Parents were involved with the school by volunteering their time (See Appendix T).

The school includes community and business partners:

The Columbus Africentric Early College was in partnership with Knowledge Works, an organization established by the Bill and Belinda Gates Foundation to send high school juniors and seniors to college free of charge to earn college credits or an Associate Degree. Therefore, by the time a student graduated from the Columbus Africentric Early College, he or she would have been exposed to college life. Students in the seventh grade were encouraged to start thinking about college and this encouragement was continued throughout middle school and high school (See Appendix U).

In summary, the Columbus Africentric Early College appeared to have implemented 14 of the 16 characteristics that the National Middle School Association had described as useful in successfully developing well-rounded adolescents. This was based on observations, posters, and documents. This study was conducted in 2010 and applied the 14 characteristics from NMSA (2003). Thus two of the 16 characteristics were not addressed because they were added to the list of characteristics after this study was completed. No observations or inquiries were made while in the field conducting research. The additional two characteristics were that every student’s academic and
personal development was guided by an adult advocate and that comprehensive guidance and support services met the needs of young adolescents.

It was important to address the politics behind establishing an Afrocentric school in Columbus, Ohio, to obtain an understanding of the need for such a school and whether the criticisms or support for establishing the school.

**Politics of Establishing an Afrocentric School**

African American parents advocated for a school that would address African and African American history for their children (Comer & Poussaint, 1992; Rockquemore, 1997). It was an attempt to provide an education in which African American children could see and learn about themselves in the dominant European school culture (Giddings, 2001). The politics behind such a school brought together advocates and critics as explained by some of the committee members who assisted in the establishment of an Afrocentric school in Columbus, Ohio. Tennant said:

I chose public education to create this Afrocentric School because the school can get tax dollars and I felt that since the school could get tax dollars, then those tax dollars can be used to create a school. If you create this type of school from a private point of view, you run through a lot of obstacles, and private schools will shut down. I knew this school wouldn’t be shut down because it had been approved by the school board. If you also look at public assistance, they in turn will dictate what the rules and regulations are and that’s what’s bad because they will come in and change things and do things and they’ll see to it that you doing things according to their philosophy, so politics has a bad influence in establishing these types of school. (personal communication, August 19, 2010)

Kambon briefly stated that there was a “misunderstanding of what the school was and what it was not. Misinformation came mainly from our own people, African Americans” (personal communication March 17, 2011). Another point of view in the politics behind establishing the Afrocentric School is expressed by Saunders, who said,
Change is the hardest thing because you hear that people are afraid of change; they don’t want to learn something new. Sometimes I think that they are more comfortable where they are. People say, “Okay, this is what I can accept; this is appropriate and acceptable.” So when it came time to change for a different type of school, we got resistance from everybody, because they were trying to figure out “Are we trying to go back to segregated schools? Are we going to teach these people not to like other people?” Not a question about “Here’s an opportunity for us to try to teach people how to love themselves.

For African American people to be self-sufficient, self-empowered, and to feel good about who they are and their culture and know who they are. We were asked those other questions, these kids are going to have to live in a White world; those types of statements were being made. “I don’t want my child to only speak Ebonics,” just all those kinds of questions. Those were some of the challenges of the politics behind establishing this school.

On the authority side, I should say the political side, I’m not sure they really wanted it to happen, but they couldn’t say no because of the politics of it and it had been voted to occur. So I don’t think the group (Charles Tennant, Ako Kambon, and Stan Embry) was getting all the support from the establishment to make it occur in a timely manner. So when a few of us got involved who had some business relationships established where we could make it happen, the school establishment moved forward. That was the challenge. The establishment is the people who are in charge, like the district representatives and the superintendent. Those are the folks that can make it happen, who eventually made it happen, with a little encouragement, but, they needed the encouragement.

(personal communication, July 29, 2010)

Sidoti commented in *The Columbus Dispatch* [Editorial & Comment Section] in regard to an Africentric school that:

As a future educator and member of the community, I am concerned about the school system. In last year's enrollment, 49.9% of the students were [B]lack and 50.1% were nonblack ([W]hite, Hispanic and Asian). It seems to me that the [B]lack students are the majority, not the minority, in this school system. How can this Africentric school benefit all, if only a few students are admitted from the entire district of 64,000 students? This school will need to be racially balanced, which would cause even fewer blacks to be offered this Africentric educational opportunity.

Indeed, the benefits of the Africentric school would only be offered to a select few. This is not an equal opportunity for education. If the community desires an Africentric school, then this school should be private, not public. Resegregation is not the answer to a better education. There is a need to educate all students on the African-American culture, as well as many other cultures. Why not integrate more learning about all of these cultures into our public schools?
This would benefit every single one of our students. The teachers coming out of colleges now are more focused on multicultural learning than ever before. It takes time and a lot of effort to incorporate new activities into the classroom, but it can be done. Education is the key to understanding the differences among all races; ignorance only causes prejudice. Students must be able to know who they are before they can accept the way others are. Learning about many different cultures in the public schools will benefit the entire community as a whole, not just a select few. (November 6, 1993)

On October 22, 1994, in The Columbus Dispatch [Editorial & Comment Section], Arthur L. Shank called the Africentric program a “waste of taxpayer’s money.” Rita Durham responded to the conflict with a comment in The Columbus Dispatch, about the establishment of an Africentric school, writing that:

For thousands of years Americans were required to learn history. This history always has included every nationality except African-Americans and their contributions to America and the world. This history has had a negative impact on the way American society views blacks, as well as having a negative impact on blacks.

Having an Africentric school simply means that American children will be taught the true history and not history that is geared toward one nationality. The only people who will run from these changes are people who can only see one way, and that is the white way. They need to wake up . . . the Board of Education is to represent the entire populace; well, it's finally trying to do just that by balancing the education system.

Africentric education is not the only thing that will be taught in the school system; this is something to be added to the children's education, not something that will be the major focus of the education. African diaspora is the settlement of African people in a land far away from their homelands. We were brought here by force, but we are here to stay. We are American citizens and refuse to be treated as less than that. The time has come for change, and it is long overdue. (November 28, 1993)

In Toronto, Canada, that school board faced similar issues as the Columbus City School Board members confronted when hearing arguments for and against an Afrocentric school. Some Canadian citizens in the community perceived Afrocentric schools as a
form of resegregation, which was argued by parents (*National Post*, January 30, 2008, p. 1). Charles Tennant explained, “The school in Toronto, Canada, sought my assistance in establishing an Afrocentric school, but I declined” (personal communication, August 19, 2010).

In summary, the Columbus Africentric Early College is sustainable, because it has public tax dollars to fund the program and it is an alternative school, which means parents have the choice to send their child here versus the regular public school. Addressing and clarifying misconceptions parents may have about this school’s mission statement is vital in sustaining the school as it demonstrated that teachers, staff members, and administrators are interested in developing the well-roundedness of the child. The ideology of empowerment is grounded in the knowledge of an African-centered perspective and supported by the “village concept” which builds a strong learning community. As members of the community expressed their sentiments about an Afrocentric school being established in Columbus, Ohio, the board members finally decided that the school would be beneficial to the community, as an estimated half of the student population was African American.

**Afrocentric School and Resegregation**

Since 1988, fewer African Americans had been attending predominantly White schools (Smith, 2004). It is becoming apparent that public schools are much more segregated today than they were two decades ago (Holley, 2005). The lack of integration in public schools can be seen through the racial makeup of the classrooms (Frey & Wilson, 2009). Systematic segregation is based on racially homogeneous classrooms, a
formation of resegregation (Bush, Burley, & Bush, 2001). To find out how people involved in the establishment of the Afrocentric School in Columbus, Ohio viewed the issue of resegregation, a question was posed to the council of elders/committee members.

Kambon said, “It is unfortunate that people would say that; it means they are not looking at public education in America. It is almost worse today in separation of races.” (personal conversation, March 17, 2011). Saunders said,

It’s about providing quality experience for folks — Black, White, whatever the color may be. If these types of schools work well, where people feel self-empowered, their self-esteem is higher, and they feel more comfortable and relaxed in a learning atmosphere, which has been shown. Then, I would say yes, great, yes. We should have those types of schools.

Now to talk about segregated schools, that pushes a button for me because I’m thinking from what I know, from what I’ve read, and what I’ve been told, and the people that I know who went through segregation: segregated schools that a lot of folks went to where you had less supplies, and old buildings. There was the teacher who may not have even graduated from high school or college, but more than likely, everybody in that classroom, when they finished the third grade, they knew how to read, write, and do basic math.

Fast forward — today, and in some of these schools, you have teachers who have to be certified. They have master’s, PhDs, and we are graduating kids in the 12th grade who may not be able to read on a third grade level. We’ve got resources; we’ve got all those things going on.

I’m going to take you back to segregated schools, the ingredient that was there was that people cared. The teachers cared and if we can get that in any school, whether the teacher’s White, Hispanic, whatever the case may be, and the schools not segregated. If the teachers demonstrated the kind of care that those teachers did back in those segregated schools and the commitment, the high expectations that were demonstrated and were delivered way back in those days, we wouldn’t have to worry about all that.

Then there is the equity with the resources, don’t have the kids on the lower socioeconomic level in hot sweaty schools while you got the other kids in the higher socioeconomic level in air-conditioned schools, where they got all the latest technology. It’s going to be a difference. Is it because of segregation or is it because of the racism? There is a difference. (personal communication, July 29, 2010)
Presented here is a very brief overview of the court case regarding Columbus City School on racial segregation. The court case was *Columbus Board of Education v. Penick, 1979, 443 U. S. 449*. The purpose of discussion in this court case was to address whether citizens in Columbus, Ohio, viewed the Afrocentric School as a means of resegregating students.

In 1973, students of Columbus, Ohio, charged the Board of Education with racial segregation in education. The plaintiffs in this case were African American students who perceived they were being racially isolated in the school district and that it was intentional. The Columbus School District had practiced a dual school system of segregation, which was deemed unconstitutional. The courts found that Columbus Public Schools on the east side “openly and intentionally segregated on the basis of race” (442 U.S. 453).

With *Brown v. Board* of Education’s 1954 decision, the Columbus school system was still implementing a dual system for Black and White students. This was accomplished by legally structuring school zones based on the racial makeup of the community.

The Columbus school board was held accountable by the Supreme Court to rectify this dual school system issue. “Pursuant to the District Court’s order, 42,000 of the system’s 96,000 students are reassigned to new schools” (443 U.S. 489). The Columbus Board of Education initiated the building of new school facilities in an attempt to provide equitable facilities. “The city of Columbus has changed enormously in the last
Students could choose to attend a school of their choice as long as space was available.

Tennant responded to this resegregation by stating:

That’s good, because desegregation is not working. Desegregation is the worst thing that ever took place. And I think kids ought to be in segregated schools; but if you look at it another way, the suburbs are segregated and in this school, the majority are Black kids and that’s good because they have an opportunity to do the same things, like White suburban kids, that they couldn’t do in a conventional school, and that’s excel.

In summary, it appeared as though the main concern among these three interviewees (Kambon, Saunders, and Tennant) was that African American students have a school that is equitable in a hegemonic curriculum, because they can learn about and see themselves within Eurocentric history. This school has been sustainable because the curriculum is grounded in the policy of the Columbus City School District and infused with African’s and African American’s culture. African American students are learning about their history, developing a positive self-concept, self-esteem, and a racial identity that is not oppressive as perceived in European history. Resegregation is not going back to times of inequality because the distribution of knowledge and wealth is still unequal in the United States.

**Achieving the Vision of the Community**

According to Gill (1991), African American parents fought to establish a school that would address the needs of their children. An Afrocentric school addresses African American students’ self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development. As African American adolescents transitioned from childhood to young adulthood, an Afrocentric education provides a positive self-concept as they are developing into adults.
Richards (1997) explains that parents also taught their children Afrocentric values at home as a buffer against negative images they may be exposed to, racism, and feeling secure in who they are as African Americans. Akbar, Chambers, and Thompson (2001) argued that how African American adolescents view themselves is improved by the guidance of an Afrocentric school. Kambon said:

The Afrocentric School was born out of frustration to what was happening to African American males in school. African American males were disproportionately expelled, suspended, and disciplined. The thought became, if we had a school that was male-centered, we needed a school that would promote the principle values. Values that were different from the typical school. African American males needed a global perspective of who they are. (personal communication, March 17, 2011)

Afrocentric schools exist because African Americans wanted an education system that reflected the social and cultural history of their experience (Shujaa, 1992).

An Afrocentric perspective, according to Baba Taylor, was:

It’s just comes pretty much from the continent of Africa and focusing on the principles of Ma’at and Nguzo Saba, which is just a way of daily living. Where it’s just having Balance in your life, having Harmony, having Justice, Righteousness, Reciprocity, just things of that nature. Saying, okay, if you live by these principles, you’re gone be able to matriculate through life, at a more successful rate, you know; if you really hone in on those principles.

We really focus our students on that and say, “Hey, with these tools; we should be able to get through this day, the next day, as we are building blocks up to our way of success.”

It was important for the family to participate in their child’s academic success. When parents have high expectations for their children’s education, the youth believe in their ability to attain academic success (Wood, Kaplan & McLoyd, 2007). Mama Clark said:

The Africentric school, it’s a village concept. We have elders come in, like elder West; we have the Sankofa celebration for the eighth grades and the elders are there. At the high school graduation the elders are there. Just their presence, having elders come to different functions, even the PTA meetings and before we
start all meetings, we address the elder in the room for his or her consent to begin the meeting. We ask for the oldest person in the room. So, the village concept is important for success at this school. (personal communication, October 28, 2010).

Mama Grace said:

This is the first time they’ve done the parade, it’s like a Unity (Umoja). The administrators brought all the Black people together, they brought the principals in, the superintendent, the African garb and it just brings a kind of pride. When this school first started it was really Afrocentric, but now we get different teachers every other year and some of the teachers who come here they don’t fall in. They are here because they were laid off; they don’t believe in the Afrocentric concept. (personal communication, October 29, 2010)

Teachers who believe in the Afrocentric concept are essential in the success of the school. Otherwise, the school can have teachers who try to “rid African American students of any vestiges of their culture” (Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 206). Mama Williams discussed the employing of teachers into the Afrocentric School, stating that:

The education system is just in financial turmoil. So we’ve had to lay off staff members, or staff reduction, based on the number of students. The turnover rate, is probably 20-25%. We probably have five to six school teachers here who chose to move up, so they apply for positions that could advance their career to where they can help a greater number of students. We’ve lost some teachers or some teachers just chose to leave. We’re a year round program and it doesn’t fit into the plan for the teacher’s life. We did have teachers who just basically left because of the Africentric perspective.

Teachers at the Columbus Africentric Early College provided some advice for teachers wanting to teach in an Afrocentric school. Baba Stevens said:

Be open to learn more about children; be open to learn more about people, and less about teaching. I think the teachers who do best in this school or any school have a good relationship which is built with their students. Their students get the most from their experiences, the more teachers get away from things being subject-based and driven on making sure students do well on tests, takes away from making sure that the student becomes a good person. So that the kids understand why they need education, and why certain things are important, teachers must give them that understanding.
Baba Morris said, “One advice I would give is to be consistent, to be fair, and most importantly build relationships with the students.”

Baba Jeffries said:

If you’re a good teacher, first and foremost, you should care about kids, even if you’re young and you’re walking around and your confidence is not all the way there. Because we’re always learning new things or whatever, your strategies are not all there. But, if you care about kids and you have an open mind — that’s the advice that I would give to them.

Come with that; come with the effort to work out with all the kids and an open mind. I’ve met some teachers who’ve taught at Afrocentric — African Americans and White teachers — who just did not agree with the whole concept of Afrocentrism. If you come here with that attitude, you’re not going to open your mind to it.

Some people have looked at Afrocentric as a religion. I’ve heard Black people say, “What are they doing over there with that ole African mumbo jumbo stuff?” These are Black people saying this. It shows me that they are not aware; even if you don’t agree or you don’t know; open your mind to listen to the research. That’s what I would say.

Before I came here at the Afrocentric, I looked it up, I read some books. Does it mean I knew everything about it? I had an idea of the concept, and I’ve learned that this is one form of Afrocentrism. This is not all, you know, some people look at it like okay, we learn about Ancient Egypt and what some of the Ancient Egyptians have done in Egypt or whatever, then you leave it there as if Africa stopped.

I’d just say do your research, be willing to go to workshops, be willing to listen and learn, don’t accept the one brand of Afrocentrism. It goes over and beyond the principles of Ma’at and Nguzo Saba.

Baba Noll said, “It’s not much different from other schools. They just have to be open to Afrocentric ways and learn what they can about it.”

Mama Fairbanks’ advice to teachers wanting to work in an Afrocentric school would be:

I would first tell them that in education, we’re always learning. You never know enough. These students are just like any other children in this world. They have feelings; they hurt just like anybody else.

There are some who don’t understand that Afrocentric piece right now at the middle level or elementary level. It’s just as important as it is going to be when you get in college because you’ve got to have that foundation or you’re going to fall on your face. The most important thing in education that I would tell
them is always have parent communication, because if you don’t have that at the home, you’re going to have problems in the classroom. Also, make sure that your students are always writing. Like I tell the kids, I’m not worried about the punctuation or anything right now, just write your idea down and tell me how you feel. I give them like, 35 journal options and they can pick anything they want to. Just start writing, because it’s very important that they write, and it’s very important that they can trust you. “If I can’t trust you, I’m not really going to give you that respect you really need because I don’t trust you” (italic emphasizes her impression of the voice of students).

Mama Cole’s advice was:

Do it because, well I don’t know if I’m the best expert, but, I like teaching here because it addresses the whole person. Also, it provides an opportunity for students to learn more freely in the way that suits them, rather being told “I want you to do it,” or “Learn it this way.”

Mama Hall said:

To have a strong background number one and wanting to learn the culture. Learning what the principles are of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at. I’m not saying they have to know it coming into the Afrocentric School, but if they don’t want to learn it or want to be trained in it, it’s going to make teaching here very difficult.

To understand what could become an issue with the Africentric perspective and why teachers may not wish to teach it, the curriculum of the Africentric School must be addressed. The curriculum is based on an Afrocentric perspective where students are the subject of whatever they are learning and not the object (Asante, 1991). The goal of the school which seeks to educate students in ways that reflect their social, cultural and historical experiences are meaningful to the community, therefore, involvement from multiple stakeholders is essential.

In summary, it was apparent that the community had the type of school it desired to educate children about who they are and how they fit into society. A misunderstanding about the school mission is an unfortunate issue but the school is still supported by the
“village concept”. This concept was a strong mechanism in guiding students to maintain a sense of self and unity. Because parents wanted this type of school, it would be productive for their continued support, which would aid in the maintenance of the sustainability of the school.

**Afrocentric Curriculum**

An Afrocentric curriculum enhanced the child’s self-esteem and offered the same educational exposure that a White child received from a Eurocentric curriculum (Asante, 1991). The Afrocentric curriculum reduced stigma in African American children (Jarvis, 1992). The principles of Nguzo Saba guided African American adolescents in redefining and affirming a positive self-concept (Robinson & Howard-Hamilton, 1994). The Afrocentric curriculum assisted in constructing a racial identity; although race is a social construct, the importance of learning about African and African American history is vital to the African American identity development (Asante, 1991; Sellers, et al., 1998). It is important to understand how the Columbus Africentric Early College implements the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at as guiding factors in the school’s curriculum.

Saunders said:

Dr. Moriba Kelsey created our curriculum Ma’at and Nguzo Saba, a long time ago. Now the terms of Nguzo Saba that is used in Kwanzaa is actually Kiswahili terms. Seven principles of Ma’at are what we typically use, the virtues of Ma’at declarations that was created long time ago. It has been said that out of the 42 declarations are the 10 commandments.

The principles of Ma’at are to prepare you for afterlife. Ma’at just talks about, this is what you do to be prepared for the afterlife, without any judgmental, or condoning other folks who decide not to follow the path. I like that about Ma’at. Nguzo Saba principles have been used a whole lot. These are not new, *Umoja*, talks about unity; *Kujichagulia*, defining yourself; *Ujamaa*, Cooperative Economics; those things that you do; *Nia*, purpose in life. If you take those Kiswahili words, most of us were raised like that. You have to have faith in what
you’re gonna do, what’s going on with these principles are not new, it’s presented in a different package, a different way, I think that makes it a little more inviting to young folks at the Africentric school. (personal communication, July 29, 2010)

Mama Williams said:

Africentric is more based on the African village concept; Dr. Kelsey came up with the curriculum. It’s holistic in a sense of I know it’s community-based on the village concept based on the African village concept. It’s hard for me to explain it in my own words because I am learning more and more each time. Then I talk to the elders to understand, because it’s like the elders who run the village, so we, like the administrators go to the elders for advice.

Baba Taylor clarifies that:

The curriculum, it goes back to Charles Tennant and the forefathers. We have the Council of Elders in our building to where, when I’m having a major meeting, I call the Council of Elders, which is a group of Elders who pretty much oversees a lot of things that go on here at Columbus Africentric. You know, we are Columbus City Schools and we have to be up under the district’s policies and procedures. We still govern a lot of things with our Council of Elders. The Village Council, which is our PTA, was brought in as our school was being formed about 18 or 19 years ago.

An Afrocentric curriculum aids in the academic struggling of African American adolescent male students. Being educated based on this type of curriculum which is culturally relevant, exposes African American adolescent male students to their African ancestral history (Kifano, 1996).

An Afrocentric education which infuses the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at, as well as the “village concept” in its curriculum, is a choice that parents and the community had sought for years before seeing their vision become reality (Asante, 1991, 1992; Henig, 1998; Karenga, 1977, 2003). An example of this infusion was accomplished by connecting the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at with textbooks (i.e. *A Treasure Within* and *The Pact*). Exposing students to textbooks and literature that had information
about the African and African American cultures before slavery and how the culture made great contributions to the world is in part what an Afrocentric education provided.

Teachers assisting the students with applying these sets of principles into their daily living, which influenced their self-concept, self-esteem, and the development of their racial identity was important. The Columbus Board of Education is a major supporter of an Afrocentric school and the community that rallied for this type of educational opportunity for their children.

In summary, students learning from an Afrocentric curriculum are taught about Africa and the African philosophy of community, not individualism. Therefore, the school’s objective of becoming grounded in the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at has been effective in assisting the participants with developing a positive self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity. Thus meeting the aspirations of both students and the community which advocated for this type of curriculum ensures support and sustainability.

Support from the Columbus Board of Education

The Columbus Board of Education acts for and represents the needs of the community. Based on the Board’s policies, it pledged a commitment to improve schools in the district and hold individual schools accountable for the policies, values, and expectations; the end result was most beneficial for the students in attendance. The Board consisted of a president, vice-president and committee members. They all worked together and provided service to the community. The Board of Education members
abided by the code of conduct which was followed; no member was an entity of his or her own, everyone had to work together (www.columbus.k12.oh.us).

The Columbus Africentric Early College school building was outdated and in need of renovations because it was built in 1950 (FactLine, personal communication, March 9, 2011). Baba Taylor stated that “With us getting a new building next year, it will show the support of the community and the school board.” Tennant said, “This school is funded through, state, local, and tax dollars.” The Columbus City School District has set aside $34 million dollars to build a new K-12 Africentric school, which will be in the same location. This school will house an estimated 1,000 students. Part of the foundation of Columbus, Ohio, according to Studer (1873), was to have great pride in its community, especially the education of the children. This dedication was still supported by the people at the time of this research. Hence, this display of monetary support underpins the sustainability of the school.
Chapter 9: Summary, Conclusion, Suggestions

Summary

An Afrocentric education, which is based in the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at, and taught from an African-centered perspective, can promote the development of self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development (Asante, 1991; Steele, 1992; Woodson, 1998). The following is a brief summary of the study, literature reviewed, theoretical framework, and methodology.

The goal of this study was to obtain an understanding of how these principles influenced African American seventh-grade male students’ self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity, and what made this school sustainable. This study was conducted at the Columbus Africentric Early College in Columbus, Ohio. An Afrocentric education is the knowledge base of the African and African American cultures, which addresses the issues of self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development (Asante, 1991, 1992, 2003, 2005; Carter & Goodwin, 1994; Corbin & Pruitt, 1999; Harper, 1977).

Four research questions guided the study,

Research question 1: How do the educational experiences from an African-centered perspective influence African American seventh-grade male students’ self-concept?

Research question 2: How do the educational experiences from an African-centered perspective influence African American seventh-grade male students’ self-esteem?

Research question 3: How is African American seventh-grade male students’ racial identity formation influenced by an African-centered perspective?

Research question 4: What makes the Afrocentric School in Columbus, Ohio, sustainable?
This study was significant because an Afrocentric education, which emerged in the late 1980s, and was grounded in the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at, had been examined very little in the literature. Also, this phenomenon had not been examined to understand the effects the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at may have in African American seventh-grade male students’ self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development. Finally, this study was significant in gaining an insight to how African American seventh-grade male students deal with learning about their “Blackness” as they were transitioning from elementary to middle level grades.

Eight major areas of literature were reviewed and are briefly discussed here to show their relevance to the study. The first sub-heading explained how enslaved Africans in America were disconnected from their culture. This enslavement initiated Africans’ losing their identity and connection with their heritage, which would be passed down to future generations. The second heading addressed the history of African Americans in public schools. This was relevant because the public school system was not educating African American children so that they could see and learn about themselves in a positive light. In the third heading the issues of developing self-concept and self-esteem in the public school system were discussed. This section was important because it illuminated the experiences African American students encountered as they developed their self-concept and self-esteem. The formation of racial identity of African American students was explored under the fourth heading. The fifth heading addressed the middle school concept, which was vital in achieving a well-rounded adolescent. Since the participants of the study were selected from the seventh grade, which is part of the middle school
structure, it was necessary to analyze how the public school system dealt with this population as they seek answers to their identity. An examination of African Americans in public school and the politics behind educating African American male students were the focus of the sixth heading. The seventh heading focused on the idea of an Afrocentric education for the purpose of analyzing whether this type of education could aid in the development of a self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity that was grounded in an Afrocentric worldview. Finally, the theoretical frameworks adopted for the study were; Cross’ 1971 Negro-to-Black Conversion theory and Delgado & Stefancic’s 2001 Critical Race Theory. They were determined to be applicable to the study because they addressed issues of racial formation and racism.

This was a qualitative research study that adopted a phenomenological case study approach to collect data for the four research questions. Data were collected from two focus group sessions with nine African American seventh-grade male students and individual interviews with seven seventh-grade teachers, two principals, three council of elders, and three parents. The interviews were based on semi-structured questions. The data were organized as they applied to the research questions, and the themes that emerged were analyzed through the theoretical frameworks, the literature, and documents such as the Columbus Africentric Staff Handbook, *The Columbus Dispatch*, and the Columbus Support of Resolution. The entire study was conducted in Columbus, Ohio.

Over the years, the Columbus Board of Education incorporated numerous types of schools in order to address the diverse student population. The Columbus Africentric Early College was one of them. Established in 1996 as an elementary school, the
Afrocentric School was grounded in the seven principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at, and based on an African-centered perspective.

The Columbus Africentric Early College, now a K through 12, school by the time of this study had approximately 941 students total, with 89 of them in the seventh grade. The Afrocentric School was based on “the village concept,” and teachers were addressed as Baba (Father) and Mama (Mother). The African-centered context of the school’s curriculum was to address the concerns of parents and the community who fought for a school that focused on their children’s self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity from an Afrocentric worldview.

The few books used to educate African American seventh-grade students included, but were not limited to, Jacobs et al. (2008), *A History of Our World: The Early Years*; novels such as Davis, Jenkins, and Hunt’s (2002) *The Pact*, Akua’s (2002) *A Treasure Within: Stories of Remembrance & Rediscovery*, and Warren’s (2001) *Surviving Hitler: A Boy in the Nazi Death Camps*. The students were taught how to view their coursework from an African-centered perspective. This made them the subject of what they were learning and not the object (Asante, 1991). Based in this ideology, African American seventh-grade male students were able to learn about their history and apply it to the courses taught at the Columbus Africentric School.

There were some political issues in the establishment of this Afrocentric School. Some people thought the school was a form of resegregation, although the student population was predominantly African American (Tennant, personal communication, August 19, 2010; Saunders, personal communication, July 29, 2010). The Afrocentric
School has been sustained since 1996 with a curriculum that is Afrocentric. This school addressed 14 of the 16 characteristics of the middle school concept that guides in the development of well-rounded African American adolescent males. It was vital that the school’s Afrocentric philosophy and the teacher’s pedagogical viewpoint were unified.

**Summary of Major Findings**

Based on the data collected for the first research question, the following four themes emerged: 1) the emergence of psychological empowerment, 2) Africa’s inspiration influencing psychological empowerment, 3) perception of Nguzo Saba’s influence, and 4) mirror image: seeing self and future aspirations. The major findings will be discussed for each theme.

**The Emergence of Psychological Empowerment**

Students recited The Pledge at the Afrocentric School on a daily basis. The Pledge educated the participants in working together, a form of *Unity* (Umoja), in which everyone made a commitment to doing his part to build upon the labors of his ancestors.

The participants recognized that they have more opportunities than some of their ancestors, through what they learned in history class of the struggles of their ancestors. The Pledge laid the foundation upon which the participants could build, educate themselves, and have faith (*Imani*) in their abilities to excel in whatever they do.

Just like the Africans enslaved in America envisioned better days, *Kujichagulia* (self-determination), these participants were educated in dreaming, planning and pursuing their own dreams. No psychologically oppressive state can prevent them from excelling in life, as long as they believe in their abilities (Blumenkrantz, 2008; Coon, 2010).
Learning about the seven principles of Nguzo Saba: *Umoja* (unity), *Kujichagulia* (self-determination), *Ujima* (collective work and responsibility), *Ujamaa* (cooperative economics), *Nia* (purpose), *Kuumba* (creativity) and *Imani* (faith) and practicing them provided psychological protection for the participants according to the data.

The concept of Nguzo Saba had been around during the era of slavery, as some of these meanings guided and provided enslaved Africans with psychological protection against oppression (Akbar, 1996; Asante, 2006; Cook & Koni, 1977; Nobles, 1986). Knowing about the enslaved Africans in the Americas became a foundation and a guiding factor for the participants’ psychological empowerment.

**Africa’s Inspiration Influencing Psychological Empowerment**

Akua’s (2002) *A Treasure Within: Stories of Remembrance & Rediscovery* educated the participants in developing an Afrocentric worldview, which related to Africans. Africans in Ancient Egypt were viewed as intelligent, which provided a form of psychological empowerment for the participants. The participants determined for themselves that they came from African ancestors who were intelligent. This was related to the principle *Kujichagulia*, leading to a developed positive self-concept.

The history of Africa influenced the participants’ beliefs as they overwhelmingly expressed the idea that they were intelligent and not intellectually inferior. The participants also recognized that African Americans needed to help African countries and to assist in the development of water purification systems there, *Ujima*. The data also revealed that the participants felt it was vital to economically invest in African countries, *Ujamaa*, to help build thriving stable communities.
Perception of Nguzo Saba’s Influence

A few teachers were either not familiar with the principles of Nguzo Saba or did not apply them in their daily lessons. This led some teachers to imply that the participants did not practice the principles of Nguzo Saba. Other teachers taught the participants how to apply the seven principles to everyday living situations. When the participants applied these principles to their lives, they assisted them in developing critical thinking and listening skills. Students in some classroom settings practiced *Umoja*, as they kept quiet and worked together in completing the classroom assignment.

Male seventh-grade students demonstrated being more relaxed and respectful to one another when they displayed academic competiveness; these actions represented the principles of *Ujima*. Mixed-gendered classes revealed more side conversations and disruptions in the classroom, especially when the teacher did not display classroom management skills. Steve said, “I hate being in an all-male class. Split class (mixed gender) was way better because there were girls in my class.”

In mixed-gendered classes, Mama Cole a science teacher and Baba Noll a math teacher, on a constant basis, had to say, *Agoo*, (I respectfully ask for your attention), to which the students said *Amee* (I respectfully give my attention). But the students did not follow through by providing the teacher with their respect and attention.

These classroom disruptions influenced Baba Stevens, science teacher, to intervene in Baba Noll’s class by removing a disruptive student, bringing the student to his classroom, and having a discussion about the student’s behavior. “The village concept” was displayed by Baba Stevens’ intervening to find out why the student was not
paying attention in class. After the brief discussion, the student returned to Baba Noll’s class and demonstrated the principle of *Nia*, in completing his work and paying attention to the day’s lesson.

**Mirror Image: Seeing Self and Future Aspirations**

The participants acknowledged several African American adult figures they wanted to emulate in adulthood. These African American seventh-grade male students chose as their role models their fathers, President Obama, or other family members who had impressed a concept of self upon them. These participants mirrored themselves after African Americans whom they respected and looked up to by discussing becoming entrepreneurs and opening up businesses in the community, which was a display of *Ujamaa*. The participants also displayed *Kuumba* by acknowledging a backup plan to make money to support their business ventures. When the participants pondered the question, “Who am I?” they answered based on a concept of self as an African American male, mirrored after their role model.

The data provided an understanding for the second research question, addressed the following two themes: 1) *Ma’at brings inner peace* and 2) *growing in the seven principles of Ma’at*. Each theme will be discussed separately along with the major findings.

**Ma’at Brings Inner Peace**

*Akua’s (2002), A Treasure Within: Stories of Remembrance & Rediscovery* provided real life examples of an African American adolescent male dealing with peer pressure. The participants related to the guidance provided by the literary novel that
demonstrated how the seven principles of Ma’at could be experienced from an African-centered perspective. The participants were taught how to control their thoughts, follow their dreams, and think about the consequences of their actions. The demonstration of Balance was instrumental in the successful development of high levels of self-esteem. A balanced perspective in African and African American history made the participants feel good about their “Blackness.” Establishing Harmony between their “Black conscious awareness” in a predominant Anglo-Saxon society provided inner peace in that the participants recognized that they fit into American society. The song “Where Else Can I Go?” taught the participants how to apply the seven principles of Ma’at to their lives.

**Growing in the Seven Principles of Ma’at**

The principles of Ma’at were not consistently demonstrated in the classrooms. All seventh-grade teachers acknowledged that these were good principles to live by, though it was difficult for African American seventh-grade male students to show them in their actions on a daily basis.

Disruptions were continual in a few classrooms, while, in other classes, the principles of Ma’at were frequently displayed. These disruptions were not appreciated by the participants. They felt it presented African American male students in a negative manner. Students were reminded to practice Balance, Harmony, and Order; this was reinforced and accomplished mainly in five of the seven seventh-grade classes.

The data collected explained the third research question, regarding racial identity formation. The following three themes, 1) identity affirmation: becoming racially aware, 2) teacher’s impact on racial identity formation, and 3) growing in an African-centered
perspective emerged from the final question. These three themes will be discussed along with the major findings.

**Identity Affirmation: Becoming Racially Aware**

African American seventh-grade males were grounded in their history based on the guidance of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at principles being taught from an African-centered perspective. The self-concept is associated with the African and African American cultures, and the participants overwhelmingly discussed not wanting to be a White adolescent male. African American seventh-grade male students loved the positive, and appreciated the negative, of their history. *The Pact: Three Young Men Make a Promise and Fulfill a Dream* by Davis, Jenkins, and Hunt (2002), taught the participants that they can overcome adversities in their lives, becoming productive and successful African American men. Nguzo Saba and Ma’at principles educated the participants to see that as African American adolescent males, their “Blackness” is not to be regarded negatively.

**Teachers’ Impact on Racial Identity Formation**

The data revealed that teachers had to know their students and continue educating themselves about Afrocentricity. Knowledge about African American seventh-grade male students enabled teachers to make positive connections that developed into trust, along with respect, and understanding, which were major issues expressed by seventh-grade teachers. This was vital in assisting African American seventh-grade male students in developing an appreciation of their racial identity. Students felt that their teachers had no preconceived biases or negatively held stereotypes against them.
Nguzo Saba and Ma’at provided African American seventh-grade male students with the tools to deal with issues of racism. The participants faced issues of racism and yet did not waver in how they felt about being an African American adolescent male.

Data also demonstrated that Order, Balance, and Harmony were essential in the development of a classroom-learning environment that was African-centered. When students were able to trust their teacher, it fostered mutual appreciation between the two.

**Growing in an African-Centered Perspective**

The principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at, from an African-centered perspective, provided the participants with a manageable means of progressing through this pivotal stage of adolescence. The teacher must reinforce these principles, model them in their behavior, and implement them in the classroom. Each participant expressed his opinion that being a teenager was extremely difficult. As African American seventh-grade male students were developing into young men, it was still an issue as each tried to deal with the various stages of adolescence, academic life, and their racial identity.

The data collected illuminated how the Afrocentric School was sustainable; this is the fourth research question. Seven themes emerged: 1) *sustainability of the Africentric Early College*, 2) *middle school implementation*, 3) *politics of establishing an Afrocentric school*, 4) *Afrocentric school and resegregation*, 5) *achieving the vision of the community*, 6) *Afrocentric curriculum*, and 7) *support from the Columbus Board of Education*. The major findings are discussed in sequence for each theme.
Sustainability of the Africentric Early College

The Afrocentric School in Columbus, Ohio was established in 1996. This school was different than other Afrocentric school in the U.S. because it was connected with a college. As a student entered their junior year, he or she had the option of pursuing a two year degree at a local college free of charge.

Based on the Ohio School Report Card, students as of the 2010-2011 school year had a graduation rate that was higher than their school district and the State of Ohio. The teaching philosophies of teachers, although varied in ideologies, were similar with a committed to assist students in excelling academically. This commitment was complimentary with the mission statement of developing well-rounded students.

Middle School Concept Implementation

By the time this study had concluded, the National Middle School Association had released new characteristics that a middle school should demonstrate. The observations for this study were based on the 14 characteristics, which were established in 2003 by the NMSA. Based on these observations that were conducted at the Columbus Africentric Early College, all 14 characteristics had been implemented.

Politics of Establishing an Afrocentric School

This was an alternative school that received public tax dollars just like other public schools, because it was theorized that being a private school would not be successful, as other Afrocentric school in the U.S. had closed. Some of these school closings were due to a lack of funding. Although there were arguments for and against establishing this type of school, addressing misconceptions about an Afrocentric
education was important, because it explained that the core curriculum of the Columbus City School District was a foundation in the education process of this school. The only difference was this school infused an Afrocentric perspective grounded in African and African American history into the curriculum.

**Afrocentric School and Resegregation**

This school was not a form of resegregation, although the student population was predominately African American. The Afrocentric School was similar to other schools in the district except it was based on a lottery system and focused on providing students with an Afrocentric education. The Board of Education in Columbus, Ohio, had been accused of racial segregation during the early 1970s. Therefore, it was best to make this an alternative school, since this school provided parents with the choice to fill-out an application for their child to enter the lottery system in hopes of being chosen for a slot.

**Achieving the Vision of the Community**

The school was a result of parents in the community being dismayed with the public school system’s mistreatment of their children, especially African American males. This group was not the center of their learning environment, but the object of continuous disciplinary actions from school personnel. To ensure academic success, a school was warranted which would educate African American students with close attention being paid to males. An Afrocentric school grounded in the seven principles of Nguzo Saba and the seven principles of Ma’at was deemed essential in guiding African American children in becoming well-rounded. A major necessity for this success was
teachers who understood an Afrocentric worldview, would be dedicated to the education of African American children learning about their culture, and being student-centered.

**Afrocentric Curriculum**

An Afrocentric curriculum infused with the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at assisted African American children in developing a positive self-concept and high levels of self-esteem. This type of curriculum led African American students to establishing a racial identity that was grounded in the African and African American culture, thus ensuring students to becoming proud of their “Blackness”.

**Support from the Columbus Board of Education**

The Board of Education had a long history of being supportive to this Afrocentric School since 1993 when the ideology was proposed. One way to demonstrate its support was the allocation of 34 million dollars to the development of a new school building that will hold an estimated 1,000 students.

**Implications**

This study was important because “other communities would like to do something very similar to this school” (Charles Tennant, personal communication, August 19, 2010). This study was also important as a learning tool for students at the Columbus Africentric Early College. Baba Taylor said:

Any study on my young men is possibly going to be a benefit to them in their future. I’m happy you’re here. I tell my students that this is someone getting her PhD and when you’re getting your PhD, you do studies. She’s doing a study on you all (seventh-grade African American males). Anytime I can use a learning experience with my students, I want to use it. I want them to dream big.
The findings from this study addressed the field of education, especially Afrocentric education. It added to the literature, which did not address both sets of principles being taught from an African-centered perspective, or how this perspective guided the development of a positive self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity formation. African American seventh-grade students were constantly dealing with the stages of adolescence, school life, peer pressure, and trying to do what they deemed was best in having a productive school day.

The findings should demonstrate to the City of Columbus, Ohio, that supporting this type of school was not a form of resegregation but a much-needed institution that responded to the desires of African American parents and the community’s call for an educational system that addressed African American children’s psychological, sociological, and academic needs. It is very important to note that this school was open to all students; the race of the student was not an issue. Learning from an Afrocentric ideology was a way of discovering the history of a different culture.

Nguzo Saba was a guiding factor in African American seventh-grade male students’ establishing a positive self-concept. Being educated with materials that the participants could learn about their history provided valuable knowledge that they can use to become grounded in the African and African American cultures. Participants were able to see themselves in the textbooks, pattern themselves after African American role models, and aspire to become positive African American young men, who gave back to their community.
Ma’at’s principles aided in the development of self-esteem in which African American seventh-grade male students demonstrated positive feelings about their “Blackness” and how African Americans have a rich vibrant history that began in Africa. Being balanced in the knowledge of African and African American history provided psychological empowerment, as the participants learned about and appreciated their culture.

The findings were important to the Columbus City School’s Evaluation Services as there previously had been little research pertaining to The Columbus Africentric Early College. This study provided insight into the school’s function based on the data and the “voices” of the participants.

**Theoretical Implications**

Cross’ (1971) Negro-to-Black Conversion Theory and Delgado and Stefancic’s (2001) Critical Race Theory were the applicable theories for this study as the lenses to view and understand the phenomena under investigation. Cross’ (1971) theory addressed which stage African American seventh-grade male students demonstrated as they answered questions pertaining to self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development. African American seventh-grade male students demonstrated characteristics of the *encounter* stage, as each one was able to make a positive connection with their racial group orientation and to view the world from an African perspective.

Some of the responses pertaining to the *encounter* stage were: “I’m very smart; I’m going to make sure I become something in life; I am smart because people think all Black people just want to play sports; I’m no different than anyone else, I’m a smart
person; I’m a smart person, who knows how to play sports.” Other responses pertain to the knowledge of Africa: “Africa is like where we come from and our origins; [Africa] . . . our heritage and it shows how we grew; Africans are the ones who took the pains for us to be free; most of our ancestors are from Africa; [Africa] . . . that is where we come from and African American history; we can have pride in our self.”

Another stage of Cross’ (1971) theory demonstrated by the participants was emergence. Overwhelmingly, participants expressed feeling good about themselves as an African American adolescent male. Even when each one discussed facing an issue of racism, his knowledge assisted him in determining that he had the tools to define himself.

The final stage of Cross’ (1971) theory discussed was internalization as the participants expressed being happy with who they were based on an African American identity and the necessity of going back to Africa and help people with Africa’s development. These expressions were based on what they had learned thus far about their history based in an African-centered perspective.

Delgado and Stefancic’s (2001) Critical Race Theory demonstrated the commonality of African American seventh-grade males’ storytelling when discussing issues of racism, though each participant had a different experience. An Afrocentric education based in the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at, from an African-centered perspective, guided the participants into recognizing that the racism they faced did not determine who they are.
**Researcher’s Reflections**

This study was an eye-opener on different levels. The first day of observations was filled with unexpected dilemmas. Watching students misbehaving in class first elicited my motherly instinct to intervene. Intervention was not the purpose of these observations; the main objectives were just to observe and to take notes. There was empathy for teachers who did not demonstrate classroom management skills. Although it was difficult to sit and watch without intervening, data collection was much more important.

One parent interviewed for this study informed me that I was supposed to intervene, that this is the “village concept.” Once I walked through that entrance door, I became a part of that village. Mama Clark, a parent, did not understand that my sole purposes were to observe, collect data, conduct interviews, and report my results. To her, the “village concept” was more important; however, the purpose of this research outweighed that concept.

After several days of observations, the principles that led these students to take responsibility for their actions became clearer. It became necessary to learn the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at in detail, in order to understand how each influenced African American seventh-grade students, specifically male students.

Being in a classroom where students did not conform to directives was enlightening in trying to understand this concept. As observations continued, misconceptions were addressed: initially, it seemed that these students were disruptive
and misbehaved in classes where the teacher was Caucasian, until an observation in Baba Phillips’ classroom gave further enlightenment.

Baba Phillips was an African American teacher who had difficulty facilitating his classroom as a learning environment. This set him apart from the other African American teachers. What became evident was that students were still able to learn, no matter the disruptiveness of the other students.

As the observations continued, and the interviewing process began, a better understanding of this process was imminent. One thing confirmed during the interviewing process was that it was difficult for African American seventh-grade male students in several ways: dealing with balancing the pressures of the onset of adolescence, handling school life, trying to fit in, and learning to become more responsible of their actions.

The village concept of this school was impressive because the students were in constant need of being reminded of to act. The constant reiteration of the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at served as a reminder about how they were to behave. While assigned to the sixth-grade, African American males were still dealing with the stages of adolescence and the introduction to middle school. The seventh-graders were a little more organized with balancing the stages of adolescence and middle school and the eighth-graders demonstrated a higher level of maturity in balancing both issues.

Choosing this research and being dedicated to representing the “voices” of African American seventh-grade male students was enlightening because of the ability to observe how an Afrocentric education affected these participants, especially if they
remained there throughout high school. This Afrocentric concept was very impressive and deserving of follow-up with numerous research studies of seventh-grade students through high school to keep track of their development of self-concept, self-esteeem, and “Black conscious awareness” (racial identity).

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the meaning behind the Nguzo Saba principles had been practiced in the African American community for decades. Karenga (1977) incorporated Swahili terms that made the characteristics of the principles unique to the African American culture, which was celebrated and reflected upon during the seven days of Kwanzaa. These were good principles to guide and build character among the African American culture, thus leading to a grounded self-concept that was favorable.

The seven principles of Ma’at based in the philosophy of the Ancient Egyptian Goddess was also unique to the African American culture. When practiced, students developed confidence in himself and his capabilities, this enhanced his self-esteem. Both sets of principles guided African American seventh-grade male students toward developing a positive racial identity which was based in an African-centered perspective.

One reason for the establishment of the Columbus Africentric Early College was to educate students in how to view themselves in the paradigm of European history and to perceive their history beyond slavery. An Afrocentric education taught students not to feel like outsiders or inferior to other cultures as they were learning the core curriculum. A person should look at this Afrocentric School through the eyes of the participants, leaving aside biases. The participants interviewed for this study believed in this school’s
mission. The question, “What is this type of school trying to prepare you for?” had the following responses:

**Benjamin:** life,

**Lorell:** for when you get older it will prepare you for the real world,

**Geno:** college, and

**Steve:** preparing us to be Black men and Black women.

Teachers should not be assigned to this type of school unless they have the necessary educational background or are willing to educate themselves on the Afrocentric concept. Listening to staff members discuss their lack of knowledge regarding the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at was not encouraging, because they were suppose to be teaching students these concepts, and incorporating them into their daily class lessons. It seemed as though some teachers were just doing their own thing as far as teaching the subject was concerned. This in itself is not bad: its just not the mission of an Afrocentric school.

Baba Taylor’s return to the Columbus Africentric Early College was encouraging for teachers and parents. During observation of his interaction with students, his demeanor was complementary to the Afrocentric concept. He was constantly demonstrating the necessary principle to the student with whom he was interacting. The principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at resonated with him and how he ran the school. The respect shown him by students was obvious as some looked to him as a big brother. He was observed while interacting not only with middle school students but also high school students. These students spoke to him with admiration and he reciprocated.
It was evident based on an interview with him that he was student-centered and students appeared not to want to disappoint him, as he is an advocate for them and very supportive of them, personally and academically. He recognized that some students would make choices that were not in their best interests, but it did not mean one should turn his back on them. He assists the student to know that the choice was not the best one to make based on the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at. Since his return to the Columbus Africentric Early College the students had improved as demonstrated by information reported in the Ohio School Report Card. Before his return, for the school year 2009-2010 the school was designated Academic Watch with 5 of the 19 required state indicators being met, and a performance rating of 76.1%. Upon his return the school was designated Continuous Improvement, having met 7 of the 19 state indicator requirements, and receiving an 80% for performance (see Appendix B).

This school was not a cure-all for the plights of African American children, but it is a means that addressed their plights and provided ways of dealing with dilemmas. Students at the Columbus Africentric Early College felt as though they were a part of a community, a learning community that has their best interests at heart. Staff members do not want to see students fall through the cracks in society because of their race. Instead, the staff members expressed unconditional support to all the students. Baba Taylor said:

Middle school students are just bouncing off the walls. They get into fights. Someone said, “A middle schooler had gotten into a fight” and I said, “That’s what they do; they fight.” Now if you were to say a high schooler got into a fight, that’s something different. There has been one fight among the high school students. But in middle school, there have been 15 squabbles. That’s what they do. But as they mature, it levels off. If a middle school boy likes a girl, he is going to talk about her. If he wants to hit her with a basketball, he is going to do it. It’s all a part of adolescence.
Baba Taylor was not saying that this behavior was acceptable, just that it is all a part of adolescence and that the teachers’ job is to teach students how to deal with the stages of adolescence and school life. The concept for middle school students is to assist them in dealing with the issues they are facing as they are developing into young people, while in an academic setting.

The participants acknowledged that they like the Afrocentric concept and learning about African and their African American ancestors. The participants did not feel they were inferior; thus reducing feelings of alienation in the classroom. The participants were proud of their heritage and themselves as African American adolescent males. This type of school assisted in guiding them to appreciate who they are and how they feel about themselves. To encourage students in applying the principles of Ma’at in their academic and social life, all of their teachers need to be in sync with fostering the practice of these seven principles. As one considers this type of school, one should remember that African American students are being educated based on the Columbus City School’s curriculum and becoming well-rounded in the process. This is a part of the middle school concept philosophy. The only difference is the inclusion of the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at from an African-centered perspective. This was how the participants viewed an Afrocentric school; therefore, seen from their viewpoint, the concept is appreciated as African American seventh-grade male students felt that they fit into society.
Suggestions

Based on the data from this research the following are suggestions along with a brief explanation as to why they were suggested:

- Teachers should be assigned based on their educational background. If they do not have an Afrocentric perspective, they should not be assigned to this school.

- The lead principal should have input on who is assigned to teach at the Columbus Africentric Early College.

- Teachers in attendance need to be educated in the Afrocentric philosophy and attend workshops that address teaching this perspective to adolescents.

- Seventh-grade teachers in the Afrocentric School should meet regularly to discuss how they are incorporating the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at into their classroom lessons. The purpose is to ensure that students are learning each course from an African-centered perspective.

- Teachers should have classroom management classes or workshops to learn how to better facilitate their classrooms.

- Administrators who cannot explain the Afrocentric concept should attend workshops to enhance their knowledge.

- Verification of the terms Agoo and Amee should be investigated to learn the actual orientation of the words: because these two terms are from the Akan culture and not Kiswahili language.

- There should be a longitudinal study interviewing African American seventh-grade male students at this Afrocentric School, followed by another interview with the same population, once they have entered the tenth grade. Investigate their self-concept, self-esteem, and “Black conscious awareness”— racial identity.

- The same longitudinal study should be done at a non-Afrocentric school to compare and contrast data. The study should be conducted with seventh-grade African American male students, and again when that population has entered the tenth grade.

- When conducting this study it should be viewed based on Cross’ 1971 racial identity theory and Cross and Vandiver (2001) Cross Racial Identity Scale. The purpose is to investigate how these two theories addressed self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development of African American adolescents.
- As a gesture of keeping track of events that affect self-esteem, the self-esteem passport should be given to students (See Appendix V).

**Summary of Suggestions**

The lead principal was a valuable member to the school’s community as he embodied both sets of the principles of Nguzo Saba and Ma’at and was viewed as a strong role model for students. He demonstrated a stern and yet positive attitude toward students while observations were conducted at the school. Teachers should be assigned after receiving training with classroom management and a concrete understanding of the Afrocentric concept. Collaboration was a positive concept to share with other teachers at the different grade levels, because the issues students were dealing with could be addressed and constructive avenues developed to guide the student toward succeeding academically and socially. Finally, verify and recognize the origin of the terms *Agoo* and *Amee*. 
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**Dissertations**


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Appendix A: Middle School Lottery Application

2010-2011 School Choice Lottery Application: Middle School

Deadline for submitting School Choice applications to be included in the lottery: Friday, February 26, 2010

List up to 3 school choices. Your child will be in the lottery for each of the schools you list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Heights</td>
<td>Northeast (1)</td>
<td>Northeast (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44 Atwood Elementary</td>
<td>140 Dominos</td>
<td>210 Medora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156 Arts Impact MS</td>
<td>233 Ridgewood</td>
<td>222 Mifflin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126 Cat City Prep for Young Men</td>
<td>274 Woodward Park</td>
<td>108 Johnson Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127 Cat City Prep for Young Women</td>
<td>525 Lindos</td>
<td>114 Buckeye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>220 Columbus Spanish Immers</td>
<td>671 South Mifflin</td>
<td>236 Sherwood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>504 Ecole Kenwood</td>
<td>674 Windor</td>
<td>240 Southmoor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>440 Fifth Ave., Alt. K-8</td>
<td>752 Kenwood</td>
<td>282 Yorktown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 McKinley STEM</td>
<td>108 Johnson Park</td>
<td>205 Westmoor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>230 Monroe Alternative</td>
<td>352 Berwick Alt. K-8</td>
<td>254 Wedgewood</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Name: [Last] [First] [Middle] [SS#]

Grade in September 2010 (Circle): 6 7 8 Will student be repeating 2009-10 grade? Yes No

Circle Only One Race Code: White Black Hispanic Asian American Indian Pacific Islander Multi Racial (Needed to develop ID for non-current CC students)

Please Circle: Male Female Birth Date: Birth City/State/County

First/Last Name(s) of Custodial Parents/Guardians

Custodial Parents/Guardians' ADDRESS: City Zip

If this is a new address, when did you move?

Custodial Mom Phone: Home Work Cell
Custodial Dad Phone: Home Work Cell

Does the student applicant have a sibling in one of the buildings you selected above? Yes No

If yes, list NAME OF SIBLING / 2009-10 GRADE / SCHOOL

School Applicant Attended in 2009-10 (district/city/state, if not CC) Assigned School for 2010-11

I certify by my signature that the information provided on this form is accurate.

SIGNATURE of Custodial Parent/Guardian

Please review the information provided. Inaccurate information can void this application.

Mail or bring applications to:
COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS
SCHOOL CHOICE OFFICE
61 S, 6th Street
Columbus, OH 43215
Appendix B: National Middle School Associations’ This We Believe 2003

- educators who value working with this age group and are prepared to do so they make “a conscious choice to work with young adolescents” and are educated specifically in the area of middle childhood

- courageous, collaborative leadership - courageous in implementing the middle school philosophy; are leaders in the transformation of this philosophy because their leadership “empowers others to make the often needed hard decisions” which goes against the hegemonic norms

- a shared vision that guides decisions - which are idealistic and uplifting that enables students to succeed “this is critical to the long-term success of any school”

- an inviting, supportive, and safe environment - “that promotes in-depth learning and enhances student’s physical and emotional well-being”

- high expectations for every member of the learning community - which is reciprocated for all involved in the successful education of students “such confidence promotes positive attitudes and behaviors and motivates students to tackle challenging learning activities”

- students and teachers engaged in active learning - “developmentally responsive instructional practices place students at the center of the learning process”

- an adult advocate for every student - is “fundamental to the school’s culture; it is “an attitude of caring that translates into action”

- school-initiated family and community partnerships - “genuine family and community involvement are fundamental components of successful schools for young adolescents”

- curriculum that is relevant, challenging, integrative, and exploratory - is “distinguished by learning activities that appeal to young adolescents and create opportunities to pose and answer questions that are important to them”
- it is of relevancy when it “allows students to pursue answers to questions they have about themselves, content, and the world”
- it is challenging when it “enables them to guide the course of their own education”
- it is integrative when it “helps students make sense of their lives and the world around them”
- exploratory is “the aspect of a successful middle school’s curriculum that most directly and fully reflects the nature and needs of young adolescents”

- multiple learning and teaching approaches that respond to their diversity
  - learning approaches “capitalizes on students’ cultural, experiential, and personal backgrounds, new concepts are built on knowledge students already possess”; teaching approach “should enhance and accommodate the diverse skills, abilities, and prior knowledge of young adolescents”

- assessment and evaluation programs that promote quality learning
  - assessing student’s “progress toward an objective and using that information to help students continue their learning”; evaluating the process by “using data and standards to judge the quality of progress or level of achievement”

- organizational structures that support meaningful relationships and learning
  - “effective teams lead to improved student achievement, increased parental contacts, and enhanced school climate, and positive student attitudes”

- school-wide efforts and policies that foster health, wellness, and safety
  - the entire “school, with faculty members sharing responsibility for maintaining a positive school environment”; provide “opportunities for developing and practicing healthful decision-making, coping, and refusal skills that are purposely reinforced throughout the curriculum”

- multifaceted guidance and support services.
  - from both “teachers and specialized professionals who are readily available to offer the assistance many students need in negotiating their lives both in and out of school”. (pp. 7-32)
**Appendix C: Ohio Report Cards 2008-2011**

### Columbus Africentric Early College

**300 E Livingston Ave, Columbus, OH 43215-5761 - Grades 6-12 - Franklin County**

#### 2008-2009 School Year Report Card

- **Current Principal:** Theodore L. Thompson (614) 365-4875
- **Current Superintendent:** Gene T. Harris (614) 365-5000

#### Percentage of Students at and above the Proficient Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Your School</th>
<th>Your District</th>
<th>State 2008-2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd Grade Achievement</td>
<td>The state requirement is 75 percent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Reading</td>
<td>59.9%</td>
<td>77.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mathematics</td>
<td>65.8%</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Grade Achievement</td>
<td>The state requirement is 75 percent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reading</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mathematics</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Writing</td>
<td>65.8%</td>
<td>84.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Grade Achievement</td>
<td>The state requirement is 75 percent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Reading</td>
<td>53.1%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Mathematics</td>
<td>44.3%</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Science</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Social Studies</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>61.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th Grade Achievement</td>
<td>The state requirement is 75 percent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Reading</td>
<td>59.1%</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>80.5%</td>
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<td>The state requirement is 75 percent</td>
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<td>84.6%</td>
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Additional notes:
- To meet a test indicator for grades 5-8 and 10, at least 75% of students tested must score proficient or higher on that test. Other indicator requirements are: 11th grade Ohio Graduation Tests, 65%; Attendance Rate, 93%; Graduation Rate, 90%.
- On the Web: reportcard.ohio.gov

---

About the image:
- The report card includes various indicators such as reading, mathematics, science, writing, and social studies.
- The overall performance index is 75.8, indicating a strong performance.
- The school is designated for continuous improvement.
- The report card also includes state graduation rates and attendance rates.
Your School's Assessment Results Over Time

All students in the school for a full academic year are included in the results.

6th Grade Achievement

7th Grade Achievement

8th Grade Achievement

Ohio Graduation Tests (10th Grade)

The State Indicators are based on state assessments, as well as on attendance and graduation rates. To earn an indicator for Achievement or Graduation Tests, at least 75% of students must reach proficient or above for the given assessment.

For the 11th grade Ohio Graduation Tests indicators, a cumulative 85% passage rate for each assessment is required.

Columbus Africentric Early College, Franklin County
Performance Index Calculations for the 2008-2009 School Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Level Across Grades 3-8 and 10 for all Tested Subjects (Includes every student enrolled in the school for full academic year)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Advanced</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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Your School’s Performance Index: 75.8

Value-Added Measure

Overall Composite: +

Reading: 
Mathematics: 

Legend:

+ = Above Expected Growth
✓ = Met Expected Growth
= Below Expected Growth

Value-Added results are computed only for buildings that include students in grades 4 through 8.

On the Web: reportcard.ohio.gov
# Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adequate Yearly Progress</th>
<th>Grades 3-8 and 10</th>
<th>Reading and Mathematics</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
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<td>Met</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian / Pacific Islander</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian / Alaska Native</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Racial</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with Disabilities</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited English Proficient</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent Passed</th>
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<td>Met</td>
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<td>Attendance Rate</td>
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### AYP Determination by Subgroup

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</table>

### Legend

This legend explains terms used in the above chart that describe whether each student group met this year's AYP goals.

For test indicators, AYP can be met in one of three ways:
1. meeting the AYP targets with current year results;
2. meeting the AYP targets with two-year combined results;
3. meeting the improvement requirements of Safe Harbor;
4. meeting the AYP targets with projected results.

*The non-test indicators used to assess AYP (participation rate and graduation rate) are applied only to the student subgroup.*

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<th>Indicator</th>
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<td>Mathematics Proficiency</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>Reading Participation</td>
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<td>Mathematics Participation</td>
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### Federally Required Graduation Rate Information

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Black, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>79.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>81.1%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The dis-aggregated graduation ratios of your schools are provided for informational purposes only and are not used for your AYP determinations.
## State and Federally Required School Information

### Your School’s Percentage of Students at Each Performance Level

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<th>American Indian or Alaska Native</th>
<th>Asian or Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Multi-Racial</th>
<th>White, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Students with Disabilities</th>
<th>English Proficient</th>
<th>Limited English Proficient</th>
<th>Students with Disabilities</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Non-Bin English</th>
<th>Low-Performing School</th>
<th>Not Performing School</th>
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### Your School’s Students 2008–2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Daily Student Enrollment</th>
<th>Black, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>American Indian or Alaska Native</th>
<th>Asian or Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Multi-Racial</th>
<th>White, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Economically Disadvantaged</th>
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<th>Students with Disabilities</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
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</table>

**Under the federal No Child Left Behind Act, states are required to report certain data about schools and teachers. Data presented here are for reporting purposes only and are not used in the computation of the state designation for districts and schools.**

**Notes:**
- Not Calculated/Not Displayed when there are fewer than 10 in the group.
- Number of Limited English Proficient Students Excluded from Accountability Calculations

## Federally Required School Teacher Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of teachers with at least a Bachelor's Degree</th>
<th>Year Building</th>
<th>Year District</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>100.0</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of teachers with at least a Master's Degree</th>
<th>Year Building</th>
<th>Year District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of core academic subject elementary and secondary classes taught by highly qualified teachers</th>
<th>Year Building</th>
<th>Year District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of core academic subject elementary and secondary classes taught by poorly qualified teachers</th>
<th>Year Building</th>
<th>Year District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>98.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of core academic subject elementary and secondary classes taught by teachers with temporary, conditional, or long-term substitute certification/licensure</th>
<th>Year Building</th>
<th>Year District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Measures of a Rigorous Curriculum for the Class of 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>2007-08 Graduates</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rate</td>
<td>79.6 %</td>
<td>EMIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean ACT Score</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>ACT Corp., EMIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Graduates participating in the ACT</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>ACT Corp., EMIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean SAT Score</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>College Board, EMIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Graduates participating in the SAT</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>College Board, EMIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Graduates graduating with an Honors Diploma</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>EMIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Graduates participating in an AP test</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>College Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Graduates with an AP score of 3 or above</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>College Board, EMIS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend**

- EMIS - Education Management Information System of the Ohio Department of Education
- ACT College Entrance Exam - Nonprofit organization that administers the ACT college entrance test
- College Board (SAT) - Nonprofit association that administers the SAT exam
- AP - Advanced Placement, a program offering courses/exams that provide students the opportunity to earn credit or advanced standing at colleges and universities

**The Measures of a Rigorous Curriculum are intended to report on the completion of a rigorous curriculum and other indicators of student success that ensure students leave school with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college, careers and citizenship. These indicators pertain to schools that have any combination of grades 10, 11 and 12.**

**The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP),** often referred to as "The Nation's Report Card," is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment that enables the comparison of performance in Ohio and other states in various subject areas. Schools and students within each state are selected randomly to be a part of the assessment. Not all students in the state or in a particular school take the assessment. Data are reported at the state level only, and there are no individual student or exam school summary results. The assessments are conducted in mathematics, reading, science, writing, the arts, civics, economics, geography and U.S. history.

To view Ohio's most recent NAEP results, go to: [http://education.ohio.gov](http://education.ohio.gov) and search for key word "NAEP"
Determining Your School's Designation

Determining your school's report card designation is a multi-step process. The first step is to determine a preliminary designation, which is based on the following components: 1) the percentage of indicators met, 2) the performance index, and 3) AYP determination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators Met</th>
<th>Performance Index</th>
<th>AYP Designation</th>
<th>Preliminary Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94%–100% or</td>
<td>100 to 120</td>
<td>Met or Not Met</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75%–93.9% or</td>
<td>90 to 99.9</td>
<td>Met or Not Met</td>
<td>Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%–74.9% or</td>
<td>0 to 89.9</td>
<td>Met or Not Met</td>
<td>Continuous Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%–74.9% or</td>
<td>80 to 89.9</td>
<td>Not Met</td>
<td>Academic Watch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31%–49.9% or</td>
<td>70 to 79.9</td>
<td>Not Met</td>
<td>Academic Emergency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%–30.9% and</td>
<td>0 to 69.9</td>
<td>Not Met</td>
<td>Academic Emergency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The preliminary designation results from identifying the higher value between the percentage of indicators met by your school and your school's performance index. AYP then is evaluated to determine its effect on the preliminary designation. There are three ways in which AYP can affect the preliminary designation.

1. If a school meets AYP in the current year, it can be rated no lower than Continuous Improvement.
2. If a school does not meet AYP for three consecutive years and in the current year it does not meet AYP in more than one student group, it can be rated no higher than Continuous Improvement.
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Once the preliminary designation is determined, Value-Added, the fourth measure in the accountability system, is evaluated to determine the impact (if any) on the school's final designation.

1. If your school's designation is restricted to Continuous Improvement due to AYP, Value-Added has no impact on the designation and the preliminary designation becomes the final designation.
2. If your school experiences above expected growth for at least two consecutive years, your school's final designation will increase by one designation.
3. If your school experiences below expected growth for at least three consecutive years, your school's final designation will decrease by one designation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preliminary Designation</th>
<th>Value-Added Measure*</th>
<th>Final Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Above expected growth for at least 2 consecutive years or Below expected growth for at least 3 consecutive years</td>
<td>Excellent with Distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Above expected growth for at least 2 consecutive years or Below expected growth for at least 3 consecutive years</td>
<td>Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>Above expected growth for at least 2 consecutive years or Below expected growth for at least 3 consecutive years</td>
<td>Continuous Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Watch</td>
<td>Above expected growth for at least 2 consecutive years or Below expected growth for at least 3 consecutive years</td>
<td>Academic Watch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Emergency</td>
<td>Above expected growth for at least 2 consecutive years or Below expected growth for at least 3 consecutive years</td>
<td>Academic Emergency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In all other cases, including if your school's designation has been restricted to Continuous Improvement, then Value-Added will have no impact on the designation and the preliminary designation becomes the final designation.
Ohio Department of Education
Report Card Resources on the Web:
reportcard.ohio.gov
# Columbus Africentric Early College

300 E Livingston Ave, Columbus, OH 43215-5761 - Grades 6-12 - Franklin County

## 2009-2010 School Year Report Card

**Current Principal:** Theodore L. Thompson (614) 365-8675  
**Current Superintendent:** Darrin T. Harris (614) 365-0800

---

### State Indicators

#### Percentage of Students at and above the Proficient Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Performance Index</th>
<th>Percentage of Students at and above the Proficient Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd Grade Achievement</td>
<td>76.1</td>
<td>59.0% 81.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Grade Achievement</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>57.8% 76.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Grade Achievement</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>64.1% 67.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th Grade Achievement</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>47.1% 67.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th Grade Achievement</td>
<td>77.4</td>
<td>42.2% 84.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Grade Achievement</td>
<td>80.2</td>
<td>61.1% 84.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th Grade Achievement</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>42.2% 77.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th Grade Achievement</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>55.0% 80.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th Grade Achievement</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>29.8% 64.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th Grade Achievement</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>33.3% 69.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Ohio Graduation Tests (10th Grade)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>State Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>68.6%</td>
<td>68.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>79.5%</td>
<td>79.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>71.9%</td>
<td>71.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Ohio Graduation Tests (11th Grade)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>State Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>87.1%</td>
<td>87.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>89.1%</td>
<td>89.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>68.6%</td>
<td>85.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>80.1%</td>
<td>80.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Attendance Rate

- The state requirement is 93%

- 2008-09 Graduation Rate
  - 94.3% for All Grades
  - 99.0% for Graduates

---

*Any result of or above the state standard is indicated by a ✓

+ All calculations for this chart use the state's lower than 10th of the group

*Simulation results for students who took the tests at 10th or 11th grades

---

On the Web: reportcard.ohio.gov
Your School’s Assessment Results Over Time

All students in the school for a full academic year are included in the results.

6th Grade Achievement

7th Grade Achievement

8th Grade Achievement

Ohio Graduation Tests (10th Grade)

Ohio Graduation Tests (11th Grade)*

The State Indicators are based on state assessments, as well as on attendance and graduation rates. To earn an indicator for Achievement or Graduation Tests, at least 75% of students must reach proficient or above for the given assessment. For the 11th grade Ohio Graduation Tests indicators, a cumulative 85% passage rate for each assessment is required.

*Cumulative results for students who took the tests as 10th or 11th graders.
## Performance Index

### Performance Index Calculations for the 2009-2010 School Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Level Across Grades 3-8 and 10 for all Tested Subjects (Includes every student enrolled in the school for a full academic year)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Un tested</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accelerated</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your School’s Performance Index: 76.1

---

## Value-Added Measure

Scores reflect grade level and overall composite ratings for the 2009-2010 school year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Composite</th>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 5</th>
<th>Grade 6</th>
<th>Grade 7</th>
<th>Grade 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Value-Added results are computed only for buildings that include students in grades 4 through 8.

Your school’s Value-Added rating represents the progress your school has made with its students since last school year. In contrast, achievement scores represent students’ performance at a point in time. A score of “Above” indicates greater than one year of progress has been achieved; “Met” indicates one year of progress has been achieved; “Below” indicates less than one year of progress has been achieved. Value-Added results are computed only for buildings that include sufficient testing data for students in any grade 4 through 8.

On the Web: reportcard.ohio.gov

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**Legend**

- + = Above Expected Growth
- ✅ = Met Expected Growth
- ✗ = Below Expected Growth
### Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

#### Adequate Yearly Progress

Grades 3-8 and 10 Reading and Mathematics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adequate Yearly Progress</th>
<th>All Students</th>
<th>Economically Disadvantaged</th>
<th>Asian/Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Black, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>American Indian/Alaska Native</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Multi-Racial</th>
<th>White, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Students with Disabilities</th>
<th>Limited English Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics Not Met</td>
<td>Not Met</td>
<td>Not Met</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>Not Met</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics Not Met</td>
<td>Not Met</td>
<td>Not Met</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>Not Met</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### AYP Determination by Indicator

- **Reading Proficiency**: Met
- **Mathematics Proficiency**: Not Met
- **Reading Participation**: Met
- **Mathematics Participation**: Not Met
- **Graduation Rate**: Met
- **Attendance Rate**: Met
- **AYP Determination for Non-High School Students**: N/A

#### Legend

This legend explains terms used in the above chart that describe whether each student group met this year’s AYP goals.

- **N/A**: Not applicable.
- **NR**: Not Required – This indicator was not evaluated for this subgroup because the subgroup size was smaller than the minimum number needed to achieve a statistically reliable result. 30 students is the minimum size for the proficiency and non-test indicators, while 40 is the minimum size for the participation rate indicators.
- **Met**: This subgroup met AYP for this indicator with its current year, two-year combined, Safe Harbor, or growth measure results.
- **Not Met**: This subgroup did not meet AYP for the indicator.

### 2008-2009 Graduation Rate Information

- **American Indian/Alaska Native**: N/A
- **Asian or Pacific Islander**: N/A
- **Black, non-Hispanic**: N/A
- **Econ. Discharged**: 84.6%
- **Hispanic**: N/A
- **Limited English Proficient**: N/A
- **Multi-Racial**: N/A
- **Students with Disabilities**: 95%
- **White, non-Hispanic**: N/A

The disaggregated graduation rates of your school are provided for informational purposes only and are not used for your AYP determination.
### State and Federally Required School Information

#### Your School's Percentage of Students at Each Performance Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Students Scoring</th>
<th>Limited</th>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Accelerated</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mathematics</strong></td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Science</strong></td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Studies</strong></td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Percentage of Students Scoring Limited

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Your School’s Students 2009-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Daily Student Enrollment</th>
<th>Black, Non-Hispanic</th>
<th>American Indian or Alaska Native</th>
<th>Asian or Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Mult-Racial</th>
<th>White, Non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Economically Disadvantaged</th>
<th>Limited English Proficient</th>
<th>Students with Disabilities</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>581</td>
<td>96.8%</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>87.8%</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Under the federal No Child Left Behind Act, states are required to report certain data about schools and teachers. Data presented here are for reporting purposes only and are not used in the computation of the state designation for districts and schools.**

### Federally Required School Teacher Information

**Your Building’s Poverty Status: High Poverty**

- Percentage of teachers with at least a Bachelor’s Degree: 100.0%
- Percentage of teachers with at least a Master’s Degree: 58.8%
- Percentage of core academic subject elementary and secondary classes not taught by highly qualified teachers: 0.0%
- Percentage of core academic subject elementary and secondary classes taught by teachers with temporary, conditional, or long-term substitute certification/credential: 0.0%

**Your Building**

- District: 99.9

**District**

- Number of Limited English Proficient Students Excluded from Accountability Calculations: --
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<td>Continuous Improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>50%-74.9% or</td>
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<td>Academic Watch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31%-49.9% or</td>
<td>70 to 79.9</td>
<td>Not Met</td>
<td>Academic Emergency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%-30.9% or</td>
<td>60 to 69.9</td>
<td>Not Met</td>
<td>Academic Emergency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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1. If your school’s designation is restricted to Continuous Improvement due to AYP, Value-Added has no impact on the designation and the preliminary designation becomes the final designation.
2. If your school experiences above expected growth for at least two consecutive years, your school’s final designation will increase by one designation.
3. If your school experiences below expected growth for at least three consecutive years, your school’s final designation will decrease by one designation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preliminary Designation</th>
<th>Value-Added Measure*</th>
<th>Final Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Above expected growth for at least 2 consecutive years or Below expected growth for at least 3 consecutive years</td>
<td>Excellent with Distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Above expected growth for at least 2 consecutive years or Below expected growth for at least 3 consecutive years</td>
<td>Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>Above expected growth for at least 2 consecutive years or Below expected growth for at least 3 consecutive years</td>
<td>Continuous Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Watch</td>
<td>Above expected growth for at least 2 consecutive years or Below expected growth for at least 3 consecutive years</td>
<td>Academic Watch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Emergency</td>
<td>Above expected growth for at least 2 consecutive years or Below expected growth for at least 3 consecutive years</td>
<td>Academic Emergency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In all other cases, including if your school's designation has been restricted to Continuous Improvement, then Value-Added will have no impact on the designation and the preliminary designation becomes the final designation.
The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP),
only nationally representative and continuing
assessment that enables the comparison of performance in Ohio and other states in various
subject areas. Schools and students within each state are selected randomly to be a part of the
assessment. Not all students in the state or in a particular school take the assessment. Data
are reported at the state level only, and there are no individual student or even school summary
results. The assessments are conducted in mathematics, reading, science, writing, the arts,
civics, economics, geography and U.S. history.

To view Ohio’s most recent
NAEP results, go to:
http://education.ohio.gov
and search for key word “NAEP”
The School Report Card for the 2010-2011 school year shows the progress schools have made based on four measures of performance:

- **State Indicators**
- **Performance Index**
- **Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)**
- **Value-Added Measures**

The combination of the four measures is the basis for assigning state designations to districts, buildings, and community schools.

The six designations are:
- Excellent with Distinction
- Excellent
- Effective
- Continuous Improvement
- Academic Watch
- Academic Emergency

To meet a test indicator for grades 3-8 and 10, at least 75% of students tested must score proficient or higher on their test. Other indicator requirements are:
- 8th grade Ohio Graduation Tests: 85%
- Attendance Rate: 95%
- Graduation Rate: 95%

### State Indicators

**3rd Grade Achievement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Your School</th>
<th>Year District</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
<td>79.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
<td>82.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4th Grade Achievement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Your School</th>
<th>Year District</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
<td>83.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>60.2%</td>
<td>78.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**5th Grade Achievement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Your School</th>
<th>Year District</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>74.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>66.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
<td>71.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**6th Grade Achievement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Your School</th>
<th>Year District</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
<td>85.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>77.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**7th Grade Achievement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Your School</th>
<th>Year District</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>77.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>50.9%</td>
<td>74.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**8th Grade Achievement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Your School</th>
<th>Year District</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>69.1%</td>
<td>85.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>74.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>67.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Ohio Graduation Tests (10th Grade)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Your School</th>
<th>Year District</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>78.3%</td>
<td>87.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>68.6%</td>
<td>82.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>81.6%</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
<td>74.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>69.9%</td>
<td>80.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Ohio Graduation Tests (11th Grade) *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Your School</th>
<th>Year District</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>87.3%</td>
<td>92.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
<td>89.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>93.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>94.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>70.4%</td>
<td>88.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Attendance Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Your School</th>
<th>Year District</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9th Grade</td>
<td>93.7%</td>
<td>94.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2009-10 Graduation Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Your School</th>
<th>Year District</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9th Grade</td>
<td>94.5%</td>
<td>94.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the Web: reportcard.ohio.gov
Your School’s Assessment Results Over Time

All students in the school for a full academic year are included in the results.

3rd Grade Achievement

4th Grade Achievement

5th Grade Achievement

6th Grade Achievement

7th Grade Achievement

8th Grade Achievement

Ohio Graduation Tests (10th Grade)

Ohio Graduation Tests (11th Grade)*

The State Indicators are based on state assessments, as well as on attendance and graduation rates. To earn an indicator for Achievement or Graduation Tests, at least 75% of students must reach proficient or above for the given assessment.

For the 11th grade Ohio Graduation Tests indicators, a cumulative 85% passage rate for each assessment is required.

* Cumulative results for students who took the tests as 10th or 11th graders.
Performance Index Calculations for the 2010-2011 School Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Level Across Grades 3-8 and 10 for all Tested Subjects (includes every student enrolled in the school for a full academic year)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>=</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Untested</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>43.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accelerated</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your School’s Performance Index: 80.0

Performance Index Over Time:
- 2010-2011: 80.0
- 2009-2010: 76.1
- 2008-2009: 75.8

Value-Added Measure

Overall Composite: ✓
Scores reflect grade level and overall composite ratings for the 2010-2011 school year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 5</th>
<th>Grade 6</th>
<th>Grade 7</th>
<th>Grade 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mathematics:

- ✓

Note: Value-Added results are computed only for buildings that include students in grades 4 through 8.

Value-Added Measure:

Your school’s Value-Added rating represents the progress your school has made with its students since last school year. In contrast, achievement scores represent students’ performance at a point in time. A score of “Above” indicates greater than one year of progress has been achieved; “Met” indicates one year of progress has been achieved; “Below” indicates less than one year of progress has been achieved. Value-Added results are computed only for buildings that include sufficient testing data for students in any grade 4 through 8.

On the Web: reportcard.ohio.gov
### Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

#### Adequate Yearly Progress
Grades 3-8 and 10 Reading and Mathematics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adequate Yearly Progress</th>
<th>All Students</th>
<th>Economically Disadvantaged</th>
<th>Asian/Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Black, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>American Indian/Alaska Native</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Multi-Racial</th>
<th>White, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Students with Disabilities</th>
<th>Limited English Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage Proficient</strong></td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mathematics</strong></td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Graduation Rate</strong></td>
<td>Met</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attendance Rate</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AYP Determination by Subgroup</strong></td>
<td>Met</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### AYP Determination by Indicator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Proficiency</th>
<th>Met</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics Proficiency</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Participation</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics Participation</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rate</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance Rate</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AYP Determination for Your School</strong></td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Legend

This legend explains terms used in the above chart that describe whether each student group met this year’s AYP goals.

For test indicators, AYP can be met in one of four ways:

1. Meeting the AYP targets with current year results;
2. Meeting the AYP targets with two-year combined results;
3. Meeting the improvement requirements of Safe Harbor;
4. Meeting the AYP targets with projected results.

For non-test indicators, AYP can be met in one of three ways:

1. Meeting the AYP targets with current year results;
2. Meeting the AYP targets with two-year combined results;
3. Making improvement over the previous year.

The AYP determination for your school is based on these indicators.

N/A: Not applicable.

NR: Not Required – This indicator was not evaluated for this subgroup because the subgroup size was smaller than the minimum number needed to achieve a statistically reliable result. 30 students is the minimum size for the proficiency and non-test indicators, while 40 is the minimum size for the participation rate indicators.

Met: This subgroup met AYP for this indicator with their current year two-year combined, Safe Harbor, or growth measure results.

Not Met: This subgroup did not meet AYP for this indicator.

---

#### Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is a federally required measure. Every school and district must meet AYP goals that are set for Reading and Mathematics Proficiency and Participation, Attendance Rate, and Graduation Rate. These goals are applied to ten student groups: All Students, Economically Disadvantaged Students, Asian/Pacific Islander Students, Black, non-Hispanic Students, American Indian/Alaska Native Students, Hispanic Students, Multi-Racial Students, White, non-Hispanic Students, Students with Disabilities (IEP), and Students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). If any one of these groups does not meet AYP in Reading or Mathematics Proficiency, or in Participation, Attendance Rate, or Graduation Rate, then the school or districts does not meet AYP. Not meeting AYP for consecutive years will have both federal and state consequences. Federal consequences could include a school or district being identified for Improvement. State consequences could include a reduction in the state’s rating designation.

#### 2009-2010 Graduation Rate Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Students</th>
<th>American Indian/Alaska Native</th>
<th>Asian or Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Black, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Econ. Disadvantaged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94.5%</td>
<td>94.9%</td>
<td>94.4%</td>
<td>94.4%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Limited English Proficient</th>
<th>Multi-Racial Students with Disabilities</th>
<th>White, non-Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### State and Federally Required School Information

#### Your School’s Percentage of Students at Each Performance Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>American Indian or Alaska Native</th>
<th>Asian or Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Multi-Racial</th>
<th>White, non-Hispanic, Students with Disabilities</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Non-Economically Disadvantaged</th>
<th>Eco Deaf/Hard of Hearing</th>
<th>Limited English Proficient</th>
<th>Hindu</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage of Students Scoring Limited</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Percentage of Students Scoring Basic** |
| Reading               | 21.7                | --                               | --                       | --       | --           | 22.3                                          | --       | 23.8                           | --                       | 3.1                                    | --    | 24.6 |
| Writing               | 12.9                | --                               | --                       | --       | --           | 8.3                                           | --       | 14.0                           | --                       | 9.1                                    | --    | 20.0 |
| Mathematics           | 31.7                | --                               | --                       | --       | 32.3         | 19.0                                          | --       | 34.4                           | --                       | 31.1                                    | --    | 32.6 |
| Science               | 40.8                | --                               | --                       | --       | --           | 40.4                                          | 33.3     | 42.5                           | --                       | 41.9                                    | --    | 40.3 |
| Social Studies        | 14.3                | --                               | --                       | --       | --           | 16.4                                          | --       | 15.5                           | --                       | 15.6                                    | --    | 15.0 |

| **Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient** |
| Reading               | 50.7                | --                               | --                       | --       | --           | 52.1                                          | 53.1     | 50.2                           | --                       | 55.2                                    | --    | 44.7 |
| Writing               | 74.2                | --                               | --                       | --       | --           | 76.3                                          | 71.9     | 77.3                           | --                       | 70.0                                    | --    |      |
| Mathematics           | 34.0                | --                               | --                       | --       | --           | 35.4                                          | 37.9     | 33.9                           | --                       | 34.5                                    | --    | 34.0 |
| Science               | 36.8                | --                               | --                       | --       | --           | 38.4                                          | 52.4     | 34.3                           | --                       | 36.8                                    | --    | 37.1 |
| Social Studies        | 36.5                | --                               | --                       | --       | --           | 36.1                                          | 34.5     | 33.3                           | --                       | 33.3                                    | --    | 40.0 |

| **Percentage of Students Scoring Accelerated** |
| Reading               | 14.1                | --                               | --                       | --       | --           | 15.1                                          | 0.0      | 34.4                           | --                       | 11.7                                    | --    | 14.5 |
| Writing               | 12.9                | --                               | --                       | --       | --           | 13.3                                          | --       | 14.0                           | --                       | 13.6                                    | --    | 10.0 |
| Mathematics           | 8.3                 | --                               | --                       | --       | --           | 8.6                                           | 12.5     | 7.5                            | --                       | 9.9                                    | --    | 5.7  |
| Science               | 3.9                 | --                               | --                       | --       | --           | 4.1                                           | 4.8      | 3.7                            | --                       | 3.2                                    | --    | 4.8  |
| Social Studies        | 25.4                | --                               | --                       | --       | --           | 24.6                                          | --       | 24.1                           | --                       | 24.4                                    | --    | 25.0 |

| **Percentage of Students Scoring Advanced** |
| Reading               | 2.6                 | --                               | --                       | --       | --           | 2.7                                           | 6.3      | 2.1                            | --                       | 4.1                                    | --    | 0.7  |
| Writing               | 0.0                 | --                               | --                       | --       | --           | 0.0                                           | --       | 0.0                            | --                       | 0.0                                    | --    | 0.0  |
| Mathematics           | 2.3                 | --                               | --                       | --       | --           | 2.4                                           | 6.3      | 1.8                            | --                       | 2.9                                    | --    | 1.4  |
| Science               | 2.0                 | --                               | --                       | --       | --           | 2.1                                           | 4.8      | 1.5                            | --                       | 2.2                                    | --    | 1.6  |
| Social Studies        | 15.9                | --                               | --                       | --       | --           | 16.4                                          | --       | 15.5                           | --                       | 17.8                                    | --    | 10.0 |

#### Your School’s Students 2010-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Daily Student Enrollment</th>
<th>Black, non-Hispanic</th>
<th>American Indian or Alaska Native</th>
<th>Asian or Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Multi-Racial</th>
<th>White, non-Hispanic, Students with Disabilities</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Non-Economically Disadvantaged</th>
<th>Limited English Proficient</th>
<th>Students with Disabilities</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>568</td>
<td>97.8%</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>88.8%</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Under the federal No Child Left Behind Act, states are required to report certain data about schools and teachers. Data presented here are for reporting purposes only and are not used in the computation of the state designation for districts and schools.**

### Federally Required School Teacher Information

#### Your Building’s Poverty Status: High Poverty

- **Percentage of teachers with at least a Bachelor’s Degree**: 100.0%
- **Percentage of teachers with at least a Master’s Degree**: 62.5%
- **Percentage of core academic subject elementary and secondary classes taught by highly qualified teachers**: 1.1%
- **Percentage of core academic subject elementary and secondary classes taught by teachers with temporary, conditional or long-term substitute certification/licensure**: 0.0%

#### Your Building

- **100.0%**

#### District

- **64.1%**
Determining Your School's Designation

Determining your school's report card designation is a multi-step process. The first step is to determine a preliminary designation, which is based on the following components: 1) the percentage of indicators met, 2) the performance index and 3) AYP determination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators Met</th>
<th>Performance Index</th>
<th>AYP Designation</th>
<th>Preliminary Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94%-100% or</td>
<td>100 to 120</td>
<td>Met or Not Met</td>
<td>Excellent or Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75%-93.9% or</td>
<td>90 to 99.9</td>
<td>Met or Not Met</td>
<td>Effective or Continuous Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%-74.9% or</td>
<td>0 to 89.9</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Continuous Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%-74.9% or</td>
<td>80 to 89.9</td>
<td>Not Met</td>
<td>Academic Watch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31%-49.9% or</td>
<td>70 to 79.9</td>
<td>Not Met</td>
<td>Academic Emergency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%-30.9% or</td>
<td>0 to 69.9</td>
<td>Not Met</td>
<td>Academic Emergency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The preliminary designation results from identifying the higher value between the percentage of indicators met by your school and your school's performance index. AYP then is evaluated to determine its effect on the preliminary designation. There are two ways in which AYP can affect the preliminary designation:

1. If a school meets AYP in the current year, it can be rated no lower than Continuous Improvement.
2. If an Excellent or Effective school does not meet AYP for the same two (or more) subgroups for three consecutive years, its rating will be decreased to Effective or Continuous Improvement (respectively).

Once the preliminary designation is determined, Value-Added, the fourth measure in the accountability system, is evaluated to determine the impact (if any) on the school's final designation.

1. If your school's designation either is increased or decreased due to AYP, Value-Added has no impact on the designation and the preliminary designation becomes the final designation.
2. If your school experiences above expected growth in the current year, your school's final designation will increase by one designation.
3. If your school experiences below expected growth for at least three consecutive years, your school's final designation will decrease by one designation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preliminary Designation</th>
<th>Value-Added Measure*</th>
<th>Final Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Above expected growth</td>
<td>Excellent with Distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or Below expected growth for at least 3 consecutive years</td>
<td>Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Above expected growth</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or Below expected growth for at least 3 consecutive years</td>
<td>Continuous Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>Above expected growth</td>
<td>Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or Below expected growth for at least 3 consecutive years</td>
<td>Academic Watch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Watch</td>
<td>Above expected growth</td>
<td>Continuous Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or Below expected growth for at least 3 consecutive years</td>
<td>Academic Emergency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Emergency</td>
<td>Above expected growth</td>
<td>Academic Watch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or Below expected growth for at least 3 consecutive years</td>
<td>Academic Emergency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In all other cases, Value-Added will have no impact on the designation and the preliminary designation will become the final designation.
In 2008, the U.S. Department of Education issued new regulations to require Ohio and all other states to transition to a new graduation rate formula that will provide more consistency in reporting and will allow for comparisons across states. The new formula, referred to as a “four-year, adjusted cohort graduation rate,” includes only graduates who earn either a regular or honors diploma anytime within four years of when they first enter the 9th grade, which includes the summer immediately following their fourth year of high school.

The cohort (group) is created by following the progress of individual students from the time they enter high school. The group is adjusted to take into account students who transfer in or out any time over the four years. The graduation rate is calculated by taking the number of students who graduate in four years or less and dividing it by the number of students in the original list of 9th graders, adjusted to include students who move away or move into the school district.

Ohio is required to display the new graduation rate in 2011 to help familiarize the public with how it is created and compares to the existing rate. Beginning in 2012, this new rate will be the official graduation rate for Ohio and will be used for accountability purposes. Ohio also is required to display the new graduation rate by student group (as shown in the table on this page).

The data on this page is for the graduating Class of 2010. So that summer graduates can be included, Ohio lags its graduation rate by one year. Next year, the new formula (computed for the graduating Class of 2011) will be used in each school or district’s AYP calculation and to determine if the school or district met the state indicator for graduation.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), often referred to as “The Nation’s Report Card,” is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment that enables the comparison of performance in Ohio and other states in various subject areas. Schools and students within each state are selected randomly to be a part of the assessment. Not all students in the state or in a particular school take the assessment. Data are reported at the state level only, and there are no individual student or even school summary results. The assessments are conducted in mathematics, reading, science, writing, the arts, civics, economics, geography and U.S. history.

To view Ohio’s most recent NAEP results, go to:
http://education.ohio.gov
and search for key word “NAEP”
Appendix D: Consent Form for African American Seventh Grade Male Students

Ohio University Consent Form (Parent)

Title of Research: A Phenomenological Case Study of African American Adolescent Males in the Africentric School at Columbus, Ohio.

Researcher: Debra D. Rayford (PhD candidate)

Your child is being asked to participate in a research study, which is being conducted at the Columbus Africentric Early College. For you to be able to decide whether you want him to participate in this project, you should understand what the project is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks. It also explains how your child’s personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form and are in agreement for your child to participate, please sign and date it. This will allow your child to participate in this study.

Explanation of Study

This study is being conducted to obtain your child’s experience in the Columbus Africentric Early College based on his understanding of the principles of Ma’at and Nguzo Saba. This research is to investigate how these two principles influence your child’s perception of himself from an Afrocentric perspective.

Your child should not participate if you feel he will be at any risk or discomforts. All information will be confidential. No names will be revealed to the school’s administrator, or in the research study. No extraneous amount of time will be taken away...
for your child’s class time or studies. If your child is chosen to participate in a focus

group, it will take place during lunchtime in which the researcher will provide lunch

based on the approval of the school’s principal.

This study is important to society because many Afrocentric Schools have not

been viable in U.S society; therefore, this school is considered unique. Also, the

principles of Ma’at and Nguzo Saba have not been studied together and analyzed with

regards to the experiences of seventh grade African American male students.

All information will be kept confidential and no names will be used or appear in

this study.

Confidentiality and Records

Your study information will be kept confidential by the researcher, Debra D. Rayford

(PhD candidate).

Additionally, while every effort will be made to keep your study-related information

confidential, there may be circumstances where this information must be shared with:

* Federal agencies, for example the Office of Human Research Protections,

  whose responsibility is to protect human subjects in research;

  * Representatives of Ohio University (OU), including the Institutional Review

    Board, a committee that oversees the research at OU;

    *

Compensation

No compensation will be provided.

Contact Information
If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Dr. Francis E.

Godwyll/godwyll@ohio.edu & Debra D. Rayford/dr222307@ohio.edu
If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, (740)593-0664.

By signing below, you are agreeing that:

- you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered
- you have been informed of potential risks and they have been explained to your satisfaction.
- you understand Ohio University has no funds set aside for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this study
- you are 18 years of age or older
- your participation in this research is completely voluntary
- you may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Child’s Name ____________________________________________

Signature_______________________________________________ Date___________

Printed Name____________________________________________

Version Date: [06/01/10]
Appendix E: Guidelines to Conduct Research in Columbus City School District

GUIDELINES FOR THE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH STUDIES IN COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

The Columbus City School District takes the position that educational research, when carefully planned and conducted, provides a promising approach to the solution of contemporary educational problems. Consequently, the school system assumes the position of actively encouraging the conduct of meaningful research that is aimed at the advancement of education as a science or the advancement of the behavioral sciences commonly associated with the science of education. The District also takes the position that the training of educational researchers should include practical experience in the conduct of well-planned, meaningful research in a school setting. Thus, the District accepts the responsibility for cooperation with institutions of higher education by helping arrange internship and practicum programs for students pursuing advanced studies in education and related areas of behavioral science.

Consideration of the number of requests for permission to conduct research within the school system necessitates formulation of a set of guidelines. For this purpose, six categories of research are identified. They are as follows:

- **In-System research** consists of properly authorized studies designed to supply the information needs of the school system and conducted by system personnel.

- **Course requirement research** consists of projects assigned to graduates or undergraduates as a requirement for course completion, usually with a one-quarter or less time frame (10-12 weeks).

- **Thesis and dissertation research** consists of research conducted to fulfill the requirement associated with a specific course at an academic institution.

- **Cooperative research** consists of research jointly planned and conducted by personnel from the school system and some outside agency, such as a university, private research foundation, or a government agency.

- **Invited research** consists of studies specifically requested by the school system to supply its information needs.

- **Faculty research** consists of studies conducted by individual faculty members of institutions of higher education, exclusive of the categories of invited or cooperative research.

EXPECTATIONS

- Submit a proposal for consideration only after it is well conceptualized and designed.

- Develop and maintain good human relations with school personnel while collecting data.
RESEARCH GUIDELINES (cont.)

- Remain cognizant of the school’s instructional mission and strive to minimize interference with normal school routines and instructional schedules. Studies that require extensive use of instructional time will not be approved for implementation in the District.

- Recognize the integrity of cooperating pupils and observe good human relations in all interaction with pupils.

- Explicate the immediate and/or potential implications of findings for educational practices in the Columbus City Schools.

- Protect the confidentiality of individual pupil responses and/or performances. Guidelines for the release of confidential information should be mutually agreed upon by the researcher and school officials prior to data collection.

- Insure that persons involved in data collection have been provided with adequate training in the use of all assessment procedures involved in the study.

- Employ treatment and/or assessment procedures congruent with the ethical standards of both the educational community and federal human subjects’ regulations. A copy of IRB approval from the IHE is required.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

It should be noted that the school system has adopted criteria for evaluating the desirability of granting approval for the conduct of a study in the Columbus City School District.

This does not mean that school system officials necessarily propose to judge the merit of research proposals in any absolute sense. Rather, they propose to evaluate the merits of granting the use of time and facilities by the potential researcher and to safeguard the rights of pupils and staff.

To insure a complete and adequate review, it is suggested that the prospective researcher follow the proposal outline shown below.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE ENTIRE PROPOSAL PACKAGE SUBMITTED FOR CONSIDERATION NOT EXCEED 20 PAGES. IF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS NEEDED, THE REVIEW COMMITTEE WILL REQUEST IT.
RESEARCH GUIDELINES (cont.)

SUGGESTED PROSPECTUS OUTLINE

Investigator's name

Address

Campus address

Telephone(s)

Advisor's name

Campus telephone

I. Problem statement

II. Related research

III. Objectives, hypotheses and/or questions

IV. Procedures
   1. Population and sample
   2. Design
   3. Data and Instrumentation (attach instruments)
   4. Analysis
   5. Time schedule

V. Reporting and dissemination

VI. Personnel

VII. Facilities

VIII. Implications and benefits

The following criteria, organized by topic area, will be employed in the evaluation of requests for the conduct of research in the Columbus City Schools.

1. General Significance of Study

   A. Preference will be given to studies that offer the most promise for advancement of the science of education or to the advancement of some area of behavioral science that contributes knowledge of direct value to the advancement of the science of education.

   B. Preference will be given to studies that are judged to offer the greatest potential contribution to instructional and administrative theory and practice.

   C. Preference will be given to the studies that focus on educational problems of high priority for the Columbus City School District.
RESEARCH GUIDELINES (cont.)

2. Adequacy of the Design

A. Preference will be given to well-conceptualized studies based upon theoretical frameworks having relevance for instructional theory and practice in education.

B. Preference will be given to studies that are designed in such a way as to maximize the probability of answering the research questions posed by the study.

C. Preference will be given to studies that employ data collection procedures with established reliability and validity.

3. Logistical Criteria

A. Preference will be given to studies that minimize the distraction and disruption of normal school routines in the course of data collection.

B. Preference will be given to studies that require a minimal amount of staff time and instructional time for data collection.

C. Preference will be given to studies that minimize the amount of staff time and effort required for data collection. In cases where extensive teacher involvement is necessary for data collection, the researcher should carefully justify the teacher involvement in terms of the potential benefits of the study for educational practice.

D. Preference will be given to studies that minimize the amount of information that must be directly provided by District personnel.

E. Preference will be given to studies that are planned so as to minimize space and facility requirements from the school system.

F. Preference will be given to studies that are planned so as to minimize the special characteristics (age, gender, race, SES, IQ, etc.) required on the part of pupils included in the sample.

4. Feedback

A. Preference will be given to studies in which the data collected is of direct value to the ongoing activities of the school system.

B. Preference will be given to studies that demonstrate the most effective planning for dissemination of findings to school personnel.

C. Preference will be given to studies in which the implications of the findings for educational practices in the Columbus City Schools are most effectively and clearly explicated.
RESEARCH GUIDELINES (cont.)

PROCEDURAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following minimal procedural considerations will be required of researchers who receive approval for the conduct of a study:

1. The researcher will provide building principals and cooperating teachers with an accurate schedule of data collection activities in their school.

2. The researcher will clearly delineate prior to the beginning of data collection, the nature of any information needed from school personnel or school files, e.g., intelligence test data, achievement test data, or attendance data.

3. The researcher will provide feedback to cooperating school personnel concerning the progress of the study and its final results. The precise nature of the feedback to be provided should be mutually agreed upon by the researcher and school officials.

4. The researcher will outline procedures for securing parental permission for pupil participation in those studies where the invasion of privacy is potentially involved.

5. The researcher will keep the Director of Evaluation Services informed, by memo or e-mail, of the schools participating and any changes in design or instrumentation, as well as the start and completion dates.

6. The researcher will provide the Director of Evaluation Services with two copies of the report of the completed study.

7. The approval of a research study does not imply that the District will collect or summarize data for the researcher. If a study requires data to be collected by District staff, the researcher is responsible for contacting the department that is to provide the assistance. The researcher must provide clearly defined specifications for data to be collected by District staff, and must allow adequate time to collect these data. **Data collection can only be completed if the collection process does not interfere with other District priorities.**
RESEARCH GUIDELINES (cont.)

PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING APPROVAL: OSU AFFILIATED STUDENTS, STAFF AND FACULTY

1. At least one month prior to the intended start date of the study, the researcher will submit five copies of a prospectus, instruments (e.g.: survey or interview protocols), consent/assent forms, IRB approval from the researcher's university, along with one complete copy of the proposal to:

Don Cramer
The Ohio State University
Room 185, Arps Hall
1945 North High Street
Columbus OH 43210

Phone: 614.688.5662
Fax: 614.688.4612

The researcher's Columbus and campus addresses and telephone numbers should be included on the prospectus.

Mr. Cramer will forward four copies of the prospectus and the complete proposal to the Director of Evaluation Services for consideration.

2. The Director of Evaluation Services will have the prospectus reviewed by appropriate members of the staff.

3. The Director of Evaluation Services will inform Mr. Cramer of the decision to approve, deny, or recommend modifications. If approved, a letter of introduction will be provided. The researcher is to offer this letter to building administrators when soliciting participation/subjects. Before the researcher begins any research activities in the building, the researcher must get the building administrator's signature on the letter of introduction and fax it to Evaluation Services, 614.365.5160.

4. A proposed research project that has been approved is subject to acceptance of the building principal in consultation with the appropriate staff to be involved in the study. Therefore, upon said approval, the researcher will contact the principal(s) to be involved to explain the study, the requirements of the study, the means of conducting the study, and to offer the letter of introduction.

5. The building principal will, if approving the involvement of his/her building in the study, make the necessary arrangements for the researcher or delegate that responsibility to the appropriate person in the building (e.g., instructional coordinator, guidance counselor, etc.).

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE ENTIRE PROPOSAL PACKAGE SUBMITTED TO US FOR CONSIDERATION NOT EXCEED 20 PAGES. IF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS NEEDED, THE REVIEW COMMITTEE WILL REQUEST IT.
RESEARCH GUIDELINES (cont.)

PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING APPROVAL: NON-OSU AFFILIATED STUDENTS, STAFF AND FACULTY

1. At least one month prior to the intended start date of the study, the researcher will submit four copies of a prospectus, instruments (e.g., survey or interview protocols), consent/assent forms, IRB approval from the researcher's university, along with one complete copy of the proposal to:

   Director of Evaluation Services
   Columbus City Schools
   Kingswood Data Center
   1091 King Avenue
   Columbus OH 43212

   Phone: 614.365.5167

   The researcher's address and telephone number should be included on the prospectus.

2. The Director of Evaluation Services will have the prospectus reviewed by appropriate members of the staff.

3. The Director of Evaluation Services will inform the prospective researcher of the decision to approve, deny, or recommend modifications. If approved, a letter of introduction will be provided. The researcher is to offer this letter to building administrators when soliciting participation/subjects. Before the researcher begins any research activities in the building, the researcher must get the building administrator's signature on the letter of introduction and fax it to Evaluation Services, 614.365.5160.

4. A proposed research project that has been approved is subject to acceptance of the building principal in consultation with the appropriate staff to be involved in the study. Therefore, upon said approval, the researcher will contact the principal(s) to be involved to explain the study, the requirements of the study, the means of conducting the study, and to offer the letter of introduction.

5. The building principal will, if approving the involvement of his/her building in the study, make the necessary arrangements for the researcher or delegate that responsibility to the appropriate person in the building (e.g., instructional coordinator, guidance counselor, etc.).

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE ENTIRE PROPOSAL PACKAGE SUBMITTED FOR CONSIDERATION NOT EXCEED 20 PAGES. IF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS NEEDED, THE REVIEW COMMITTEE WILL REQUEST IT.
Appendix F: Letter of Approval from Dr. Brennan to Conduct Research

June 16, 2010

Francis E Godwyll, PhD
McCracken Hall, 321f
Ohio University
Athens OH 45701

Dear Dr. Godwyll:

The Research Proposal Review Committee of Columbus City Schools has reviewed and approved the research proposal, A phenomenological case study of African American adolescent males in the Africentric School at Columbus, Ohio, by Debra D. Rayford. At the conclusion of her study, Ms. Rayford will need to share her findings with the Columbus City Schools Department of Evaluation Services and the faculty of the Columbus Africentric Early College School.

I am enclosing a letter of introduction. Ms. Rayford will need to give the letter of introduction to the building administrator when soliciting participation/subjects for her study. She must get the permission of the building principal or designee, get his signed consent (see letter of introduction), and fax it to the Department of Evaluation Services, Columbus City Schools at 365-5160, before contacting any potential subjects in that building.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact my office.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Saundra G. Brennan, EdD
Director, Evaluation Services

The Columbus City School District does not discriminate because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex or handicap with regard to admission, access, treatment or employment. This policy is applicable in all district programs and activities.
Appendix G: Letter from Internal Review Board (IRB) Ohio University

The following research study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Ohio University for the period listed below. This review was conducted through an expedited review procedure as defined in the federal regulations as Category(ies):

Project Title: A Phenomenological Case Study of 7th Grade African American Male Students in the Africentric School at Columbus, Ohio

Primary Investigator: Debra D. Rayford
Co-Investigator(s):

Faculty Advisor: Francis Godwyll
(if applicable)

Department: Educational Studies

Rebecca Cale
Rebecca Cale, AAB, CIP
Office of Research Compliance

6/11/10
Approval Date

6/10/11
Expiration Date

This approval is valid until expiration date listed above. If you wish to continue beyond expiration date, you must submit a periodic review application and obtain approval prior to continuation.

Adverse events must be reported to the IRB promptly, within 5 working days of the occurrence.

The approval remains in effect provided the study is conducted exactly as described in your application for review. Any additions or modifications to the project must be approved by the IRB (as an amendment) prior to implementation.
Appendix H: Letter of Introduction to Columbus Africentric Early College

June 16, 2010

Dear Administrator:

This letter serves as an introduction to Ms. Debra D. Rayford, graduate student at Ohio University. Ms. Rayford’s proposed research, A phenomenological case study of African American adolescent males in the Africentric School at Columbus, Ohio, has been reviewed and approved by the Research Proposal Review Committee.

This letter does not obligate you to participate in the study. Rather, it is an introduction and official notification that Ms. Rayford has followed established procedures and has been granted permission to solicit subjects to participate in the study.

If you agree to allow the researcher to conduct research in your building, please sign below. The researcher must then fax this letter to the Department of Evaluation Services at 358-5166. This must be completed before the researcher contacts any potential subjects in your building. If you have any questions or concerns, please call my office.

Sincerely,

Saundra G. Brennan, EdD
Director, Evaluation Services

[Signature]

Date (6/29/2018)

[Signature]

Principal's Name

The Columbus City School District does not discriminate because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex or handicap with regard to admission, access, treatment or employment. This policy applies to all district programs and activities.
Appendix I: Focus Group Interview Questions-Students

Interview Guide- Focus Groups

1. Describe yourself?
2. Do you intend to go to college?
3. Do you wish you were a White teenager? Why or Why not?
4. Does the history of Africa have anything to do with you as an African American male, please explain?
5. Explain to me the book you read “Surviving Hitler”?
7. How are you different from when you were in the sixth grade?
8. How do you feel about being an African American male based on what you have learned about Ancient Egypt?
9. How do you feel about being an African American male living in the United States?
10. How do you feel about being an African American male?
11. How do you feel about White teenagers?
12. How do you feel about yourself?
13. How do you feel when other students are disruptive in class?
14. How do you feel when you arrive to school late?
15. How do you show your Nubian Pride?
16. How does Ancient Egypt influence your thoughts about the United States?
17. How does learning about the principles of Maat influence your life?
18. How does learning about the principles of Nguzo Saba influence your life?
19. Is being a teenager difficult? Explain?
20. Is this the only school you have attended? What is the difference between this school and the other one you attended?
21. What are the principles of Maat?
22. What are the principles of Nguzo Saba?
23. What can you tell me about your text book History of our world: The early ages?
24. What do you think about race, racism?
25. What do you think about the continent of Africa now that you have been exposed to its history?
26. What do you want people to know about you as an African American adolescent male?
27. What do you want to become when you grow up?
28. What do you would want me to know about this school?
29. What does Nubia mean to you?
30. What does the song “Lift every voice and sing” mean to you?
31. What is an Africentric school?
32. What does Afrocentric mean to you?
33. What is this school trying to prepare you for? Why?
34. What is your least favorite subject and why?
35. What is your favorite subject and why?
36. Which principle do you practice least?
37. Which principle do you practice most?
38. Which principle do you practice the least? Why?
39. Which principle do you try to practice the most? Why?
40. Which teacher do you get along the best?
41. Which teacher do you get along with least?
42. Who is your role model?
43. How do you feel about all male classes?
Appendix J: Interview Questions for Teachers

Interview Question- Seventh Grade Teachers

1. How many years have you been teaching in the Africentric School?
2. Tell me something about yourself?
3. What is your educational background?
4. What is your teaching philosophy?
5. What college courses, if any, do you feel helped you prepare for your role as a teacher in an Afrocentric School?
6. Describe how you have applied what you learned from Higher Education into the classroom?
7. As a teacher in the Africentric School, how do you view your interactions with seventh-grade African American male students?
8. What are some characteristics of the teacher-student relationship in the classroom?
9. What are the outcomes you believe of an Afrocentric education on African American adolescent male students in middle school?
10. How does exposure to an Afrocentric education affect African American adolescent male students in the seventh grade?
11. How does the principles of Maat influence African American male students in the seventh grade?
12. How does the principles of Nguzo Saba, influence African American male students in the seventh grade?
13. In your opinion, how do these principles, effect the racial identity development of African American adolescent male students?
14. Explain how African American adolescent male students are encouraged to problem solve or critically think?
15. What advice do you have to a person wishing to teach in an Afrocentric School?
16. Based on your perception, does this type of school influence African American seventh-grade male students in becoming consciously aware of their Blackness?
17. Have you had any African American studies courses?
18. What differences have you noticed between 6th and 7th grade African American male students?

19. How do you think the principles of Nguzo Saba will help African American adolescent seventh-grade male students with racism, self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development?

20. How do you think the principles of Maat will help African American adolescent seventh-grade male students with racism, self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity development?

21. What would you like people to know about African American seventh-grade male students?
Appendix K: Interview Guide for the Principal

Interview Questions- Principal

1. How did this section of the school, 6-12 emerge and when?

2. This school was first an Africentric School, and then it became the Columbus Africentric Early College, why?

3. Explain your educational background?

4. How long have you worked at this school?

5. In what other capacity have you worked within this school?

6. Why did you choose this particular type of school to work in?

7. Have you worked in any other public or private school as a principal, if so, where and how is it different from the Africentric School?

8. Please explain the term Africentric.

9. Who created the curriculum which infused the principles of Nguzo Saba and Maat?

10. Please explain the principles of Nguzo Saba.

11. How do these principles influence seventh-grade African American male students?

12. Please explain the principles of Maat.

13. How do these principles influence seventh-grade African American male students?

14. Describe any changes you have seen in African American seventh-grade male students based on these two principles. First Nguzo Saba then Maat?

15. How are these two sets of principles influencing seventh-grade African American male students outside the classrooms?

16. What has been the teacher turn-over rate since you have been at this school? Do you know why?

17. What has been the principal turn-over rate? Do you know why?
18. What is your impression about teachers and African American seventh-grade male student’s interactions within the classroom?

19. How does this school influence African American seventh-grade male students in becoming a better “Black” person? (Black consciously aware)

20. In your opinion, what makes this school sustainable?
21. How did Knowledge Works become involved in this school?
22. What impact has this organization impressed upon this school?
Appendix L: Interview for Council of Elders/Committee Members

Interview Questions for Council of Elders/Committee Members

1. How did this school emerge the Africentric School and why?
2. How did the 9-12 section of the school emerge?
3. Explain your educational background?
4. Please explain the term Africentric?
5. Who created the curriculum which infuses Nguzo Saba and Maat?
6. How do these principles influence African American male students?
7. Please explain the concept of Maat.
8. How do these principles influence African American male students?
9. How should these principles influence African American males outside the classroom? Please explain beginning with Nguzo Saba then Maat.
10. How do the principles of Nguzo Saba prepare African American males to deal with issues in their life?
11. How do the principles of Maat prepare African American males to deal with issues in their life?
12. Can the principles of Nguzo Saba empower African American males? Please explain in detail.
13. Can the principles of Maat empower African American males? Please explain in detail.
14. How can the principles of Nguzo Saba influence critical thinking skills in African American male students?
15. How can the principles of Maat influence critical thinking skills in African American male students?
16. How can the principles of Nguzo Saba and Maat reconstruct African American male student’s racial identity?
18. How can the principles of Nguzo Saba affirm African American male student’s racial identity?
19. How can the principles of Maat affirm African American male student’s racial identity?
20. How should teachers implement Nguzo Saba and Maat in the classrooms?
21. What makes this school sustainable?
22. How would you respond to people who say this type of school is a form of resegregation?
23. Please explain the politics behind establishing this type of school.
24. What were some political barriers which the committee had to overcome?
25. How is this school funded?
26. Why is this school not a charter school?
27. How long did it take for this school to become reality?
28. Who are the committee members which organized the plan to establish this school?
29. Is there anything else which I did not ask that you want me to know?
30. Can I get a copy of the plan?
Appendix M: Interview Guide for Parents

Interview Question for Parents

1. What does Afrocentric mean to you?
2. What do you least like about this type of school? Why?
3. What do you like most about this type of school? Why?
4. How do the principles of Nguzo Saba/Maat influence your child?
5. What concerns do you have in regards to your African American male child and racism?
6. How can this type of school help your African American male child with his self-concept?
7. How can this type of school help your African American male child with his self-esteem?
8. What was the biggest difference you have seen in your child when he transitioned from 6th to 7th grade?
9. Pertaining to your male child’s racial identity development, what did you see as his biggest challenge?
10. Who do you think is your African American male child’s role model?
11. Why do you think he chose this person?
12. How do you feel about your African American male child learning about Ancient Egypt?
13. In your opinion, what is the difference between being called Black versus African American?
14. How do you think your African American male child would have fared academically in a different school?
15. Does your African American male child practice the principles of Nguzo Saba/Maat outside of school? Please explain how?
16. What would you like for me to know about this school that I did not address?
17. What do you want me to know about your African American male child that I did not address?
Appendix N: Columbus Africentric Early College: Handbook

COLUMBUS AFRICENTRIC EARLY COLLEGE
300 E. Livingston Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 365-8675  Fax: (614) 365-8908
www.columbusafricentric.com

“NUBIANS”

“SUCCESS IS THE ONLY OPTION”

“2010 - 2011 STAFF HANDBOOK”
Columbus Africentric Early College's Objective:

To provide a quality academic & culturally enriching learning environment by implementing Columbus City Schools’ Curriculum infused with the Africentric Principles of Ma’at & Nguzo Saba.”

At The Columbus Africentric Early College, we are committed to passing the baton of Cultural & Historical Excellence to our youth!

DEFINITION OF AN AFRICENTRIC PERSPECTIVE:
(Adaptation: Moriba Kelsey, Ph. D.)

An Africentric School is an educational environment that:

1. provides opportunities and encourages everyone to be active as a teacher and learner;
2. promotes excellence in all activities;
3. encourages internalized balance and harmony as the basis of all discipline;
4. recognizes that decision-making is always a collective effort by the participants involved, and those individuals are assigned to carry out the will of the group; utilizes African traditional and cultural guidelines, Kemetic principles and historical knowledge as the guiding tenets for teaching, learning and decisions

Columbus Africentric Early College
MISSION STATEMENT:
Our mission at the Columbus Africentric School is to develop an African-centered holistic education system for students, parents, staff and the community addressing the needs of the total self, by implementing “Ma’at & Nguzo Saba” as guiding principles.

THE PRINCIPLES OF “MA’AT”:
1. Balance:
   I will work to achieve equality among my school, home & social life.
2. Harmony:
   I will work with others peacefully.
3. Justice:
   I will seek to set things right.
4. Order:
   I am in control and organized.
5. Reciprocity:
   What I give is what I get.
6. Righteousness:
   I do the right things and I am proud of it.
7. Truth:
   I believe in myself and I am honest.

THE PRINCIPLES OF “NGUZO SABA”:
1. Umoja means Unity:
   My school needs unity from all members of the village in order to survive.
2. Kujichagulia means Self-determination:
   I think for myself.
   I will work to help others.
4. Ujamaa means Cooperative Economics.
   I will put my money with others in the African village so we can have more in our pockets.
5. Nia means Purpose:
   I will make it my job to build and develop my community.
6. Kuumba means Creativity:
   I will make my village (home, neighborhood, school, and playground) more beautiful.
7. Imani means Faith:
   I believe in myself and the victory of my work.
We Are The Proud Nubians!

Nubia:
Once encompassed both Egypt (Ancient Kemet) & Sudan (Ancient Kush). Nubians were Indigenous Black Africans. They were great warriors, shared political & military power with women; built golden cities, temples and royal pyramids.

Nubia:
Is a derivative from the ancient Kemetic word, “Nub” which means gold. Nubia was once a leading commercial center trading in gold, ebony, ivory, incense & spices.

Nubia:
Emerged during the Pre-Dynastic Kemet (Around 3800 B.C.E.), which served as the Original Cradle of Arts & Sciences, and the birth place of Hieroglyphic (Medu Netcher) sacred writings.

We are the mighty NUBIANS?
Nubians are the descendants of ancient peoples from what was once called Lower and Upper Nubia or Northern Sudan and Southern Egypt today. The word Nubia comes from the Kemetic word Nub which meant gold. Thus Nubia was referred to as the land of gold and its people were called NUBIANS, or people from the land of gold. Nubians are the people of Africa’s earliest black culture with a history that can be traced back from 3100 B.C. onward through Nubian monuments and artifacts, as well as written records from Egypt and Rome.
COLUMBUS AFRICENTRIC EARLY COLLEGE’S PLEDGE”

by: Mychal Wynn

Today I pledge to be
The best possible me.
No matter how good I am,
I know that I can become better.

Today I pledge to build
On the work of yesterday.
Which will lead me
Into the rewards of tomorrow.

Today I pledge to feed,
My mind: knowledge
My body: strength, and
My spirit, faith.

Today I pledge to reach,
New goals, new challenges, and
New horizons.

Today I pledge to listen,
To the beat of my drummer.
Who leads me onward
In search of my dreams.
Today I pledge to believe in me!
COLUMBUS AFRICENTRIC EARLY COLLEGE'S SONG

"Where Else Can I Go"

As I walk through the doors, I know that I have arrived.
Its rich, calming spirit gives me a sense of pride.
Its strength and its power, gives me courage to succeed.
In the eyes of those before me, I see all that I can be.

Where else can I go, where my soul can really grow?
Where else can I go, where my love can truly flow?
Where else can I go, where traditions abound?
Where else can I go, where my culture is found?

(Chorus)
It’s the Africentric School; we’re the brightest and the best!
It’s the Africentric School; we honor elders with respect!
It’s the Africentric School, where learning is the key!
It’s harmony and family inside of me.

 Tradition has taught me, that we come from Kings and Queens.
  Tradition has taught me, we can realize our dreams.
     Tradition has taught me, we have a rich legacy!
       It’s harmony and family inside of me!

(Repeat Chorus)
Middle & High School Grade Placement:

Middle School students are going through the most rapid period of growth and change in their lives. They range in age from ten to fourteen years and have special intellectual, emotional, social, and physical needs and concerns. In the process of developing a promotion procedure for the middle schools, these needs and concerns must be accommodated.

The intent of the middle school instructional program is to facilitate student progress. The progress made by students in all areas (academic and unified courses) should be given consideration when making the determination on promotion or retention. However, the final decision must give priority to the student’s grades in the academic areas, especially reading and mathematics which serve as the foundation for success in other courses. Students should not be promoted unless they have passed 4 of the 5 academic courses AND HAVE BEEN UNEXCUSED ABSENT FOR 10% OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.

Students not promoted for academic reasons and for other considerations not being retained, will be “assigned” instead of promoted to the next grade.

Students are to be promoted, assigned or retained at the end of the school year. Students not promoted may enroll in academic courses in summer school and upon successful completion of summer school, may return to their middle school principal to have the retention or assignment considered.

In September, students in the 8th grade who will be 16 years of age before January 1 of that year should be assigned to the 9th grade immediately. The high school instructional program will accommodate such students in accordance with their needs.

The school principal has the final responsibility determining promotion, assignment or retention.
DETENTIONS:
Students may be assigned detentions by teachers and administrators as a result of undesirable behavior, excessive tardiness or other reasons. These may be assigned for time periods before school, after school, or lunch. A student’s failure to attend a detention will elevate the student infraction to include school suspension as a response. Teachers will monitor all detentions.

AFTER-SCHOOL DETENTION (ASD) GUIDELINES:

1. ASD assignment letter will be signed/dated by both student and teacher. A copy will be sent home with student to inform parent just in case teacher missed initial telephone contact. Other copies will be placed in the student’s file. Teachers will be responsible for cover the students that are assigned to ASD.

2. Assigning teacher must contact parent 24 hours before assigned day of ASD. Leave message if you get no direct contact person.

3. Students assigned to ASD must report to the designated area by 2:40. (Late students will not be admitted).

4. Students must bring study materials with them and study the entire period until they are dismissed at 4:30.

5. No sleeping, eating, talking, or passing notes are allowed in detention.

6. Upon dismissal students are to leave the building immediately. They are not permitted to go to their lockers.

7. Students who arrive late, fail to attend, or are removed for failure to follow rules will receive an administrative consequence.

8. Students assigned to ASD are responsible for their own transportation home and are always given advance notice to allow them to notify parents.

9. ASD takes precedence over participation in extracurricular activities such as practice, athletic conditioning, or rehearsals.

10. 5 ASD within 9 wk grading period = an administrative consequence.
REMOVAL:
A removal is a temporary state where (with parent contact) a student is instructed to remain at home while a student’s misconduct or situation is assessed. For example, a school removal may occur 1) during an investigation of an incident, 2) while a parent conference is being arranged, 3) when a student’s presence/actions pose an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process of others, and/or 4) when a student’s placement at home may be in the best interest of the student or situation.

SUSPENSION:
Suspension from school generally occurs when misbehavior is continual, flagrant and/or violent. Suspension may range from 1 to 10 school days. Greater or lesser penalties specific to days suspended are assessed depending upon the facts and circumstances surrounding the misbehavior. Students who are suspended are not to be on any Columbus Public School property or attend any Columbus Public School event during the suspension period.

EXPULSION:
An expulsion is the most severe penalty issued by the school district. Expulsion is a complete restriction of school district academic and activity programs for a period of from 11 to 80 school days OR longer as defined by law. This disciplinary action can be coupled with reassignment to another school upon the completion of the expulsion.

STUDENT UNIFORM:
All students in grades K-12 attending Columbus Africentric Secondary School for the 2010-2011 school year will be required to adhere to the school uniform policy.

NUBIAN KINGS:
SHIRTS: BLACK SHIRTS WITH A COLLAR – HIGH SCHOOL
PURPLE SHIRTS WITH A COLLAR – MIDDLE SCHOOL
HUNTER GREEN SHIRTS WITH A COLLAR – ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PANTS/SHORTS: SOLID KHAKI (Tan)

SPECIFICS:
• ALL CLOTHING SHOULD BE FREE OF WRITING
• IF PANTS HAVE BELT LOOPS A BELT MUST BE WORN AROUND WAIST.
• BELTS MUST NOT BE MORE THAN THREE (3) INCHES LONGER THAN THE STUDENTS MEASURED WAIST SIZE.
• SHIRTS MUST BE TUCKED IN (NO SAGGING).
• NO T-SHIRTS (unless school T-shirt).
• NO JEANS.
• NO EXCESSIVELY BIG CLOTHES, NO WRITING ON CLOTHES.
• NO HEAD GARMENTS (scarves, hats, headbands or wavecaps, etc.).
- NO TANK TOPS, SLEEVELESS SHIRTS OR MUSCLE SHIRTS.
- NO HALF HAIR STYLES (half braids/half afro).
- SHOES MUST BE WORN AT ALL TIMES. (For safety purposes sandals must have back straps.
- **Flip-Flops, slippers/bedroom shoes and beach shoes are not permitted.**
- NO HATS, COATS OR BOOKBAGS DURING SCHOOL DAY.
- STUDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO WEAR SWEATSHIRTS OR SWEATERS THAT ARE BLACK, WHITE OR PURPLE. (Hoodies are not permitted.)

**NUBIAN QUEENS:**

**SHIRTS/BLOUSES:** BLACK SHIRTS WITH A COLLAR – HIGH SCHOOL
PURPLE SHIRTS WITH A COLLAR – MIDDLE SCHOOL
HUNTER GREEN SHIRTS WITH A COLLAR – ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**PANTS/SKIRTS:** SOLID KHAKI (Tan)

**SPECIFICS:**
- ALL CLOTHING SHOULD BE FREE OF WRITING
- NO JEANS
- NO EXCESSIVELY TIGHT CLOTHING
- NO “SEE THROUGH” CLOTHING (Clothing shall be sufficient to conceal undergarments at all times.)
- NO REVEALING SHIRTS (clothing revealing midsection, cleavage, etc.)
- NO T-SHIRTS (unless school T-shirts)
- NO TANK TOPS, SLEEVELESS SHIRTS OR MUSCLE SHIRTS
- NO SHORT SKIRTS OR SHORT SHORTS (**skirts must be 6 inches past your fingertips**)
- NO WRITING ON CLOTHES
- NO HEAD GARMENTS (scarves, hats, headbands or wavecaps, etc.)
- HEAD GARMENTS ARE PERMITTED BASED ON RELIGION, DOCUMENTATION MUST BE PROVIDED
- SHOES MUST BE WORN AT ALL TIMES. (For safety purposes sandals must have back straps.
- Flip-Flops, slippers/bedroom shoes and beach shoes are not permitted.)
- SUNGLASSES ARE APPROVED FOR OUTSIDE, BUT NOT FOR INSIDE THE SCHOOL BUILDING
- NO HATS, COATS OR BOOKBAGS DURING SCHOOL DAY
- (STUDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO WEAR SWEATSHIRTS OR SWEATERS THAT ARE BLACK, WHITE OR PURPLE) (Hoodies are not permitted.)

Compliance with the standards listed above will be the responsibility of students, parents, and school staff.
Appendix O: Summary of Textbook — History of Our World: The Early Ages

Ancient Greece’s beginnings, according to Jacobs et al. (2008), were in a land surrounded by several bodies of water, which led to the development of farmland for cultivation. Ancient Greece was organized into small communities that were separated by mountains. Each community had its own customs and belief systems. Common among these communities was their willingness to fight for their traditions and beliefs as each community believed its system was the best.

Ancient Greeks used clay tablets for writing. However, during what was known as the Dark Ages (1100 B.C.-750 B.C), there were no writings, so people passed down knowledge and traditions orally to their descendants. Ancient Greeks arts, philosophy, and literature were impressed upon the world. They are also credited with the development of studies in the area of mathematics, philosophy, and astronomy (Jacobs et al., 2008).

Ancient Greece’s philosophers are well known in today’s society. The first of these was Socrates, who advocated for ancient Greek society to understand justice, and courage, and to become critical thinkers. Other great Greek philosophers included Plato and Aristotle (Jacobs et al., 2008).

Jacobs et al. (2008) write that the Parthenon was a symbol that represented patrons who were the protectors of Athens, Greece; it also represents the goddess Athena, a well-known goddess who is depicted by one of many statues located and arranged inside the Parthenon; the arrangement is a representation of balance and order. These arrangements can be seen in “the reflection of Greek Art” (p. 186). Ancient Greece
was a city-state community with its own form of government and traditions. City-state communities were ruled by chieftains or kings, and were later ruled by aristocrats. One leader discussed was Solon, who led the country into a democratic system. At the age of 18, males were given a voice in which laws would be incorporated in governing society. Pericles was another great leader, and was considered the most powerful because of the accumulation of great wealth during the Golden Ages of Ancient Greece (Jacobs et al., 2008).

In Ancient China, people depended on the river’s soil deposits to cultivate the land; this enabled people to farm the land and to live off their products. The image of a dragon represents the river; its legs were considered small streams. Dragons in Ancient China were viewed as good luck and not perceived as frightening (Jacobs et al., 2008).

The first form of writing in Ancient China was called cuneiform; writings of past events were attributed to Sima Qian, and they would take a lifetime to complete. People in Ancient China wrote on scrolls and bones; later the people would write on silk. The silk was developed into paper; previously, tree bark, hemp, and old rags had been used as material for writing (Jacobs et al., 2008).

Ancient China was ruled by dynasties. The first civilization emerged around 1760 B. C. and was led by the Shang Dynasty. Six hundred years later, the Zhou Dynasty emerged; this group fought repeatedly with the Shang Dynasty. The Shang Dynasty eventually overpowered the Zhou Dynasty and ruled Ancient China for 1,000 years. The ancient Chinese belief regarding rulers is that it is the ruler’s fate or destiny to be in power (Jacobs et al., 2008).
Confucius was a great ancient Chinese philosopher. His teachings influenced China from 479 B.C. on. He taught peace, prosperity, and stability. Confucius was considered a person of great knowledge. His philosophy influenced the beliefs and culture of Chinese society. He attempted to influence rulers to live in peace. Confucius’ philosophy was that proper behavior brings peace and order to the country (Jacobs et al., 2008).

Jacob et al. (2008) describes the rulers of Ancient China, starting with China’s first emperor Shi Huangdi, who conquered the warring kingdoms. Shi Huangdi was a harsh ruler who protected the empire from invaders. Previous rulers had built walls around China to prevent enemies from invading. Shi Huangdi connected all the walls and is credited with the Great Wall of China, which is 4,500 miles long. He wanted to control people’s thoughts; therefore, he outlawed the teachings of Confucius. Shi Huangdi had all “the books in China burned except those about medicine, technology, and farming” (p. 151). When scholars protested, they were killed. In 200 B.C., Emperor Liu Bang, born a peasant, believed in educating people to work for the government. The next ruler of Ancient China was a 15-year-old named Wudi, who ruled for 50 years.

During Wudi’s rule, he improved the Great Wall of China and strengthened the military. His rule went as far as parts of Asia, Korea, and Vietnam. After his death, there were younger emperors and people fought to gain power over these young rulers; some emperors were only 100 days old. Eventually, the emperors lost power to warlords, breaking Ancient China into small kingdoms from the numerous wars that ensued (Jacobs et al., 2008).
Ancient Romans depended on the Tiber River to fertilize soil, which enabled cultivation of the land for growing products. The Etruscans first ruled the country; citizens were unhappy, and this led to numerous revolts. Eventually, the Etruscans were run out of power. Unfortunately, the Romans incorporated the Etruscans’ philosophy into their ideology of society. Ancient Roman society also adopted the Greek alphabet, which influenced their language (Jacobs et al., 2008).

Ancient Romans went across Greece and Spain declaring war on these lands. Ancient Rome faced its own problems when a four-year civil war erupted. This led to the rise of Julius Caesar, who gained control and became the leader of Ancient Rome. Caesar’s leadership was in the form of a dictatorship. After Caesar’s assassination, Rome fell into 13 years of civil unrest, until his son emerged as leader, becoming the first emperor of Ancient Rome. The country faced 500 years of being ruled by emperors and not the elected government; therefore, many more civil wars occurred (Jacobs et al., 2008).

Jacobs et al. (2008) describes one ruler who did not believe in a dictatorship philosophy. This was Augustus, who worked with the government to protect the people of Ancient Rome. Another benevolent emperor was Marcus Aurelius, who kept the peace in society. Marcus Aurelius’ son ruled in the opposite manner, and when he became emperor, he was considered very brutal. Other emperors included Caligula, who thought he was a god, and Nero, who killed his mother, wife, and brother. These two were considered mentally ill by the people of Ancient Rome (Jacobs et al., 2008).
Jacobs et al. (2008) explains that rulers and emperors were immortalized in statues. Caesar is forever known as a dictator whose “name came to mean emperor” (p. 234). The statue of Augustus is a symbol for years of stability and prosperity and the statue of Marcus Aurelius represents the last of the good emperors. Over time, in order to keep count of Ancient Roman citizens, a census was taken to count the people every five years. Also, Ancient Romans, if accused of a crime, had the right to face their accuser. Under Ancient Roman laws, if there was any doubt of a person’s guilt, he was considered innocent (Jacobs et al., 2008)
Appendix P: Summary of the Novel — Surviving Hitler: A Boy in Nazi Death Camp

Both Jewish and non-Jewish citizens complied with the Nazis’ orders, thinking it would save their lives, but this was not true. Children were not allowed to attend school and adult Polish Jews were humiliated by being forced to clean the streets on their hands and knees. This seemed unfair because Jack’s grandfather “had lived in harmony all his life with non-Jews” (p. 29). Children typically believe that if people were nice to one another, the same would be reciprocated. Jack’s identity was changed from Polish to Jew when Germany invaded Poland. This confused him.

Eventually, Jack and his mother went to another village where there was a curfew; this was a strategy used to impose fear and lay the foundation of control over Jews. Anyone out after curfew “could be shot on sight” (p. 33). The Nazi’s invasion perpetuated a system of classism; this was based on Jack’s young perception. The Nazi army made Polish Jews tip their hats them, step off the sidewalk as the Nazis passed by, and Polish Jews could not have “eye contact, ever” (p. 34), with Nazis. Slave labor arose in Germany because the country needed laborers. Jack is now 14 years old. Polish Jews were taken and forced into Germany to work and were never heard from again by their families. Jack’s family was eventually broken up — the men went off in one direction, while women and children were directed elsewhere. Jack was sent to “the Blechhammer concentration camp, across the border, in Germany” (p. 51). To dehumanize the Jewish prisoners, they received numbers to replace their identities, their heads were shaved to prevent lice, and all the men were stripped naked to have their body hair shaved. This was all done in public.
To further dehumanize the prisoners, they were rationed a cup of watered-down soup made from rotten “turnips, potatoes, beets, [and] spinach” (p. 95), in the day and a slice of bread which was made of flour, with sawdust used as a filler. Jack slept on a straw bed with no pillow or blanket to use. The daily routine was to “get your share of food, work hard, stay well, stay clean as possible, [and] avoid beatings” (p. 63); sick or weak prisoners were immediately killed by the Nazi army.

Eventually, Nazis viewed Polish Jews as subhuman and believed that they deserved to be severely abused. To survive, Jack developed a psychological trick, which was to view being in a Nazi concentration camp as a game. Jack had to realize not to take it personally because the situation would eat him alive. Jack kept strong by thinking about his mother, father, sister, and younger brother, and one day reuniting with them. Jack knew that if he made one wrong move, he could be killed. The prisoners suffered from a lack of food and water; they were dirty, had lice, developed disease, and died; Jack “learned to think of the dead as fortunate because they were no longer suffering” (p. 72). By the age of 16, Jack had been moved to a few different concentration camps. Eventually, he developed dysentery and was taken to a prison doctor, given coal water to drink, and slept on and off throughout the day. On one occasion, Jack observed the doctor giving what appeared to be a vaccination to sick prisoners. After the shot, they immediately died. Jack had to get out of bed and leave before the doctor reached him, to keep from being put to death. Jack survived this ordeal and became better after several days; in his mind he “had cheated Hitler of one more dead Jew” (p. 84). When the war ended on May 17, 1945, about six years after Jack was first imprisoned, he was 18 and,
“stood five seven and weighed 80 pounds” (p. 112). Jack had an estimated 80 family members before the Nazi invasion; afterwards he had about five — no mother, father, or siblings.
Appendix Q: Summary of the Novel — The Pact

This is an overview of the lives of George Jenkins’, Sampson Davis’, and Rameck Hunt’s pursuit to become doctors. This examines an African-centered perspective on how these young men can be perceived by African American seventh-grade male students who read the book, beginning with George’s story, followed by Sampson’s (Sam), then Rameck’s.

Around the age of 11, George was inspired to become a dentist during an office visit. George grew up in what is known as “the projects,” a low-income section in Newark. He is a child of divorced parents, with an older brother, who was reared by their mother.

When George was growing up, he did not have a stable male role model in his life after his mother and father divorced, and later, even in his stepfather. George finally found a male role model — Mr. Jackson, the father of one of his friends. Mr. Jackson believed in George and often encouraged him to pursue his dream of becoming a dentist. George’s mother worked very hard to provide for him and his brother; and the family eventually moved from the projects to a slightly nicer apartment complex.

Although his mother provided a stable home for them, the neighborhood was riddled with drug dealers. George perceived that people sold drugs “because they felt they had no choice” (p. 10). George believed that an unstable environment led to giving into peer pressure and committing negative actions; therefore, he tried to stay away from negative peers. Around the age of 13, George had a little job working around the apartment complex. This included minor chores such as picking up trash. George always
managed to keep some type of employment as he became older, working at Chuck E. Cheese, Mrs. Fields, and Murray’s Steaks.

George was “blessed with people who told [him] positive things” (p. 11). For example, Mr. Jackson called George “doctor” because he had said he wanted to become a dentist. In elementary school, his teachers encouraged him to go to college. George did not always have encouraging figures in his life. When he was in high school, he believed that his teachers did not care about him and that they were not dedicated to seeing him through the schooling process. George started to feel unchallenged in high school, realizing that the school did not teach him about his history, and he started skipping classes.

George also thought about a career in nursing, or as a lab technician. While in high school, he learned about the Educational Opportunity Program, Pre-Medical/Pre-Dental Plus Program at Seton Hall University; this provided opportunities for minority students to attend college free of charge. Unfortunately, after he was accepted into the program, George learned that the money had been mismanaged by the program and sought financial support from his family, loans, grants, and scholarships.

In the seventh grade George had met Sampson (Sam) Davis; in junior high school. The two met and befriended Rameck Hunt. George suggested that the three make a pact to attend medical school, since all three were interested in the Pre-Medical/Pre-Dental Plus Program.

When making this pact, the three agreed to stick together. They promised to support and motivate one another, no matter what occurred in their lives along the way.
George believed that surrounding himself with positive friends would keep him out of trouble. George stated, “I chose positive guys who wanted to do the right thing; it made a huge difference in how my life turned out” (p. 107). Because of his perseverance, George eventually attended college, thus became a dentist.

Sampson (Sam) Davis grew up in a household with both parents and two siblings. His household began to fall apart when numerous physical altercations between his parents led to his father’s filing for divorce. After the household became one parent and three children, the family had to apply for welfare assistance. One day, Sam realized that his mother could not read; so helping her write out checks to pay the bills made him feel like an adult.

Sam always associated with older teenagers, who influenced him to do negative things. For example, he was convinced to go into the neighborhood store to steal an Icee; he was caught in the act by the store owner. Around the age of 13, he was arrested for stealing a carpet cleaner. He went to the store with an older friend, and this friend told him to grab the carpet cleaner; he told Sam that it was already paid for. As Sam walked out of the store and headed down the street, a police car pulled up. The officer arrested Sam as his friend ran away. Sam realized that his friend had lied and had not paid for the carpet cleaner. Sam was held at the police station for a couple of hours until someone came to bail him out.

Sam drank alcohol and participated in the selling of crack cocaine for a month. He was arrested for driving the car used in robberies against people selling drugs in the neighborhood. Sam then faced armed robbery charges, which carried a prison term of
three to 10 years. Sam soon realized two things: how could he disappoint his mother, and, eight years of college was much better than ten years in jail. As luck would have it, Sam accepted a plea deal resulting in two years’ of probation.

Before these criminal activities, Sam’s teachers encouraged him to attend a different high school so that he could have a better chance of getting into college. He did this; unfortunately, he still associated with a negative crowd. Eventually, he was accepted into Seton Hall University’s Pre-Medical/Pre-Dental Plus Program.

Sam began to rethink his decision of attending medical school when he was asked to shadow a doctor in surgery, and he threw up at the sight of blood. He failed the state board exam on the first try and became unsure of himself. The second time he took the state board exam, he passed. Sam decided to specialize in emergency medicine and needed to find a hospital at which to complete his residency. Now his dream of becoming an emergency medical doctor would come true. He found a residency position at Beth Israel Hospital.

Looking back, Sam said, “During a trying adolescence, I’d felt like I was a good kid caught up in a bad situation and truly had to work to overcome obstacles” (p. 222). Sam credited his perseverance to become a doctor, as well as the support of George and Rameck, to keep him motivated while attending medical school.

Rameck’s life was a lot more troublesome than either George’s or Sam’s. Rameck was born to a teenage mother, and for a while, they lived with his maternal grandmother. His mother became a drug addict, as did his father. This led to an unstable
home life. Later, his mother would get pregnant and give birth to a daughter. The family was supported by welfare while his mother tried to provide a stable home.

Rameck attended a Catholic school; when he became disruptive in class, the teacher suggested he be placed in special education. His mother fought that idea and had him assigned to a public school, where he was placed in the gifted and talented program. Rameck’s first job at the age of 13, was sweeping the floor in a barbershop. His mother had stopped caring for him financially and he felt basically on his own.

While in seventh grade Rameck started drinking beer with his friends and later randomly started beating people. Rameck associated with “the wrong crowd”; he was trying to become a thug. His father, still addicted to drugs, intervened; this did little to improve Rameck’s behavior. One day Rameck and his friends were shot at because of their violent behavior; this did not deter him.

Rameck had no role models: “I had no identity of my own, no sense of the kind of person I was or wanted to be” (p. 79). The friends with whom he associated sold crack. On one particular day, a drug addict bought some crack from them and started smoking it on the school grounds. Rameck and his friends beat the addict for smoking on the school grounds; they wanted the school’s grounds to be kept clean from drug paraphernalia. Rameck had a switchblade and pulled it out in an attempt to impress his friends; he stabbed the man, hoping all the while that he did not hurt him.

Later in the day, they were questioned by a few police officers who patted them down and found the weapon on Rameck. After being physically assaulted by an officer, Rameck and his friends were arrested and charged with attempted murder. Rameck heard
another male in the cell next to his being raped and became scared. Rameck’s mother did not rush to aid him as he sat in detention, contemplating his life. Rameck, with the help of his attorney was released and his friends were charged because they had records.

After he was accepted into the Pre-Medical/Pre-Dental Plus Program, Rameck became very studious; unfortunately, he got into an altercation with a White boy, which escalated in to a fight. Rameck grabbed the boy and slammed him on his head. Rameck was scared, though he was trying to act tough in front of the crowd; George and Sam were not present. The White boy’s friends picked him up and they left the scene. The police came and took Rameck out of his room once the injured boy identified Rameck as the attacker. During this time, Rameck realized he had broken the boy’s foot. The victim and his mother did not press charges against Rameck, and he was grateful. Since this incident happened on campus, there was a hearing. Rameck apologized to the victim and his mother at the hearing; he also provided letters of support, and was given a second chance. He was put on six months’ probation for this offense.

Rameck later stole a sweatshirt from the bookstore. When confronted by the store clerk, he ran. He remembered that he was still on probation and that, if he got caught, George and Sam would continue the pact agreement without him. Rameck was lucky; the clerk could not find him before he ran and hid in his room on campus.

Later, Rameck came across a book titled The Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys by Jawanza Kunjufu. In this book Kunjufu discussed the principles of Kwanzaa, and Rameck recognized himself in this book as he read it; he looked at how young males looked to the streets for how to become a man. The principle of Ujima, which Rameck
read about in this book, influenced him and changed his behavior. Rameck, George, and Sam started a fundraising event to collect money for students to attend a tour of the campus and have lunch. They also volunteered their time tutoring students at an elementary school.

One day, Rameck and a friend were driving through a suburban neighborhood when the police pulled them over. Rameck explained that he was a first-year medical student and his friend was a law student at the university. Although Rameck did not commit any moving violations, the two were frisked, and another officer searched his car. Rameck and his friend watched as the officer found a small knife, the size of a pencil, in the trunk of the car. It was illegal to have a knife, no matter how small it was. Rameck was booked for interference with a police officer and possession of a deadly weapon.

While he sat in jail, a different White officer approached him and suggested that Rameck file a complaint, then walked away. As the trial date drew near, Rameck’s lawyer tried to have the case thrown out. The officer refused to drop the charges. As luck would have it, the knife was lost and the case was thrown out of court.

As Rameck proceeded to do what was right and to continue with medical school, his maternal grandmother suffered from cirrhosis of the liver. This influenced Rameck’s decision to specialize in gastroenterology — to understand what his grandmother was going through, and to keep other patients from suffering as she did. Rameck made it through medical school and became a doctor.
Appendix R: Guide to Positive Student Behavior

GUIDE TO POSITIVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR
2010-2011 SCHOOL YEAR

Be Safe | Be Respectful | Be Responsible

Working Together to Achieve 100 Percent Student Success

Mission:
Each student is highly educated, prepared for leadership and service, and empowered for success as a citizen in a global community.

Superintendent’s Message

Dear Parents,

Columbus City Schools is pleased to share with you our Guide to Positive Student Behavior. We believe that safe, engaging learning environments with clear expectations and behavioral support have a positive effect on attitudes, behaviors, and overall student achievement. A positive school climate exists when students feel valued, accepted, and safe, and interact with caring people they trust.

The Columbus City Schools Guide to Positive Student Behavior provides clear expectations for positive student behavior, outlines specific methods and strategies to encourage positive social skills, and details the consequences and strategies to correct inappropriate conduct. As parents and guardians, when you establish boundaries and set expectations for your children, you help to ensure they are more likely to behave appropriately and be successful in school. We pledge to work with you to ensure that your child has a safe, exciting, and academically successful school year.

Please take the time to read this information and discuss it with your child. We share the responsibility of helping each and every one of our students to be successful. If you have any questions regarding district discipline policies and/or procedures, call the Discipline Help Line at 365 HELP (4357) or call your child’s school and ask to speak to the principal or teacher at a mutually convenient time.

Thank you for all of your efforts that reinforce the value of education and support your child’s success in school today and in the future.

Sincerely,

Gene T. Harris, Ph.D.
Superintendent/CEO

The Columbus City School District does not discriminate because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex or handicap with regard to admission, access, treatment or employment. This policy is applicable in all district programs and activities.
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A Guide to Positive Student Behavior

Columbus City Schools celebrates and rewards safe, respectful and responsible behavior in its schools. We believe that when students are aware of what is expected of them and the consequences of misbehavior are made clear, the great majority of our students will choose to make wise choices. However, when a student fails to meet expected standards of behavior, the student will be held accountable for his/her behavior. The Columbus City Schools (CCS) Guide to Positive Student Behavior enables students, families and staff to learn expectations for positive behavior, as well as interventions and disciplinary actions that may be taken as a result of misbehavior.

The examples of offenses listed in The CCS Guide to Positive Student Behavior are not intended to be a complete list of offenses that may result in disciplinary action. Any act that disrupts learning and threatens the order and safety of students and the school environment will be considered for disciplinary action.

**WHEN THE GUIDE TO POSITIVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR APPLIES**

The Guide to Positive Student Behavior applies to all Columbus City Schools students:

- On school grounds before, during and after school hours;
- At any other time when the school is being used by a school group;
- Off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event;
- Whenever a Columbus City Schools student represents his or her school;
- On a school bus, a school-sponsored vehicle, or at a Columbus City Schools bus stop and as it relates to all school/district property and vehicles;
- At all times whenever a student’s conduct is related to school or school activities.

The Board of Education has adopted policies that relate to student activities, student behavior, and student discipline. Students must abide by these policies and guidelines. Students, parents, and staff members are also expected to acquaint themselves fully with school building procedures. Additionally, removal, suspension, expulsion and appeal procedures are posted in a visible location in each school building in the main office and are available to parents and students upon request.

BE SAFE • BE RESPECTFUL • BE RESPONSIBLE
Steps to Building a Positive School Climate

- Build **RELATIONSHIPS** and **COMMUNICATE** a caring attitude.
- **EMPOWER** students.
- Create a climate of **COOPERATION**.
- Provide a **SAFE** and **SECURE** environment.
- Model and teach how to be **RESPONSIBLE**.
- Build **TRUST** between students and staff.
- Communicate **HIGH EXPECTATIONS** to students.
- Teach and show **RESPECT** through social/emotional learning strategies.
- Help students establish and demonstrate a positive **ATTITUDE** each day.
- Support frequent **COMMUNICATION** with parents, guardians and the community.
- Encourage parents and community members to **BE PARTNERS**.
- Teach **CONFLICT MANAGEMENT** and pro-social skill development.
- **TEACH** and **ENCOURAGE** expected behaviors.

**BE SAFE • BE RESPECTFUL • BE RESPONSIBLE**
Rights of Students and Parents

In public schools, parents and students have certain rights given by federal and state laws and Board of Education policies. Nevertheless, the individual rights of students will be weighed against the safety and welfare of the majority of students in the schools.

AS COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS STUDENTS AND PARENTS, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT:

• To Due Process of Law
  Before a student is suspended, the student has the right to receive written notice of the reason for the intended suspension and an opportunity for an informal hearing. Before a student is expelled, the student and the parent have the right to receive written notice of the reason for the proposed expulsion and an opportunity for a formal hearing. In both instances, parents will be given the opportunity to challenge the disciplinary action.

AS A COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS STUDENT, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT:

• To expect a free education in a positive learning environment
• To expect that the school you attend will be a safe place
• To expect that you will not be subjected to discrimination
• To expect to be informed about all school rules and regulations

A student’s rights in regard to decisions concerning searches to persons or property will be balanced by the responsibility of the school to protect the safety and welfare of all students. Lockers are the property of the school system and are on temporary loan to students and are subject to examination by school personnel at any time. The regulation also applies to the use of any school district equipment including furniture, computers and related accessories.

BE SAFE • BE RESPECTFUL • BE RESPONSIBLE
Responsibilities of Students

AS A COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS STUDENT, YOU HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY:

- To know and follow the rules and regulations of Columbus City Schools;
- To do your part to create a positive environment at your school by working toward academic excellence, striving for perfect attendance, and participating in school activities;
- To respect the dignity and worth of yourself, your fellow students, teachers and school staff;
- To respect the authority of teachers, school administrators and other authorized personnel in maintaining discipline;
- To behave in a way that does not disrupt the educational process or lead to physical or emotional harm; and
- To learn problem-solving skills to effectively handle conflict situations in an effort to avoid disrespectful and harmful behaviors.

STEPS TO MAKING GOOD CHOICES

- Think it through
- Gather information
- Weigh your choices
- Review what you did
- Learn from your choices

To know what is right and not do it is the worst cowardice. - Confucius

BE SAFE • BE RESPECTFUL • BE RESPONSIBLE
Responsibilities of Students

All students have the right to learn and no student has the right to disrupt the learning activities of others. The safety and security of your child is our highest priority and we are committed to providing a safe learning environment. The Guide to Positive Student Behavior provides definitions of behavior infractions and defines the consequences that can result due to inappropriate conduct. Unacceptable behavior is defined in a progressive order as Level I, Level II or Level III.

Columbus City Schools’ staff provides corrective instruction to students who fail to meet the behavioral expectations. Multiple options for correcting student behavior may be selected depending on an individual student’s needs including the age and grade level of the student, the student’s history of misbehavior, and the specific offense and its seriousness. Each school establishes its own school-wide discipline plan that includes activities for teaching and encouraging expected behaviors. The school principal and staff communicates the school-wide discipline plan to its parents/caregivers and students on an annual basis or as new students enroll.

The reputation of a thousand years may be determined by the conduct of one hour. - Japanese Proverb

BE SAFE • BE RESPECTFUL • BE RESPONSIBLE
Consequences and Strategies to Correct Inappropriate Behavior

Level I: First-Time Or Minor Offenses
Level II: Repeated Level One Offenses, Serious Misconduct
Level III: Repeated Level One/Two Offenses, Illegal and/or Serious Misconduct, Life or Health Threatening Offenses

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

An intervention strategy is an action designed to help a student overcome academic and/or behavioral barriers to learning. School personnel will use intervention strategies to help prevent or reduce negative behaviors.

- **Parent Contact/Conference** - Notification and holding a conference with the parent regarding the student’s behavior for all disciplinary actions.

- **School-Based Behavioral Interventions** - Examples include strategies such as creating a behavioral contract with the student, participation in anger management training, loss of privilege, re-teaching the behavioral expectation, referral to school counselor, school social worker, Intervention Assistance Team, Student Assistance and Intervention for Learning (S.A.I.L.), Student Outreach Services (S.O.S.), or a behavior improvement program/plan.

- **Positive Efforts for Adjustment and Knowledge (P.E.A.K.) Center** - The P.E.A.K. Center provides opportunities to continue the educational process for class/homework credit and provide positive behavioral support.

- **Detention** - A student may be required to stay after school or be assigned to lunch detention as a consequence for his/her behavior. The detention may include lessons in behavior management created to help the students learn problem-solving skills that will lead him or her to positive choices.

**BE SAFE • BE RESPECTFUL • BE RESPONSIBLE**
## Level I Behaviors and Corrective Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Expected Behavior</th>
<th>Violation of Expected Behavior</th>
<th>Definition of Violation</th>
<th>Consequences: Strategies to Correct Behavior</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Be Safe</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Obey laws regarding smoking for minors</td>
<td>Use, Possession, Sale or Distribution of Tobacco Products</td>
<td>Using or possessing any tobacco product such as cigarettes, &quot;dip,&quot; and chewing tobacco.</td>
<td>Student participates in a smoking cessation workshop class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follow District Dress Code Policy</td>
<td>Dress Code Violation</td>
<td>Any style of dress that contradicts the District Dress Code Policy. (See pp. 12-23.) The Dress Code Policy is intended to prevent disruption of the classroom atmosphere, enhance classroom decorum, eliminate distractions and excessive distraction of other students so as not to interfere with the educational process.</td>
<td>Conference with student/parent</td>
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<td><strong>Be Respectful</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Consider the feelings of others</td>
<td>Disruptive Behavior</td>
<td>Conduct such as talking, making noise, throwing objects, playing games, inappropriate display of affection or otherwise disturbing one or more classmates will be considered disruptive.</td>
<td>Integrate the behavioral expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obey classroom rules</td>
<td>Probability</td>
<td>Swearing, cursing, or making obscene gestures.</td>
<td>Student participates in a reflective activity.</td>
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<td>Demonstrate positive social skills</td>
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<td>Refer student to SAIL, Level 1 Intervention Assistance Team.</td>
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<td><strong>Be Responsible</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Be on time and attend regularly</td>
<td>Tardiness/Abseesence/Truancy</td>
<td>Absent from school for more than 5 days in a month or absence from school or the classroom without parents and school authorities’ knowledge.</td>
<td>Detention during which student participates in behavioral intervention.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tell the truth</td>
<td>Gambling</td>
<td>Playing any games of chance or skill for money or items of value.</td>
<td>PIAF suspension (for elementary only).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follow school rules</td>
<td>Electronic Communication Devices</td>
<td>The misuse by students of pagers, beeps, cellular telephones, and other electronic devices such as, games, MP3 players and including “black 808” devices for receiving and/or transmitting messages during school time. Electronic devices must be out of sight during school day and turned off. (The district shall not assume responsibility for devices that are damaged, lost or stolen when brought to school or after being confiscated for violation of this policy. Students may be permitted to use electronic devices for instructional purposes.</td>
<td>Time is alternative to suspension program developing support plans.</td>
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<td>Forgery/Fraud/False Identification</td>
<td>Writing the name of another person or changing times, dates, grades, names, or permits, giving false information to school district personnel.</td>
<td>File a charge if the law is broken.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** Strategies to Correct Behavior: are not aligned to the “Violation” in the Level I, II, and III Behavior Charts. Multiple options for correcting student behavior may be selected depending on an individual student’s needs including the age and grade level of the student, the student’s history of misbehavior, and the specific offense and its seriousness.

**BE SAFE • BE RESPECTFUL • BE RESPONSIBLE**
### Level II Behaviors and Corrective Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Expected Behavior</th>
<th>Violation of Expected Behavior</th>
<th>Definition of Violation</th>
<th>Strategies to Correct Behavior</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Be Safe</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Solve problems peacefully</td>
<td>Fighting</td>
<td>Mutual participation in an incident involving physical conflict.</td>
<td>Conference with student/parent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take care of school property</td>
<td>Improper operation of a vehicle</td>
<td>Action that violates state driving codes and district rules of student conduct within a public or private vehicle.</td>
<td>Loss of privilege.</td>
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<td>School Bus/School vehicle</td>
<td>Conduct not specifically listed that obstructs the orderly and safe operation of buses/vehicles.</td>
<td>Create a behavioral contract.</td>
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<td>Use impulse control</td>
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<td>Consider the feelings of others</td>
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<td>Demonstrate positive social</td>
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<td>skills</td>
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<td>Accept and respect others when</td>
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<td>the answer is “no”</td>
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<td><strong>Be Respectful</strong></td>
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<td>Ask before borrowing</td>
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<td>Take care of school property</td>
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<td>Follow school rules</td>
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<td>Follow acceptable use policy</td>
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**Multiple options for Correcting Student Behavior may be selected depending on an individual student’s needs including the age and grade level of the student, the student’s history of misbehavior, and the specific offense and its seriousness.**

**BE SAFE • BE RESPECTFUL • BE RESPONSIBLE**
# Level III Behaviors and Corrective Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Expected Behavior</th>
<th>Violation of Expected Behavior</th>
<th>Definition of Violation (Includes any repeated Level I, II Violation)</th>
<th><strong>Consequences; Strategies to Correct Behavior</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Be Safe</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face attention to health, nutrition and exercise.</td>
<td>Use possession, sale or distribution of alcohol.</td>
<td>Possession, being under the influence of, buying or selling alcohol or illegal drugs.</td>
<td>Conference with student/parent. Loss of privileges. Participation in substance abuse counseling program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avoid negative pressure and avoid dangerous situations.</td>
<td>Use possession, sale or distribution of drugs other than tobacco or alcohol.</td>
<td>Possession, being under the influence of, buying or selling alcohol or illegal drugs.</td>
<td>Conference with student/parent. Loss of privileges. Participation in substance abuse counseling program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place high importance on getting to know people of other cultural/social groups.</td>
<td>Physical Assault</td>
<td>Physically attacking another person, Unlawfully striking, kicking, shoving or otherwise causing physical pain or harm to another outside the context of a mutual conflict is considered assault.</td>
<td>Conference with student/parent. Loss of privileges. Participation in substance abuse counseling program.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Be Respectful</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Practice conflict resolution and anger management skills.</td>
<td>Use impropriety control</td>
<td>Use possession, sale or distribution of a firearm.</td>
<td>Conference with student/parent. Loss of privileges. Participation in substance abuse counseling program.</td>
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<td>Possessing, transmitting or using any kind of firearm, knife, razor, needles, mace, pepper gas or like substance, dangerous colds, chain or other lockable objects, or any item that can be considered a weapon or used as a weapon or ammunition for any such weapon.</td>
<td>Conference with student/parent. Loss of privileges. Participation in substance abuse counseling program.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Be Responsible</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Practice personal responsibility.</td>
<td>False Fire Alarms/Demolition/ Tampering with Automated External Defibrillator (AED)</td>
<td>Destroying or damaging a fire alarm. Making bomb threats, either written or verbal, against any school building. Tampering with the fire alarm causes setting off the alarm when there is no emergency. Tampering with the AED means opening the cabinet without permission.</td>
<td>Conference with student/parent. Loss of privileges. Participation in substance abuse counseling program.</td>
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**Multiple options for correcting student behavior may be selected depending on an individual student's needs including the age and grade level of the student, the student's history of misbehavior, and the specific offense and its seriousness.**
## Discipline Summary: Levels of Behavior and Consequences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OFFENSE</th>
<th>PARENT CONTACT/CONFERENCE</th>
<th>School-Level Behavioral Intervention</th>
<th>Referred to Student Support Program/Personal I.E.S.</th>
<th>Time-Out, P.L.A.N. (Elementary only)</th>
<th>Detention (Secondary)</th>
<th>In School Suspension</th>
<th>Out of School Suspension</th>
<th>Expulsion</th>
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<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
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<td>Violence/Drinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dress Code Violation</td>
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<td>Disciplinary Behavior</td>
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<td>Fraternities</td>
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<td>Timely/or Absences/Prose</td>
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<td>Smoking</td>
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<td>Electronic Communication Devices</td>
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<td>Forgery/False Identification</td>
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<td>Intoxication or Possession of a Vehicle</td>
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<td>Accidental Discharge</td>
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<td>Bombing/Explosives/Threats</td>
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<td>Physical Abuse</td>
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<td>Gagging</td>
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<td>Threatening</td>
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<td>Cheating/Plagiarism</td>
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<td>Unauthorized Use of the Internet</td>
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<td>Use, Possession, sale or distribution of intoxicating alcoholic beverages</td>
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<td>Use, possession, sale or distribution of drugs other than intoxicating alcoholic beverages</td>
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<td>Use, possession, sale or distribution of a firearm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use, possession, sale or distribution of a dangerous weapon other than a firearm, explosives, or incendiary device</td>
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**Suspension may be used with approval of the Regional Executive Director. Violation must have caused school disruption, invited panic, etc. Do not use for standard dress code violations.**
Helpful Tips for Parents

- TALK with your child about school.
- SHOW ENTHUSIASM about school and homework.
- SET REALISTIC GOALS for your child, and then focus on one at a time.
- PROVIDE A QUIET PLACE where homework can be completed.
- HELP your child complete homework. Remember NEVER do your child’s homework!
- COMMUNICATE regularly with your child’s teacher.
- EXPECT and PRAISE genuine progress and effort.
- FOCUS on your child’s strengths in school.
- BUILD CONNECTIONS between what is taught at school and what your child already knows.
- MONITOR your child’s television viewing and computer use.
- ENCOURAGE reading and involvement in extra-curricular activities.
- HELP YOUR CHILD GET ORGANIZED: break down assignments into smaller, more manageable parts. Set out needed items (clothes, homework, permission slips, etc.) the night before to avoid last-minute rushing in the morning.

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Board of Education Policies

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004
The Guide to Positive Student Behavior applies to all students enrolled in the district; however, students with disabilities will be treated in accordance with the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 and the “Operating Standards for Ohio’s Schools Serving Children with Disabilities”, and any subsequent regulations affecting the provisions. This does not necessarily preclude exclusion from school or school bus/vehicle as a result of a crisis or any emergency or as provided by law.

For more information on the rights of students with disabilities, please contact the Department of Educational Services, Student Assistance, Intervention and Outreach, or refer to the publication, Whose IDEA Is This?, available at the Bell Avenue Center (365-1204).

Corporal Punishment
Schools and classrooms shall be organized and managed to promote a safe and orderly environment for students and school personnel where effective teaching and learning can occur. Discipline shall be maintained through means which are not solely punitive. Corporal punishment shall not be used.

Emergency Response/Crisis Management
The Columbus City Schools strives to provide a safe and secure environment for students and to protect your child should a crisis/emergency occur. A district-wide Safety/Crisis Plan has been developed and provided to school personnel for assisting and responding to various crisis/emergency situations.

For information concerning a school crisis, please refer to local radio or television stations for updates. PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE SCHOOL DIRECTLY. Calling the school may limit the availability of telephone lines needed to access emergency rescue services.

Smoke Free Environment
To protect the health of students and employees, and in accordance with state law and Columbus City ordinance, smoking shall be prohibited on all property and inside all facilities and motor vehicles owned and leased by the district.

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Board of Education Policies

Zero Tolerance
As required by Ohio law, the Board of Education has adopted a policy of "zero tolerance" for violent, disruptive or inappropriate behavior, including excessive truancy and possession of a weapon, and has established strategies ranging from prevention to intervention to address the behavior.

When disciplinary actions are warranted, the Columbus City Schools will strive to maintain a constructive approach that focuses on positive changes in behavior and minimizes any interruption of the educational process. Age and maturity level requires different types of disciplinary actions. These factors will be considered when corrective measures are necessary.

Gun-Free School Act (GFSIA)
The Columbus Board of Education adheres to the Gun-Free School Act (GFSIA) and state law requiring local educational districts to expel from school, for a period of not less than one calendar year (from date of infraction), a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school, other property or to an activity under its jurisdiction, or for possessing a firearm that was initially brought on school property by another person. The district may also seek the permanent exclusion from public education of students possessing a firearm at school, provided specific criteria are satisfied.

Additionally, state law and the Columbus Board of Education policy provide that the superintendent may expel a student from school for a period not to exceed one year for bringing a knife to school, other property or to an activity under its jurisdiction or for possessing a knife that was initially brought on school property by another person, or making a bomb threat to a school building or any premises where a school activity is occurring.

Parents must emphasize to their children the seriousness of having possession of a firearm or knife, or making a bomb threat on school grounds, other property or to an activity under its jurisdiction.
Board of Education Policies

Policy 4114.123 Prohibit Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying
In accordance with state law, the Columbus City School District prohibits harassment, intimidation or bullying of one student toward another particular student or students on school property, at school sponsored events and at all times where student conduct is related to school or school activities. Harassment, intimidation or bullying by one student toward another particular student or students means either of the following: (1) an intentional, written, verbal, or physical act that occurs more than once and the behavior both causes mental or physical harm to the other student and is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for the other student; or (2) violence within a dating relationship. Any student who believes he/she has been harassed, intimidated or bullied by another particular student may bring forward a complaint to the school principal or designee. Any school personnel who are aware of prohibited incidents shall report those incidents to the school principal or designee. All allegations of harassment, intimidation or bullying shall be promptly, impartially and thoroughly investigated. Parents or guardians of students involved in a prohibited incident shall be notified and to the extent permitted by federal and state law, shall have access to any written reports pertaining to the prohibited incident. Any school employee, student or volunteer, who in good faith and in compliance with procedures, reports an incident of harassment, intimidation or bullying shall be immune from civil liability.

Informal Complaint Procedures
Any student or the parent of any student who believes that the student has been subjected to treatment in violation of this policy may seek informal resolution of alleged violations of this policy by discussing his/her concerns with a staff member without reference to these procedures. Informal resolutions are to be encouraged, although staff shall always inform complainants of their right to and the process for bringing forward a formal complaint. After attempting to resolve the issue(s), staff members shall also inform the school principal or designee when they receive informal reports of bullying and complete the appropriate form. If a subsequent complaint is received involving the same student(s), the complaint will automatically proceed to the formal procedures.

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Formal Complaint Procedures

Any student who believes that he/she has been subjected to treatment in violation of Board policy which prohibits harassment, intimidation or bullying of one student toward another particular student or students on school property, at school sponsored events and at all times where student conduct is related to school or school activities, may bring forward a written complaint. Such complaints shall be made in writing by the student, parent, teacher or administrator and must include the name of the student about whom the complaint is filed and the alleged perpetrator.

An allegation of harassment, intimidation or bullying should be made as soon as possible. All such allegations shall be referred for investigation to the school principal or designee where the alleged conduct occurred. All allegations shall be promptly, impartially and thoroughly investigated by the principal or designee.

The investigation shall be completely and carefully documented and, at a minimum, include interviews with the student complaining of bullying and the student accused of violating the policy. Investigations should be completed within three (3) school days. Parents and/or guardians of students involved in verified acts shall be notified and, to the extent permitted by federal and state law, shall have access to any written reports pertaining to the prohibited incident(s).

Retaliation

Retaliation against individuals who file a bullying complaint or assist in the investigation of a bullying complaint is expressly prohibited. Retaliation includes but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment motivated by the filing of a complaint.

Any student who makes an allegation of a violation of the policy and this regulation in bad faith may be subject, at the discretion of the building principal, to disciplinary action under the Guide to Positive Student Behavior.
Board of Education Policies

Student Acceptable Use Regulation
The Columbus City School District is now offering Internet access for student use. This document contains the Acceptable Use Policy for your use of the Columbus City Schools' Wide Area Network (WAN).

A. Educational Purpose
1. The Columbus City School District has established a Wide Area Network for limited educational purposes. The term "educational purpose" includes classroom activities, career development, and limited self-discovery activities.

2. The Columbus City Schools' network has not been established as a public access service or a public forum. The Columbus City Schools' network has the right to place reasonable restrictions on the material you access or post through the system. You are also expected to follow the rules set forth in the Columbus City Schools' Discipline Policy and the law in your use of the Columbus City Schools' network.

3. You may not use the Columbus City Schools' network for financial or commercial gain.

4. You may not use the Columbus City Schools' network for political lobbying. But you may use the system to communicate with elected representatives and to express your opinion on political issues.

5. You will use the Columbus City Schools' network only for educational and career development activities and limited self-discovery activities.

B. Student Internet Access
1. Students will have access to Internet information resources through their classroom, library, or school computer lab.

2. Elementary students who have e-mail access may use it only under their teacher's direct supervision.

3. Secondary students may use an individual e-mail account with the approval of their parent.

4. You and your parent must sign an account agreement to use an individual e-mail account on the Columbus City Schools' network. Your parents or guardians can withdraw their approval at any time.

5. If approved by your building principal, you may be able to create a personal web page on the Columbus City Schools' web server. All material placed on your web page must be pre-approved and comply with the Columbus City Schools' web page content standards and guidelines.

BE SAFE • BE RESPECTFUL • BE RESPONSIBLE
Board of Education Policies

C. Unacceptable Uses

The following uses of the Columbus City Schools’ network are considered unacceptable:

1. Personal Safety
   - You will not post or retrieve personal information about yourself, minors, or any other person. Personal information includes, but is not limited to, your home address, telephone number, school address, work address, etc.
   - You will not agree to meet with someone you have met online without your parent’s or guardian’s approval. Your parent or guardian should accompany you to this meeting.
   - You will promptly disclose to your teacher or other school employees any message you receive that is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.

2. Illegal Activities
   - You will not access or attempt to gain unauthorized access to the Columbus City Schools’ network or to other computer systems through the Columbus City Schools’ network or go beyond your authorized access. This includes attempting to log in through another person’s account or access another person’s files. These actions are illegal, even if only for the purposes of “browsing.”
   - You will not access or attempt to access resources, features, contents, or controls of the information technology facilities or other computer systems that are restricted, confidential, privileged, or that you are otherwise not authorized to use. These actions are illegal.
   - You will not use resources so as to cause damage to or alter the operation, functions, or design of the information technology facilities or content or of any other computer network.
   - You will not use the Columbus City Schools' network to engage in any other illegal act, such as arranging for a drug sale or the purchase of alcohol, engaging in criminal gang activity, threatening the safety of a person, etc.

3. System Security
   - You are responsible for your individual account and should take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from being able to use your account. Under no conditions should you provide your password to another person.
   - You will immediately notify a teacher or the system administrator if you have identified a possible security problem. Do not go looking for security problems.
   - You will avoid the inadvertent spread of computer viruses by following the district virus protection procedures if you download software.

BE SAFE • BE RESPECTFUL • BE RESPONSIBLE
4. Inappropriate Language
   • Restrictions about inappropriate language apply to public messages, private messages, and material posted on web pages.
   • You will not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language.
   • You will not post information that could disrupt or cause damage.
   • You will not engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.
   • You will not harass another person. Harassment is persistently acting in a manner that distresses or annoys another person. If you are told by a person to stop sending them messages, you must stop. In addition, you will not harass any student, staff member, or other person on the basis of gender, race, national origin, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation. Such harassment includes slurs, jokes, intimidation or any attack directed at an individual’s gender, race, national origin, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation.
   • You will not infringe on the rights or liberties of another person. You will not knowingly or recklessly post false or defamatory information about a person or organization.

5. Respecting Resource Limits
   • You will use Columbus City Schools’ network only for educational and career development activities and limited, self-discovery activities. There is no limit on use for education and career development activities.
   • You will not download large files unless authorized by your teacher or library media specialist.
   • You will not post chain letters or engage in “spamming.” Spaming is sending an annoying or unnecessary message to a large number of people.

6. Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement
   • You will not plagiarize works that you find on the Internet. Plagiarism is taking the ideas or writings of others and presenting them as if they were yours.
   • You will respect the rights of copyright owners. Copyright infringement occurs when you inappropriately reproduce work that is protected by a copyright. If a work contains language that specifies appropriate use of that work, you should follow the expressed requirements. If you are unsure whether or not you can use a work, you should request permission from the copyright owner. Copyright law can be very confusing. If you have questions, ask a teacher.

BE SAFE • BE RESPECTFUL • BE RESPONSIBLE
7. Inappropriate Access to Material
   - The district will monitor Internet and e-mail usage and will use content filtering software programs. Nevertheless, students may still find Internet sites that contain inappropriate materials. Parents and students should be aware of this possibility.
   - You will not use the Columbus City Schools' network to access or reproduce material that is harmful to minors, which includes but is not limited to material containing profanity, obscenity, child or other forms of pornography, or material that advocates illegal acts, or that advocates violence or discrimination, including hate literature.
   - If you mistakenly access inappropriate information, you should immediately tell your teacher or library media specialist. This will protect you against a claim that you have intentionally violated this acceptable use policy.

8. Waiver of Privacy
   - Waiver of Privacy Expectations. Due to the inherent lack of security in some information systems, and due to the right and need of the Columbus City Schools to monitor compliance with this policy, utilization of information systems that require privacy of any kind for any purpose are not supported and are prohibited. Any person utilizing any information system of the Columbus City Schools understands and agrees that they are specifically waiving any expectations of privacy in their communications, data, programs and other personal information stored, displayed, accessed, communicated, or transmitted on the system. Those utilizing the network who require security for district-related purposes shall contact Columbus City Schools information management services to arrange for specific project or program arrangements.

D. Your Rights
1. Limitations
   - The district may restrict your speech on the network for educational or other appropriate reasons or may limit offensive, loud, or disruptive speech.

2. Search and Seizure
   - Routine maintenance and monitoring of the Columbus City Schools’ network may lead to the discovery that you have violated this acceptable use policy, the Columbus City Schools’ discipline policy, or the law.
   - The Columbus City Schools’ network and any files on that network, including personal files, are the property of the board of education and the contents of the network are subject to random search at anytime without regard to whether there is a reasonable suspicion that the network or the files therein contains evidence of a violation of a criminal statute or a school rule.

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Board of Education Policies

3. Due Process
   • The Columbus City School District will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any
     investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through Columbus City Schools’ network.
   • In the event there is a claim that you have violated this acceptable use policy or the Columbus City
     Schools’ discipline policy in your use of the Columbus City Schools’ network, the privilege of using
     the network may be revoked. In addition, you will be disciplined in accordance with, and receive the due
     process rights under, the Columbus City Schools’ discipline policy.
   • If the violation also involves a violation of other provisions of the Columbus City Schools’ discipline
     policy, it will be handled in a manner described in the Columbus City Schools’ discipline policy.
     Additional restrictions may be placed on your use of your Internet account and/or access.

E. Limitation of Liability
   • The Columbus City School District makes no guarantee that the functions or the services provided by or
     through the Columbus City Schools’ network will be error-free or without defect. The Columbus City School
     District will not be responsible for any damage you may suffer, including but not limited to, loss of
     data or interruptions of service. The Columbus City School District is not responsible for the accuracy
     or quality of the information obtained through or stored on the system. The Columbus City School District
     will not be responsible for financial obligations arising through the authorized or unauthorized use of
     the Columbus City Schools’ network.

F. Personal Responsibility
   • When you are using the Columbus City Schools’ network, it may seem like you can more easily break a rule
     and not get caught. This is not really true because whenever you do something on a network you leave little
     “electronic footprints,” so the odds of getting caught are really about the same as they are in the real
     world. The fact that you can do something or think you can do something without being caught does not
     make it right to do so. Even if you do not get caught, there is always one person who will know whether
     you have done wrong -- and that person is you. Your use of the Internet can be a mirror that will show
     you what kind of a person you are.
Dress Code

1. All clothing shall be within the bounds of decency and good taste as appropriate for school. Clothing shall be sufficient to conceal undergarments at all times.
   - Dress and skirt length shall be within the bounds of decency and good taste and not shorter than mid-thigh.
   - No bare midriffs. As a test for appropriate length, student bodies shall not be exposed when arms are raised above their heads. Tops may not be low cut, off the shoulder or otherwise revealing. Tube tops, spaghetti strap tops, halter tops and/or any strapless top or dress which reveals the midriff or breasts are neither acceptable nor permitted. No undershirts shall be worn as outer wear.
   - Clothing may not be “see through.” Shirts must be worn at all times and must be sized appropriately so that they do not interfere with normal school activities.
   - Shorts and skirts may not be shorter than mid-thigh.
   - Shorts, pants, and skirts shall have no writing across the seat area.
   - Clothes may not be tight or form fitting.
   - No sleepwear.

2. Shoes must be worn at all times. Flip-flops, slippers/bedroom shoes and beach shoes are not permitted.

3. Commercial lettering or printing will be allowed on shirts and sweatshirts as long as it is acceptable for school attire. Clothing and jewelry shall be free of writing, pictures or any other insignia which are crude, vulgar, profane, sexually suggestive or which advocate negative racial, ethnic, gender or religious prejudice, or use or glorification of drugs, tobacco, alcohol or violence. Metal studied collars and chains hanging from clothing are not allowed.

4. Hats, caps and other types of head covering (other than for religious purposes) shall not be worn inside buildings.

5. Sunglasses are approved for wear outside, but not for inside the school building.

6. Students may wear Bermuda shorts, walking shorts or other shorts within the following guidelines:
   - Shorts must be hemmed and straight legged.
   - The length of shorts must be within the bounds of decency and in good taste as appropriate for school. Shorts must be no shorter than mid-thigh and must be worn to the waist. Saggy shorts are not allowed.
   - Short shorts or gym shorts are not to be worn other than for physical education courses.

BE SAFE • BE RESPECTFUL • BE RESPONSIBLE
Dress Code

7. Long pants are allowed for both boys and girls. The fullness of pants must not interfere with normal school activities and must be neat and clean at all times. Students wearing overalls or other bib type attire must have the straps buttoned appropriately and wear an acceptable shirt or blouse underneath. All long pants must be proper waist size, length and leg size (no sagging; no oversized clothing).

- Pants waist must not be more than one inch bigger than the correctly measured student waist size.
- Pants cannot be gathered or drawn together at the waist and must not hang below the waist.
- Pant inseams must be appropriately sized for the student. Pant length should not touch or drag on the ground.
- Belts must not be more than three (3) inches looser than the student’s measured waist size.

Gang Symbols and Gang-Related Apparel

The Board of Education desires to keep district schools and students free from the threats or harmful influences of any groups or gangs which advocate drug use or disruptive behavior. For purpose of these guidelines, “gang related apparel” is defined as apparel that, if worn or displayed on campus could be determined to threaten the health and safety of the school environment.

Disciplinary actions for dress code infractions must follow progressive discipline procedures as outlined in the Consequences: Strategies To Correct Behavior on page 11.

BE SAFE • BE RESPECTFUL • BE RESPONSIBLE
Every Day Counts: Attendance Procedures

Students with regular school attendance are more successful academically and have more opportunities for important communications with their teachers. They feel a stronger sense of connection with both their peers and the school community as a whole. Consistent school attendance is directly related to establishing regular habits of dependability important to the future of the student.

Regular school attendance is a joint responsibility shared by the student, parent/guardian, teacher, administrators and other school personnel. We appreciate you and your child's willingness to work with us toward a common goal of graduation.

Schools keep records of every excused and unexcused absence for each student. Parents and guardians must call the school to report a student's absence before 8:30 am for each day the student is absent. The parent or guardian must supply the school a written excuse signed by the parent within two school days of the student's return.

If no report of absence or written excuse is received, the absence is considered an unexcused absence. Unexcused absences may result in a referral to juvenile court for educational neglect or truancy.

The following excuses shall be accepted for student absence:

1. Personal illness or quarantine.
2. Illness or death in the immediate household.
3. Emergencies or any other occurrences or situations which, in the judgment of individual principals, may necessitate absence from school as a last resort.
4. Religious holiday.
5. Superintendent's designation.

* Students in grade 12 may be excused from attendance for a maximum of three days for colleges/university visits.
* No Out of School Suspension (OSS) Disciplinary consequence is permitted for Truancy or other attendance related infractions.
Title VI, Title IX and Section 504 Complaint Procedures

In accordance with the Federal and State Office of Civil Rights Guidelines, any student or staff person who believes that the Columbus City School District or any of the district’s staff have been discriminated against or harassed based on race, color, national origin, sex/gender or disability may bring a formal complaint to the building administrator or appropriate supervisor. Whenever possible and practical, an informal solution to the alleged complaint is encouraged and should be attempted.

If an acceptable informal solution cannot be attained, formal complaint procedures shall commence as follows:

Step 1
The discrimination complaint should first be made by the student or parent/guardian of the student or staff person to the principal or appropriate supervisor within ten school days of the incident. A copy of the alleged complaint must be forwarded to the District Compliance Office immediately. If the allegation is against an administrator, the complaint should be made directly to the Office of the Chief Academic Officer, who will designate the investigator.

Step 2
If not resolved at Step 1, the decision may be appealed to the district’s Compliance Officer within five school days of receipt of the decision.

Step 3
If not resolved at Step 1, the decision may be subject to an administrative review by the Superintendent or designee. However, at anytime throughout the process, the parent or student may forward the complaint to the Office for Civil Rights. Employees may at any time file a complaint with the local Equal Opportunity Commission or Ohio Civil Rights Commission offices.

If the investigation reveals that the complaint is substantiated, then prompt, appropriate, remedial and/or disciplinary action will be taken to prevent the continuance of the discriminatory action or its recurrence.

Note: Parents/guardians do not have to be present at the informal complaint meeting with the principal. However, parents and/or guardians may be present for youth under age 18 at all levels of the formal grievance process.

Compliance Office: 270 East State Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215
Phone: (614) 365-5143 • Fax: (614) 365-5741

BE SAFE • BE RESPECTFUL • BE RESPONSIBLE
Early Childhood Program Discipline Guidelines

Columbus City Schools’ Pre-Kindergarten Program uses a positive, progressive approach to classroom discipline. Discipline in the preschool classroom is viewed as guiding the behavior of children. The ultimate goal of discipline is to help children control their own behavior. Constructive, developmentally appropriate child guidance and management techniques are used at all times. The measures include, but are not limited to the following: time-out, redirection, talking with the child and parent, praise for appropriate behavior and the establishment of 3-4 simple rules for the preschool classroom:

- We respect ourselves and each other.
- We use our inside voices in the building.
- We clean our space when we finish our work and our play.
- We listen while others are talking.

There are four simple rules that preschool children can live by and remember. When the rules are broken the students will know that these are the consequences:

- First Offense: Warning/Contact Parent
- Second Offense: Time Out/Contact Parent
- Third Offense: Withdrawal of Privileges/Contact Parent
- Fourth Offense: Conference between Parent and Teacher and/or other Early Childhood Support Staff

BE SAFE • BE RESPECTFUL • BE RESPONSIBLE
Early Childhood Program Discipline Guidelines

The preschool teacher begins the process of positive discipline on the first day of school by doing the following:

- Engaging the children in establishing the 3 or 4 rules and consequences.
- Organizing the classroom to achieve the goal of good classroom management.
- Planning activities that are appropriate and have a balance of active versus quiet activities during the day.
- Showing concern, care and fairness to each child.
- Consistently enforcing the rules and expectations.

For the few children who may be disruptive or unable to settle down to a routine, the preschool staff will develop a plan of action with the parent(s) to help the child.

Positive, progressive discipline is based on the following guidelines:

- Respect for each child as a person.
- Commitment to the care and well being of each child.
- Avoidance of cruel, harsh, corporal or unusual punishment.
- Avoidance of physical restraints, profane language, threats, derogatory remarks and/or verbal abuse.
- Adherence to appropriate separation places and times that are based on the age and developmental ability of the child.
- Avoidance of any form of child abuse and or neglect.

BE SAFE • BE RESPECTFUL • BE RESPONSIBLE
Resources

**DISCIPLINE HELP LINE**

If you have concerns or questions regarding district discipline policies and/or procedures, or need to report a Columbus City Schools’ student’s truancy, telephone the Discipline Help Line at:

614-365-HELP (4357)

---

**Truancy Intervention Centers (TIC)**

St. John’s Parish Annex
640 South Ohio Ave.
Columbus, OH 43205
614-227-1316

North Area Education Center
3911 Dresden St.,
Columbus, OH 43221
614-487-9960

**Positive Alternative Learning for Students (PALS)**

UNH Center
40 West Long St.,
Columbus, OH 43210
614-224-1137, Ext. 302

North Area Education Center PALS
3911 Dresden St.,
Columbus, OH 43224
614-487-9962

---

The Guide to Positive Student Behavior may be accessed from the Columbus City Schools Web site:

www.columbus.k12.oh.us.

Click on the "Parents & Students" box, then select "Discipline" from the left side menu.

Consent for Release of Student Information

"Directory Information" is a legal phrase defined as student information including a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, height and weight (if a member of an athletic team), dates of attendance, date of graduation, awards received, honor rolls, and/or scholarships.

Please mark appropriate consent for each area:

☐ give consent or ☐ do not give consent for my student's school and/or the District to release Directory Information.

☐ give consent or ☐ do not give consent for photographs, audio, video, or electronic images of my student to be used by Columbus City Schools for exhibition, public display, publication, publicity materials, advertising, a news media story, video, audio, or other electronic media, such as the Internet, television, CD-ROM, or DVD. I understand that my student's full name may also be used with such display except that only my student's first name will be used on the District and/or school building websites.

☐ give consent or ☐ do not give consent for original written materials, artwork, or other work created by my student during the course of instruction to be used by Columbus City Schools for exhibition, public display, publication, publicity material, advertising, a news media story, video, audio, or other electronic media, such as the Internet, television, CD-ROM, or DVD. I understand that my student's full name may be used with such display except that only my student's first name will be used on the District and/or school building websites. If consent is denied, such denial shall not apply where the student's materials are incorporated into a greater or larger body of work (such as a student's voice in a choral recording).

☐ give consent or ☐ do not give consent for quoted statements given by my student, or photographs, audio, video or electronic images of my student, with possible identification by full name, to be used for the purpose of news stories or interviews about Columbus City Schools.

☐ give consent or ☐ do not give consent for my student to participate in letter writing as part of the educational experience to people outside the school district (e.g. pen pals, thank-you letters, letters to authors, or letters to public officials), and I understand these letters may include the student's full name and may include other personally identifiable information about the student.

Please complete, sign and return this form to the school office within two weeks of starting school.

Student Name (Print) ____________________________
Parent/Guardian Name (Print) ____________________________
Parent/Guardian Signature ____________________________ Date ____________
Address ____________________________ Phone ____________________________
School Building ____________________________ Teacher ____________________________ Grade/Room ____________________________

This consent shall remain in effect for the duration of your child's enrollment at our school. A new form is necessary if a parent requests a change or if a child changes schools.
Student Internet Acceptable Use Policy Consent Form

Student:  
By signing below, I agree to follow the Columbus City Schools' Acceptable Use Policy as outlined in the attached documents. I understand that my use of the Columbus City Schools' network is a privilege and may be revoked at any time for misuse of the network.

Student Name (Print)  
Student Signature  
Address  
School Building  

Date  
ZIP  

Parent or Guardian:

I give my permission for my child to have access to the Internet. I have read and understand the Columbus City Schools' Acceptable Use Policy. I also understand that Columbus City Schools may monitor pupil access to any of the interconnected systems and does not warrant the accuracy or appropriateness of any information contained in any of the interconnected computer systems. I hereby release the Columbus City School District, its personnel, and any institutions with which it is affiliated, from any and all claims and damages of any nature arising from my child's use of, or inability to use, the Columbus City Schools' network.

The undersigned acknowledges and agrees as a condition of using the wide area network that the student has no privacy expectation in the network.

Waiver of Privacy Expectations. Due to the inherent lack of security in some information systems, and due to the right and need of the Columbus City Schools to monitor compliance with this policy, utilization of information systems that require privacy of any kind for any purpose are not supported and are prohibited. Any person utilizing any information system of the Columbus City Schools understands and agrees that they are specifically waiving any expectations of privacy in their communications, data, programs and other personal information stored, displayed, accessed, communicated, or transmitted on the system. Those utilizing the network who require security for district-related purposes shall contact Columbus City Schools information management services to arrange for specific project or program arrangements.

Parent/Guardian Name (Print)  
Parent/Guardian Signature  
Daytime Telephone  

Date
Parent-School Compact

The purpose of the Parent-School Compact is to foster increased cooperation among teachers, parents, and students in order to support student achievement. This cooperation transcends what each may do as individuals.

As a parent, I will do my best to:
- communicate with the classroom teacher to share my child’s strengths and needs.
- provide a place at home for my child to study and help them whenever I can.
- keep in contact with the school to stay informed of my child’s progress.

As a student, I will do my best to:
- do the best work that I can.
- ask for help at school and at home when I need it.
- keep parents informed of my progress in school throughout the school year.
- tell my parents how I am doing at school during the year.

As a teacher, I will do my best to:
- be aware of your child’s individual strengths and needs.
- provide instruction that meets the needs of your child so that success can be experienced.
- keep you and your child informed of classroom progress throughout the school year.

As their principal, I
- provide a safe and healthy environment for learning to take place.
- discuss with parents the needs of their children.
- support parents and teachers by maintaining instructional materials and supplies in the school.

We have read and understand the above compact and have added our suggestions for the improvement of learning.

Student Signature

Parent Signature

Teacher Signature

Principal Signature

School

Date

“It takes an entire village to raise a child” — African Proverb
Columbus City Schools
Guide to Positive Student Behavior
Parent and Student Sign-off Form
2010-2011

I have reviewed and discussed with my child all the information contained in the Columbus City Schools Guide to Positive Student Behavior. I will abide by the policies and regulations set forth by the Columbus City Board of Education and the expectations of the school staff and administrators.

Student Name (Print) __________________________ School __________________________

Student Signature __________________________ Date __________________________

Parent/Guardian Signature __________________________ Date __________________________

SIGN AND RETURN WITHIN 2 WEEKS OF STARTING SCHOOL
Appendix S: Columbus City School District Teacher’s License Application

2-Year Provisional License Renewal or Advance a 2-Year Provisional/2-Year Alternative to a 5-Year Professional License

PERSONAL INFORMATION

SSN __________________________

-OR- Educator State ID __________________________

Birthday __________________________  Male □  Female □

First Name __________________________ MI ______

Last Name __________________________

Address __________________________

City __________________________ State __________ Zip __________

Home Phone __________________________ Cell Phone __________________________

E-mail __________________________

Other names that may appear on official documents (maiden, etc.) __________________________

BACKGROUND CHECKS

First Ohio License, Certificate or Permit

When an individual submits an application for his/her first license, certificate or permit issued by the Ohio Department of Education, a BCI and FBI background check report, completed within 365 days of the date the application is received, must be on file at the Department of Education.

Renewals and Additional Licenses, Certificates or Permits

Have you lived continuously in Ohio for the past 5 years? You must check one:

☐ YES

☐ NO

An FBI background check is required if the report on file with ODE is more than 5 years old at the date the application is received. A BCI background check is required if you do not have one on file with ODE.

Both the BCI and FBI background checks are required if the reports on file with ODE are more than five years old on the date the application is received.

Please note:

The Ohio Department of Education is not able to accept paper reports. All background check reports must be submitted to this office via electronic submission directly from the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation. When you have your fingerprints taken at a WebCheck facility, please ask the person taking the prints to check the box under ‘Reason Fingerprinted’ to send to the Ohio Department of Education per the example below:

Reason Fingerprinted

☐ Send to the Ohio Department of Education

Please do not use the Department of Education address in the ‘mail to’ section because the department is not able to utilize paper reports.

For more information on how to complete this electronic process, please visit www.ohiodoebigeneral.gov/services/business/webCheck.

LEGAL QUESTIONS (Each question MUST be answered by placing a ☑ in the appropriate box.)

If you answer YES to any question, attach an explanation to this application. Please include the year of conviction, the nature of the offense and the court where the matter was heard.

☐ Yes ☐ No  Have you ever been convicted of, found guilty of, pled guilty to, or pled no contest to any misdemeanor other than a traffic offense?

☐ Yes ☐ No  Have you ever been convicted of, found guilty of, pled guilty to, or pled no contest to any felony?

☐ Yes ☐ No  Have you ever had a criminal conviction sealed or expunged?

☐ Yes ☐ No  Have you ever had ANY professional certificate, license, permit, or an application for the same, revoked, suspended, limited or denied?

☐ Yes ☐ No  Have you ever surrendered ANY certificate, license or permit, other than a driver’s license?

APPLICANT SIGNATURE

I certify under penalty of loss of my right to teach or work in the schools of Ohio that the answers to these five questions are true and correct in every respect.

Signature of Applicant __________________________ Date __________________________

Page 1 of 4

April 2011
**CREDENTIAL INFORMATION (Indicate License Requested).**

Please indicate the license type(s). You may use the code sheet on Page 3 to find your license TYPE codes. The teaching field and endorsement codes will be automatically entered by the Office of Educator Licensure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Renewal</th>
<th>2-Year Provisional License</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please submit <strong>OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS</strong> (no photocopies or grade reports) showing all coursework required for the renewal. If transcripts are to be sent separately from the application, include a note indicating which course(s) will be sending transcripts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Career Technical Workforce Development License: Individuals who are renewing this license must submit a completed CTE-37 Form signed by the university official verifying eligibility to renew. Transcripts are not required for the renewal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advance</th>
<th>2-Year Provisional License to a 5-Year Professional License</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please check one:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers who fulfilled requirements of the Transition Resident Educator Program including monitoring and summative assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residents of the Transition Resident Educator Program including summative assessments with an ODE certified mentor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individuals who are advancing a Career Technical Workforce Development license must also submit a completed CTE-37 Form signed by the university official verifying that all programs had been met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers who fulfilled the former Entry Year Program and Praxis III Assessment (completed prior to July 1, 2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please submit a letter on district letterhead, signed by the superintendent of the district where the entry year program was completed, verifying successful completion of the monitoring component of the entry year program. Praxis III Assessment results must have been reported directly to the Ohio Department of Education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individuals who are advancing a Career Technical Workforce Development license must also submit a completed CTE-37 Form signed by the university official verifying that all programs had been met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Career Technical Workforce Development teachers who already hold another 5-year professional teaching license</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Career technical workforce development teachers who already hold another type of 5-year professional teaching license are not subject to entry year or transition resident educator program requirement and must submit only the CTE-37 Form signed by the university verifying that all program requirements for the new license have been met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Counselors who successfully completed the Induction Year for School Counselors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please submit the School Counselor Induction Form signed by the superintendent and supervising licensed school counselor. The Verification Form may be found on the ODE website at education.ohio.gov (keyword search: induction year).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers who completed three years of teaching outside the state of Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers who have completed three years of teaching under a standard teaching license in another state must submit a letter on district letterhead, signed by the superintendent, or human resources director verifying that experience. A copy of the standard teaching license must also be submitted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers who completed an alternative licensure pathway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alternative educators who complete the Transition Resident Educator Program during the 2010-11 school year must have their mentor and superintendent sign the Transition Resident Educator Verification Form on page 4 verifying completion of the Transition Resident Educator Program including summative assessments with an ODE certified mentor. Alternative license holders must also complete all additional requirements prior to applying to advance to the 5-year professional license, including two years of mentioned teaching under the alternative license, professional development coursework, and Praxis II or ACTFL teacher exams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principals advancing to the 5-year professional license</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principals have the option to achieve and sign this license on an existing 5-year license; or, the license may be issued as a separate 5-year license with an effective date that is reflective of the current year. If compliant, the license will take on the validity period of the existing license.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EFFECTIVE YEAR**

The effective year for an Ohio license begins July 1, regardless of the date of issuance. When renewing, you may apply on January 1 of the year the license expires.

License to begin on July 1, ____________.

**MAIL TO ORGANIZATION OR INDIVIDUAL (Check only one box.)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home</th>
<th>School District</th>
<th>School District Name</th>
<th>IRN #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**APPLICANT SIGNATURE**

I certify under penalty of law at my right to teach or work in the schools of Ohio that the answers to these five questions are true and correct in every respect.

Signature of Applicant: ___________________ Date: ____________

Print Name: ___________________
GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Please read carefully

Use this application to:
- Renew a 2-Year Provisional License
- Advance a 2-Year Provisional Teaching, School Counselor or Principal to a 5-Year Professional License
- Advance an Alternative TEACHING License to a Standard License
- Advance a 2-Year License to a 5-Year Professional License based on out of state teaching experience

Application status may be checked online at education.ohio.gov. Use the search option access Educator Profile.

PLEASE DO NOT STAPLE MATERIALS TOGETHER. Please mail to:
Office of Educator Licensure
25 South Front Street, Mail Stop 105
Columbus, OH 43215-4183

ADVANCING A 2-YEAR ALTERNATIVE

The holder of an alternative educator license may advance to a standard teaching license upon completion of two years of successful teaching experience under the alternative educator license as verified by the employing school superintendent; successful completion of the required Praxis II tests; AND

- for Adolescent to Young Adult 7-12: completion of 12 additional semester hours of coursework, with a GPA of 2.5 or above, prior to expiration of the alternative educator license, from a college or university approved to prepare teachers, in the principles and practices of teaching; student development and learning; pupil assessment procedures; curriculum development; classroom management; and teaching methodologies.
- for Intervention Specialist K-12: completion of 12 additional semester hours of coursework, with a GPA of 2.5 or above, prior to expiration of the alternative educator license, from a college or university approved to prepare teachers, in the principles and practices of teaching; student development and learning; pupil assessment procedures; curriculum development; classroom management; and teaching methodologies; or in the teaching of reading and/or phonics.

FEES

A check or money order payable to "Treasurer, State of Ohio" covering the application fee(s) specified for the license(s) requested must accompany each application. Do not send cash.

Please note: $25 of the processing fee is non-refundable if eligibility requirements for the license are not met.

2-Year Provisional License Renewal = $30 for the first license type
$20 for each additional license type requested with the same effective year

Advance a 2-Year Provisional License to a 5-Year Professional License:
- Teacher = $160
- Counselor = $200
- Principal = $260
  - $20 if aligned to an existing 5-Year Professional License.

LICENSE TYPES

- 62) MIDDLE CHILDHOOD (4-9)
- 63) ADOLESCENCE TO YOUNG ADULT (7-12)
- 64) MULTAGE (PK-12)
- 65) INTERVENTION SPECIALIST
- 66) CAREER-TECHNICAL
- 71) EARLY CHILDHOOD (PK-3)
- 72) EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION SPECIALIST (PK-3)
- 73) PRINCIPAL
- 74) PUPIL SERVICES (school counselor)
Transition Resident Educator Program Verification

First Name ______________________ Last Name ______________________ Birthday ______________

SSN _____ . _____ . _____ OR Educator State ID _____ . ____________

Resident Educators must have their mentor and superintendent sign below verifying completion of the Transition Resident Educator Program using the required formative assessments with an ODE certified mentor.

I certify the applicant fulfilled the requirements of the Transition Resident Educator Program using the required formative assessment tools during school year 2009-2010 or 2010-2011.

Please indicate the year of mentoring:

☐ 2009-2010 ☐ 2010-2011

_________________________ School or District ____________________________

_________________________ Signature of Mentor __________________________

_________________________ Date __________________________

Print Mentor Name ____________________________________________________

I certify the applicant fulfilled the requirements of the Transition Resident Educator Program and the mentor is an ODE-certified mentor.

_________________________ School or District ____________________________

_________________________ Signature of Superintendent __________________

_________________________ Date __________________________
Appendix T: Parent Participation Request

Columbus Africentric Early College

Dad, Mom, Guardian your presence is needed in our school

From Wednesday, Sept. 8, 2010 through Friday Oct. 8, 2010 (homecoming)

Come and see what my day is like

K-12 Parents who invest at least eight (8) hours in our school building during the dates listed above will be entered in a drawing to possibly receive a Wal-Mart GC, free Dinner or movie passes.

The winner of the drawing will also have their photo taken and placed on our board of fame and have their name announced during our homecoming game.

Please show up and make a difference

Note: Be sure to sign in and out each visit
Appendix U: Middle School College Blue Print

Attention Columbus City Schools middle school parents and students

Come create your college “blueprint” with us at

Blueprint: College 2.0

A college planning workshop sponsored by I Know I Can and The Ohio State University

Start now to help your children achieve their dreams.

**Where** Various locations throughout the school district

**When** The first session, College Bound, begins in November (16th, 17th, or 18th)

**Who** Parents/guardians of middle school students of Columbus City Schools

**How** Register online! Space is limited. To learn more, go online to www.iknowican.org or call (614) 233-9510 and ask for an Early Awareness College Advisor.

**Why** Because all kids deserve a chance to go to college

**Registration deadline** Monday, November 8, 2010

Brought to you by I Know I Can and The Ohio State University.
Appendix V: Self-Esteem Passport
SESELF-ESTEEM PASSPORT™

Created by Michael Krawetz

Visit us on the web: www.healthyselfesteem.org
National Association for Self-Esteem

www.odt.org
**SELF-ESTEEM PASSPORT CONTENTS**

- How the Passport Works ............................................. 4
- Bearer's Name and Address .......................................... 5
- Identification Page .................................................. 6
- Be Proud of Your Looks Visa ........................................... 7
- Physical Attributes Visa ................................................ 8
- Self-Confidence Visa .................................................. 10
- Acceptance of Faults Visa .............................................. 12
- Sense of Humor Visa ................................................... 13
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- Playing to Win Visa .................................................... 18
- Power of Failure Visa ................................................... 20
- Giving Up Resentments Visa ......................................... 22
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- Freedom from Guilt Visa ............................................... 28
- Capsulize and Internalize Visa ....................................... 29
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HOW YOUR SELF-ESTEEM PASSPORT WORKS

This is your United States of America Self-Esteem Passport. It validates your allegiance to yourself. It will help protect you against feelings of inferiority and inadequacy.

With your newly discovered self-esteem strengths—found inside the pages of this document and written in your own hand—you will have the power to transform the quality of your life. You will direct your mind to set your success pattern.

Possession of this Self-Esteem Passport will allow you to move forward naturally—growing in self-worth and self-love—because this document provides you with an immediate awareness of your combined strengths, triumphs, and personal achievements—the essential self-esteem catalysts.

This document permits you to progress without delay or hindrance to your life’s goals and destinations. If you travel during times of stress and trouble, carry it with you. Its contents will provide you with the strength and comfort of your own self-acceptance.

Your Self-Esteem Passport is valid for life. It can be modified by entering—and then internalizing—your new self-esteem achievements in the summary section of this document.

“Sow a thought, and you reap an act; Sow an act, and you reap a habit; Sow a habit, and you reap a character; Sow a character, and you reap a destiny.”

—Samuel Smiles

SELF-ESTEEM PASSPORT

Date of Issuance

Bearer’s Name and Address

Telephone:

NOTICE TO PASSPORT HOLDERS

This United States of America Self-Esteem Passport™ issued to all persons regardless of age, race, or creed—will permit the bearer to experience a new sense of self after honestly completing all visa entry sections.

However, you will be in violation of the rules governing your Self-Esteem Passport if you persist with the following negative attitudes which undermine your newly gained self-esteem: An unwillingness to let go of living in the past, habitual self-condemnation and feelings of worthlessness, and professing allegiance to self-pity, pessimism, resentment, and dishonesty.

“So much is a man worth as he esteems himself.”

—Rabelais
IMPORTANT: This United States of America Self-Esteem Passport is NOT VALID until completed and signed BY THE BEARER.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>SEX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIRTH DATE</td>
<td>BIRTHPLACE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEIGHT</td>
<td>HAIR COLOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLOR OF EYES</td>
<td></td>
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<td>SINGLE OR MARRIED</td>
<td>FAVORITE OCCUPATION</td>
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<td>NAMES AND AGES OF CHILDREN</td>
<td>FAVORITE HOBBY</td>
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<td>FAVORITE SPORT</td>
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SIGNATURE OF BEARER

In the space below, list the reasons why you selected it. Consider both physical and emotional factors. Admire all of your features and accept yourself as you are. This is the least harmful form of self-acceptance.

Paste a favorite photograph of yourself on this page.
A realistic self-image will bolster your self-esteem. Accepting your body—whether overweight, underweight, or out-of-shape—reinforces your self-worth because acceptance stops self-hate and self-condemnation. Once you’ve acquired acceptance, you can then gently change any part of yourself—without self-purdynice—and further strengthen your self-worth.

In this section, list the many physical parts of yourself which you proudly accept. Include your dimensions, physique, sexy points, strength, stamina, and contours. If you’re modest, ask a friend to help you complete this section.

(Example: I have heavy but shapely thighs, a friendly smile, and a prominent nose that gives me a lot of character.)

“Deal with yourself as an individual worthy of respect and make everyone else deal with you the same way.” —Nikki Giovanni

“Beauty in things exists in the mind which contemplates them.” —David Hume
SELF-CONFIDENCE
VISA SECTION

You do many things well that you've always taken for
granted. Your job, running your home, hobbies, cooking,
repairing broken appliances, excelling in school and at
athletics, etc. Endorsing yourself for your achievements
reinforces your self-worth. In this section, fill in your per-
sonal accomplishments.

(Example: I've worked up to a four-mile run every day—and
I never miss an outing. I'm able to sew most of my own clothes
and save hundreds of dollars every year.)

"Insist on yourself; never imitate...
Every great person is unique."
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

"No one can make you feel inferior
without your consent."
—Eleanor Roosevelt
ACCEPANCE OF FAULTS
VISA SECTION

It's human to have faults but inhumane to condemn yourself for having them. Some faults you can change. Others will remain. Accept your faults and bolster your self-esteem. In this section, list your faults and how they may be offset by your virtues.

(Example: I may be stubborn, but I am persistent and dependable.)

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SENSE-OF-HUMOR
VISA SECTION

Humor is a vital part of life. It offsets solemn or troubled times. It keeps us from taking ourselves too seriously. If we can laugh at our past disappointments—and use the laughter to help provide new insights—we have given ourselves self-compassion, the cornerstone of all self-esteem. In this section, list some of the past hardships you've endured, but can now put into perspective with a touch of laughter.

(Example: I'm better off without my repossession car. Now the finance company is stuck with a lemon that leaks in the rain, cooks out in direct sunlight, and occasionally chases dogs.)

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"The greatest of all faults is to be conscious of none. Recognizing our limitations and imperfections is the first requisite of progress." —Dr. Dale E. Turner

"A sense of humor is part of the art of leadership, of getting along with people, of getting things done." —President Dwight D. Eisenhower
PERSONAL COURAGE
VISA SECTION

Everyone has moments of personal courage in life but those important events are often forgotten in the passage of time, or because modesty and memories of previous setbacks get in the way. Remembering your personal courage milestones—whether they were helping a poor swimmer to safety or giving your first speech in front of a large audience—fortifies your self-esteem. Recalling those times of bravery will remind you that you are self-reliant and capable of heroic action. You know you can tackle tough situations because you've done it before.

In this section, list incidents of personal courage you have experienced, from childhood to the present.

(Example: In grade school, I defended a classmate who was being treated unfairly by a bully. Years later, I drove through a dangerous snowstorm to deliver medicine to a sick friend.)

"What I treasure most in life is being able to dream. During my most difficult moments and complex situations I have been able to dream of a more beautiful future."
—Rigoberta Menchú Tumán

"When I care to be powerful -- to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid."
—Audre Lorde
CHOOSING TO RISK
VISA SECTION

Choosing to risk strengthens your self-image. It shows that you have confidence in your judgement and are willing to overcome fear, boredom, or complacency in order to bring about change. Deliberately taking a chance implies that your decision to pursue a certain course is rational—whether it’s getting married or divorced, moving to a new community or career—and that you’re prepared to deal with either failure or success. If you succeed, you will enjoy a new vitality and sense of accomplishment. If you don’t, the experience will strengthen your resolve to risk again because you’ve tested your courage and know you’re able to go on. In this section, show how you have benefited from risks you have taken.

(Example: I was always afraid to travel alone but, after the divorce, I fulfilled a lifetime dream and visited Alaska by myself. I have become my own partner.)

“I is not easy to be a pioneer -- but oh, it is fascinating! I would not trade one moment, even the worst moment, for all the riches in the world.” —Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell

“It is only by risking our persons from one hour to another that we live at all.” —William James
PLAYING TO WIN
VISA SECTION

Playing to win can often make the difference between failure and success. It means going after a goal with persistence and the unswerving resolve to succeed. If your attempts to become a winner have resulted in repeated setbacks, it's time to examine your strategies. Are your objectives reasonable? Could you be standing in your own way without even knowing it? Get in touch with your inner self. Are you unconsciously choosing to fail—or remain an underachiever—because you fear that positive changes will require living up to greater expectations? You can become a winner, which is far more rewarding than going through life as a loser, if you deal with your self-defeating patterns.

In this section, list examples of how you 'snatched defeat from the jaws of victory,' and indicate how you can avoid similar results in the future.

(Example: I never spoke up during employee brainstorming because I felt that no one would be interested in what I have to say, but my holding back may have kept me from being recognized by my boss. Now I realize that being able to present my ideas well is part of winning on the job, if I want to be promoted.)

"I can honestly say that I was never affected by the question of the success of an undertaking. If I felt it was the right thing to do, I was for it regardless of the possible outcome." —Prime Minister Golda Meir

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”
—Dr. Margaret Mead
POWER OF FAILURE
VISA SECTION

Failure is a teacher and can be the source of much personal growth. Experiencing failure—and learning to judge your own capabilities—demonstrates that you have the strength to accept life’s challenges. Never condemn yourself for not succeeding. That’s being unfair to yourself. See failure for what it really is: an opportunity to discover that future success lies in another strategy or direction. You will achieve your next goal if you learn from your past mistakes. In this section, show how some of your past failures could lead to new achievements. (Example: I tried many times without success to break the cigarette habit on my own, but I finally realized I couldn’t do it alone and signed up for a stop-smoking workshop. I haven’t smoked for six months and I can now taste food.)

“Life is either a daring adventure or nothing.”
—Helen Keller

“Never give up, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn.”
—Harriet Beecher Stowe
Relinquish your resentments—they’re only unhappy memories of past experiences that once crossed your life. It doesn’t matter who was to blame. Letting go of your disappointments releases you from the mental imprisonment of reliving yesterday’s troubles. You’re also rid of the all-consuming need to exact revenge. Your self-esteem is automatically increased because you no longer view yourself as a tragic unfortunate who was wronged—and forever a victim of that unpleasant situation. By being forgiving—both to yourself and others responsible for the hurtful incident—you automatically eliminate your mind’s existing inventory of trouble-provoking grudges and bad memories. Freeing yourself from resentments creates a brand-new blueprint for present-day happiness and a chance to go for the gold. In this section, describe how resentments have trapped you in the past and why that won’t happen again.

(Example: I resented being poor and having to work my way through school, and my constant bitterness only made me feel worse about myself. If I finally let go of hating the past, I can be free to enjoy my present success in life.)

“Let us forget and forgive injuries.”
—Don Quixote

“Better by far you should forget and smile than that you should remember and be sad.”
—Christina Georgina Rossetti
BEING YOUR OWN BEST FRIEND

VISA SECTION

You have a friend for life—you yourself! Friendships provide comfort and strength and must be nourished with gentle deeds and loving actions. In fact, being your own best friend and having a strong self-esteem are synonymous. In this section, list the steps you have taken to become your own best friend.

(Example: I signed up for the French class today. I wanted to take the course for the last three years. Then as a reward I made plans for a two-week vacation.)

RESPECT FOR OTHERS

VISA SECTION

A vital self-esteem builder is to admire, respect, and appreciate the uniqueness of other people. No two people are alike. Recognizing the differences in others will provide you with your own special place of importance in this world and strengthen your own self-esteem. In this section, list some of the original qualities of other people and why you admire them.

(Example: My mother is a remarkable cook. My best friend is a truly witty conversationalist.)

“All you need is already within you, only you must approach your self with reverence and love.”
—Sri Nisargadatta

“Out beyond ideas of right and wrong doing, there is a field. I’ll meet you there.”
—Rumi
FOREVER YOUNG
VISA SECTION

Thoughts, attitudes, and actions—and not the actual passage of time—determine old age. Resistance to growth and new ideas saps the life force. Rigid thinking blocks self-renewal. Hope and anticipation are two factors which help keep you eternally young. In this section, list the actions you have taken to remain forever young.

(Example: I study dance twice a week in a studio full of students fifteen years my junior.)

"Any human anywhere will blossom in a hundred unexpected talents and capacities simply by being given the opportunity to do so.” —Doris Lessing

YOUR UNIQUENESS
VISA SECTION

You're an original. There's no other person in the world like you. In this section, list the traits that make you a unique person. That's why you're irreplaceable.

(Example: I don't have a selfish bone in my body. I really can make people laugh and enjoy themselves.)

"We can help one another find out the meaning of life... But in the last analysis, each is responsible for finding oneself.” —Thomas Merton
FREEDOM FROM GUILT
VISA SECTION

There's really no need to punish yourself for past mistakes by feeling guilty. Guilt cripples your self-esteem by trapping you in the memory of past failures. It creates low self-worth. There is life without guilt. It means learning from your past mistakes—and not condemning yourself for them.

In this section, list the guilt-producing experiences which once made you feel bad about yourself, but which you now choose to eliminate from your growing self-esteem inventory.

(Example: I once felt badly that I moved away from my parents' hometown. But now I've made a new life for myself and they're proud of me.)

CAPSULIZE YOUR NEWLY DISCOVERED SELF-ESTEEM STRENGTHS IN THIS SECTION AND INTERNALIZE THEM

After you've honestly answered all of the preceding Self-Esteem Passport visa entry sections, you now have living proof—a authored in your own hand—that you're a very special and accomplished person.

In this section, capsulize all of your newly discovered strengths. Was there a self-esteem attribute not covered in this passport? Enter it on these next pages.

Your self-esteem discovery process doesn't end with the completion of this document. From here, your new self-esteem traits must be consciously affirmed in your own mind—just like learning the alphabet as a youngster—to ensure their continuance.

Memorize, repeat, and internalize your self-esteem attributes until they become part of your consciousness. At that point, your new self-esteem will become as automatic as breathing.

“Respect yourself and others will respect you.”
—Confucius

“I am larger, better than I thought.
I did not know that I held so much goodness.”
—Walt Whitman
CAPSULIZE YOUR NEWLY DISCOVERED SELF-ESTEEM STRENGTHS IN THIS SECTION AND INTERNALIZE THEM

- PART 2 -

- PART 3 -

“I have learned over the years that when one’s mind is made up, this diminishes fear; knowing what must be done does away with fear.” — Rosa Parks

“You must learn to be still in the midst of activity and to be vibrantly alive in repose.” — Prime Minister Indira Gandhi
VALIDATION OF YOUR SELF-ESTEEM PASSPORT PROTECTS YOU AGAINST LOW SELF-WORTH

Congratulations! You have just validated your United States of America Self-Esteem Passport. Your own words and self-assessments—written in the previous visa entry sections—affirm your worthiness and self-esteem.

Do not lose this document. It will now help guide you through life, protecting you against self-doubt, self-deprecation, a low self-esteem, and fear of success.

To fully ensure the success of this passport's effectiveness, carry it and remember its special contents at all times. Refer to them repeatedly because you are the source of your own strengths and achievements. Dwell on your strengths. Resist self-condemning thoughts. Respect yourself and others will too.

You are the bearer of a Self-Esteem Passport and are entitled to the pursuit of happiness and the accompanying high self-worth. This is your life and your new self-esteem. Begin living it now.

—Michael Krawetz
SELF-ESTEEM PASSPORT EDITOR
Quotations revised 2007 by Mona Naimark

“A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.”
—Lao-Tzu