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FACTORS INFLUENCING BLACK STUDENTS IN WINDSOR AND THEIR  
PURSUIT OF POST SECONDARY EDUCATION

by

Marium Tolson-Murty

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
Through the Faculty of Education  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Education at the  
University of Windsor

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to examine the post-secondary aspirations of Black students in Windsor. The research was conducted in two community centres in Windsor. A Mixed-Methods methodology was used because this approach involves collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data which would allow for broader, more in-depth analysis of the findings. The subjects consisted of 29 high school students (15 male, 14 female) from grade 9 to grade 12. Through the use of a questionnaire administered to Black students of various cultural backgrounds, this research examined various factors which influence these students in deciding whether or not to pursue post-secondary education.

Ninety-six percent of the participants expressed career goals that require them to pursue a post secondary education. Specific factors that would support or impede their decision include personal goals, encouragement from family and school, finances, cultural and family expectations, grade point average and level of study.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION: BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

#### Historical and Spatial Context

The city of Windsor, Ontario is geographically located at the southernmost point of Canada. This is a city that proudly celebrates its cultural diversity which is entrenched in a history that is plenteous and dynamic. Within this city of 216,000 residents (<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/data/profiles/community/Index.cfm?Lang=E>), there exists a strong African Canadian community which consists of many families who can trace their family heritage as far back as their ancestors who arrived to Canada through the Underground Railroad. The province of Ontario was one of the portals along the Underground Railroad movement for escaped and freed slaves fleeing the southern United States during the 1800's. Even though slavery did exist in Canada from the 1600's to 1800's (Tulloch,1975), Canada was proclaimed as being the desired location for freedom where Blacks would not be persecuted. Great Britain banned the slave trade in 1807 and Upper and Lower Canada outlawed the practice of slavery due to the fact that this region was under British rule at the time (Greater Essex County District School Board [GECDSB], 2005). In 1819, the Attorney General of Upper Canada declared that Blacks residing in Canada were free and protected by British law (GECDSB, 2005). The history of the struggle of new Black Canadians extends into issues dealing with settlement and the barriers Blacks faced in order to receive access to education.

### ***Brief History of Black Settlement in Ontario and Windsor Region***

After the American Revolution in the United States, many African Americans who were loyal to Britain immigrated to Canada. Some settlers of African descent came to the province of Ontario as slaves assisting their loyalist masters in the daunting task of clearing the forest, building homes, and farming the land. In Ontario, many of these Black Loyalists settled around Cornwall, Kingston, York, Newark, Brantford, North Buxton, Chatham, and Windsor (GECDSB, 2005). The largest concentration of African-Canadian settlements was in Southwestern Ontario. North Buxton is considered to be the first Black settlement in Canada (<http://www.ontariotravel.net>). Other regions in Ontario where Black settlement began to take place include Owen Sound, Hamilton, St. Catherine's, Puce, Amherstburg and Sandwich. Amherstburg was regarded as an important destination for the Underground Railroad, due to its location at the narrowest point of the Detroit River that links Canada to the United States (GECDSB, 2005).

As a major destination for the Underground Railroad, Windsor emerged as an important industrial centre in the 1850's. Over 700 (30%) of Windsor's population of 2,500 were African-Canadian in the 1800's (GECDSB, 2005). Until recently, most of Canada's Black population was relatively isolated not only from Whites but from other Black communities. The pattern began to break down in the 1930's and 1940's as rural Blacks migrated to the cities in search of jobs (<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com>).

*The Early Years and Education for Blacks in Canada (1800's – 1960's)*

This was a time of immense struggle for escaped slaves who sought freedom and refuge in Canada in pursuit of a better life. For many hundreds, if not thousands of Blacks fleeing the southern United States and forging the passageway to Canada, this was the opportunity to start anew in a land which was foreseen as the Promised Land. Once in Canada, many Blacks came to own land, became farmers, work in the community, and raise their families. Despite these modest gains, many more men and woman fought for basic human rights and freedoms that many of us take for granted today. Blacks felt great discontent when they arrived in this new country. Conditions were so bleak that many Blacks considered moving back to Africa due to the lack of rights and freedoms that they had to deal with. As a result, emigration was considered to be a satisfactory option in order to improve the way of life for Blacks. A Back to Africa movement was initiated by Thomas Peters, a Black Loyalist who was rebelling against the injustices faced by Black settlers (Tulloch, 1975). Emigration was encouraged for several reasons but, it was especially due to Blacks being denied the land and assistance promised to them when they arrived in Canada as Black Loyalists (Sadlier, 1994). In 1791, Peters met with Granville Sharp, the leader of the British abolitionists who were then campaigning for the end of the slave trade who had also founded a colony in Sierra Leone for freed slaves (Walker, 1980). Peters and Sharpe negotiated arrangements for Blacks to go back to Africa, specifically Sierra Leone where they were promised free land and equality (Walker, 1980). After much politicking and planning, over 1000 men, women and children, including preachers and teachers, gathered in Halifax during the winter of 1791-

92 waiting for their ships to arrive to cross the Atlantic back to Africa (Tulloch, 1975).

These lack of rights and freedoms were especially propagated when it came to the issue of education for Blacks. It was not uncommon for Blacks to be illiterate during this period as they were not allowed to learn how to read or write. As well, it was illegal for anyone to teach Blacks how to read and write during the slavery era (Hill, 1981). The process of seeking the opportunity to obtain an education that would be equivalent to that received by their White counterparts would prove to be excruciatingly difficult for several generations of Blacks.

### ***Segregated Schools: The Ontario Region***

Prominent Negro<sup>1</sup> leaders in the early nineteenth-century fought for equality and educational opportunities in the United States and Canada. Only two provinces in Canada made the separate school the practice rather than the exception- Ontario and Nova Scotia (Winks, 1971). Blacks, although aware of this discriminatory practice, initially convinced themselves of the benefits of the segregated school system.

The first record of a Black Canadian receiving an education comes from the Relation of Jesuits' Father Paul le Jeune in 1632 who reported he "had a little savage on one side of me and a little Negro or More on the other" (Winks, 1971, p.364). Education for Blacks after this point was commonly facilitated by church missionaries. Organized education for Blacks in Canada began in 1796 when the Society for the Propagation of

the Gospel sent Benjamin Gerish Gray to Boydville to open a school and work among the “Maroons” (Winks, 1971).

British charitable organizations sponsored schools in most of the Maritime Black communities beginning in the 1780s and, during the 19th century, British and American societies established schools for Blacks throughout Ontario. In addition, the governments of both Nova Scotia and Ontario created legally segregated public schools (<http://www.canadianencyclopedia.ca>).

Elsewhere, in 1820, in Saint John’s, New Brunswick, the Canadian government extended instruction to Black children though in a separate area of the schools. In the smaller towns of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island separate schools were not created by an act of legislature. These were towns with smaller Black populations, as compared to other areas in the province which made the semi-integration process somewhat less problematic. In 1884 the New Brunswick legislature provided a grant for a ‘Negro Day School’ to be established at Loch Lamond, near St. John’s. Forty pupils initially enrolled in this facility (Winks, 1971).

In the Windsor region, it is believed that White settlers did not mind the influx of Black fugitives settling into the area because of their reputed industrious nature however, Whites did not want their children attending the same schools as Black children (Hill, 1981). In the wake of this hostility, Blacks became even more persistent in their fight to gain access to the common schools. The common schools were also referred to as the local public schools. These were the schools where the White residents sent their

children. However, with the continuous rejection, Blacks were forced to create Black schools for themselves (Hill, 1981).

At the time when discrimination and segregation towards Blacks was at its peak, where Blacks were denied admission to the public schools or common schools, leadership amongst Blacks was divided over whether separate schooling was in their interest. The division became apparent in 1850 when the separatist Elgin Association for the Social and Moral Improvement of the Coloured Population of Canada successfully sought incorporation by the provincial legislature. A petition was created which was signed by many who believed segregation was best for all (Winks, 1971).

Despite efforts made by Blacks to attend the common school, they continued to be denied although the great majority of Blacks paid taxes to support the common schools which their children were not allowed to attend. Blacks became more insistent in their quest to challenge legislature for access to these schools. In 1840 the lieutenant-governor told them that they were entitled to admittance. In Toronto, Blacks studied with Whites, and in Brantford Whites studied with Blacks. The Black community in Toronto had opened its own school in 1837, since Black children were excluded from the public schools and, the level of instruction in the Black school was recognized as superior to that offered in the common school. The Whites enrolled with the Blacks until both institutions were united (Winks, 1971).

In the town of Amherstburg, in Essex County, Ontario unofficial segregation existed by 1846. Blacks could not gain admittance to the common schools. The town superintendent, Reverend Robert Peden, after using several tactics in order to persuade

White school administrators to allow Black children in the school (for example telling teachers the government would deny them funding if they denied 'Negros' admission), was unsuccessful in trying to help the Blacks gain admission into the schools. Peden then encouraged them to establish a separate school of their own (Winks, 1971). Racial prejudice was rampant in the schools. Segregation did not only occur in the public school system and, did not only occur with Blacks. The Common Schools Act of 1850 legalized separate schools for Blacks and Catholics in Ontario which was also known as the Separate School Act of 1850 (Winks, 1971).

Where separate schools did not exist, Black children were seated on separate benches. The conditions of the separate schools for Blacks were deplorable. These inferior conditions included lack of competent teachers, irregular attendance on the part of teachers, absent library facilities and resources and, some schools only met as little as three months of the year. In Windsor, Ontario, it is reported that one Black petitioner, Clayborn Harris wrote to the Town of Windsor Board of Education about the unacceptable conditions at one of the Black schools. He pointed out a "coop", which was merely sixteen feet by twenty four feet and was used for thirty five Black students, while the White school nearby remained unfilled (Ryerson papers, Winks, 1971).

In 1851, a separate school was opened under the Common Schools Act for Amherstburg's Black children. However, Blacks in Amherstburg were not content and wanted access to the common school. For example, Mrs. Levi Foster appealed to the District School Board to allow her children to be sent to the common school. This request

was denied on the basis that the separate school "...was sufficient for the wants of the colored (sic) people" (Hill, 1981, pg.154).

As Blacks were continuously being denied access to schools and with the pervasive discrimination throughout the region, Egerton Ryerson encouraged Blacks to sue the school board for damages. Some did, others chose not to out of fear and ignorance (Winks, 1971). However, the years went by and conditions did not improve, many Black parents began to exert their rights and challenged the school system by filing petitions with school boards.

In another local case, that of Stewart and Sandwich East in 1864, Chief Justice William Draper ruled that if a separate school had been established for Blacks, and was allowed to fall into disuse, the Blacks must be admitted to the still functioning common school (Winks, 1971). Further to that, the Town of Windsor also had a segregation legal suite to contend with. In 1883, Windsor had one Roman Catholic School and two Public Schools. One of these schools was the Public Central School and the other, the Coloured School. James L. Dunn, a prominent Black Windsor business man sought to have his young daughter attend the Public Central School at the beginning of the 1883-84 school year. After several sit-in attempts, Mr. Dunn's daughter was denied admission by the school headmaster. Subsequently, Mr. Dunn petitioned the Windsor School Board Trustees. When he was denied once again, he obtained legal counsel. In *Dunn vs. The Board of Education for the Town of Windsor* in 1884, Justice Thomas Ferguson of the chancery division of Ontario's courts denied an application by a Black parent for 'a writ of mandamus to compel the Windsor public schools to admit his child. The

superintendent of schools, who was also a doctor, had filed an affidavit stating that the school in question was full and that to admit the “negro” would be “unsanitary” (Winks, 1971, p.374). According to court records, the plaintiff could not prove that admission was denied on the grounds of colour and that prior consent from the administrator of any school was necessary before a pupil might be transferred from one school to another (Winks 1971, Moore, 2006). Despite long and considerable protest, schools in Windsor remained totally segregated until 1888. It was during this time that Black children were finally granted access into the common schools (Hill, 1981).

Although almost every Black community had access to either a charity or a public school, funding was inadequate and education tended to be inferior. When combined with residential isolation and economic deprivation, poor schooling helped to perpetuate a situation of limited opportunity and restricted mobility (<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com>). In 1855, the announcement came that three new schools would be built in Windsor for the Protestants, the Catholics and the Coloured students. The coloured school was the last to open in 1858 where the Windsor School Board rented a shed, just over 300 square feet (Northstar Cultural Community Centre [NCCC], 2007).

Two of the most highly regarded Black Canadian educators became pioneers in the movement for educating Black children in the Windsor and Essex County region within the segregated school system. Mary Ann Shadd was a teacher at a Black, private school in Windsor until 1853. In 1851, Mrs. Shadd was hired by the Black community in Windsor to teach their children. Mrs. Shadd’s school was located at ‘Windsor’s Old Barracks’, which was old indeed and dilapidated (Hill, 1981). This facility was later

declared unfit for human habitation by the Board of Health. The Black community pitched in and began to raise funds to build a small frame school house. This school, which in later years was to become St. George School, which also became known as the “Negro School” (NCCC, 2007) that was located around the McDougall Street and University Avenue intersection. Today, this is the site of Windsor’s City Hall (Hill, 1981). Additionally, Mary Bibb, a Black educator, opened her doors in 1851 to teach Black students in Sandwich Towne. Both educators taught students who ranged in ages from 4 to 45 years and their classes included lessons in geography, history, arithmetic, grammar, reading and botany (GECDSB, 2005). In 1888 St. George School closed, the year schools legally became desegregated in Windsor (NCCC, 2007). This was the beginning of the integrated Goyeau Street School and three years later in 1891, Mercer Street School opened and was mostly attended by Black students who lived in this predominately Black area of Windsor (NCCC, 2007).

A former resident of this predominately Black neighbourhood and a former student of Mercer Street School (refer to plate A.1), Martha Elliott came from a line of family members who had attended the school. This included her mother, uncle and aunt. The researcher had the pleasure of listening to Ms. Elliott reminisce about her elementary school days. Ms. Elliott, who was born in Windsor and has lived for most of her life, attended Mercer Street School in the 1940’s from Grade 1 to Grade 4. She recalls that the school was a “very disciplined school and the teachers were disciplined and dedicated to their profession.” Ms. Elliott does not recall any Black teachers in the school at the time. The school was basically a mixture of “Jewish kids” and “Black kids” and many of her Jewish classmates went on to become professionals in the Windsor community. Ms.

Elliott delightfully remembers the fact that she did not encounter any racial problems at the school. She feels this was due to the fact that teachers were sensitive to the plight of the Jewish people so, there was no use of any racial epithets from one group to another. Sadly, Ms. Elliott recalls when her family was uprooted, she left Mercer Street School to attend another school on the west-side of town where there were only six Black kids in the entire school. Shortly after she left Mercer Street School, the school was completely destroyed in a fire (Ms. M. Elliott, personal communication, May 6, 2007).

With regard to higher learning or secondary school for Black students, this option was not made available until 1888 when schools became desegregated. Windsor Collegiate, Windsor's first high school (1871) eventually became Patterson Collegiate Institute (NCCC, 2007). Throughout the province, wherever there were Black communities, there were schools for Black students only. However, teachers for Blacks had to use their own money to purchase teaching materials, fuel, and at times cover the cost of the building rental (Sadlier, 1994).

Slowly some of the discriminatory schools fell into disuse and in accordance with the decision of *Stewart vs. Sandwich East*, Blacks were admitted to the common schools increasingly throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century. Mary Ann Shadd established the first racially integrated school in Canada in 1859 in Chatham (<http://womenslegalhistory.stanford.edu>). Regardless of the political gains, there still remained coloured separate schools in Chatham, Sandwich, and Anderdon until 1885. In 1891, Chatham's last separate 'Negro' school closed. Soon afterwards, the separate

school closed in Sandwich and in 1917 Amherstburg shut down its 'Negro' school.

Nonetheless, that act of 1859 remained on the books in Ontario until 1964 (Winks, 1971).

With the onset of school integration in the United States during the 1950's, and the landmark case of Brown vs. The Topeka School Board in 1954, Canada subsequently followed suite. This was done not to follow in the footsteps of the United States, but by this time, segregated schools were no longer considered good Christianity (Winks, 1971). This type of open discrimination would mark the decline of segregated schools in Canada. In 1964, segregated schools were legally abolished in Canada. Although there are differing accounts of the exact year, the last known segregated school in Ontario officially closed their doors in 1967 (GECD SB, 2005). This school is believed to be Colchester S.S No, 11 in Colchester, Ontario (Moore, 2006).

### ***Colchester S.S. No. 11: The Bitter End of an Era***

The Black Community in the Colchester/Harrow region vigorously fought for their children to be integrated into the local school system. In 1964 segregated schools in Canada were ordered to close their doors. However, Colchester S.S. No.11 remained open and all 'Coloured' as well as White children were transported by bus to Colchester S.S. No. 4, right up the road. The Black parents felt the school board was delaying the school closure to prevent the 'Negro' children and the White children from integrating in the schools (Schiff, 1964). Black parents were horrified by the conditions to which their children had been subjected and demanded they learn in a new and safe facility, the same

facilities as the White children. The parents questioned whether a new site for the school had even been considered by the school board since the decision came down to close segregated schools. S.S. No.11 went from a one room school house in its early days to a two room facility by this time. The school is reported to have been condemned by health officers at the time the school board made the purchase (Schiff, 1964). The abominable conditions of S.S. No.11 included rat infestation, poor heating conditions, no running water (children had to bring water from home) and inhumane toilet facilities. It is reported by a former trustee of the school district that the toilet facilities were so inadequate that children who could not wait in line to use the closet sized facility had to relieve themselves on the floor (Schiff, 1964).

The Black Community turned to George McCurdy, who was the president of the South Essex Citizens' Advancement Association to take action with the Colchester South Township School Area Board for the immediate desegregation of the schools. Mr. McCurdy received at least 50 names to his petition and presented it to the school board trustees. Mr. McCurdy reviewed the complaints of the parents and the deplorable conditions of the school (Schiff, 1964).

Mr. McCurdy prepared a brief based on the comments, complaints and concerns of the Black parents and charging the school board with "de facto discrimination and segregation in the area education system." ("Letter Charges School Segregation," 1964). This information was presented to the school board trustees. After much debate back and forth between the two groups and the school board attempting to justify their decision to keep the school open, it was communicated that the Harrow and Colchester school board

were to merge on January 1, 1965. The Ontario Department of Education passed legislation to unify the school boards in townships where there was more than one school board ("Letter Charges School Segregation," 1964). Therefore, the school board was unwilling to make any extensive improvements to the school since it would be closed the following year (Schiff, 1964). It is reported that the school board was to create an 11 room integrated schoolhouse to open in September 1965 (Schiff, 1964). Additionally, the school board made the following comments regarding segregated schools in the area:

"...Colchester South schools are not entirely segregated, for there are Negro children at S.S. 2 in Colchester and at the Harrow school. In addition, Mrs. Beulah Cuzzens, principle at S.S. 11 and a supporter of the board will be taken on the staff of the new school regardless of her being a Negro." (Schiff, 1964).

Lois Larkin, a former elementary school teacher who was raised in Windsor, taught at S.S.No.11 in Colchester at the beginning of the 1954 school year. This was Ms. Larkin's first teaching assignment at the age of 19. Ms. Larkin herself attended many schools in the Windsor area that were known as the "Coloured schools". These included Mercer Street School, then the move to Begley Elementary School (formerly known as Assumption Street School) and then on to Patterson Collegiate Institute, where she jokingly comments "isn't that where everyone (Blacks) went back then." The researcher had the privilege of interviewing Ms. Larkin about her early teaching experiences in the region, Ms. Larkin vividly recalls teaching 52 students in a one room school house in Colchester where she had to shovel coal into the furnace to keep the facility warm and,

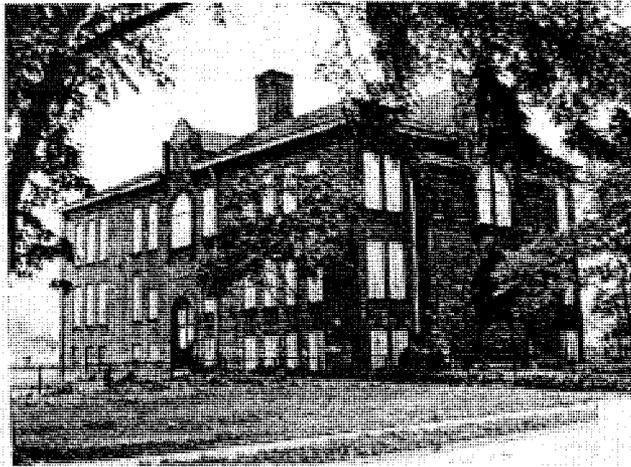
using the washroom facilities meant going outside. The two teachers, along with the students had to use the outhouse behind the building (refer to plates A.2 and A.3).

Ms. Larkin taught with another Black teacher, Mrs. Beulah Cuzzens, who taught at this school until 1967 (GECDSB, 2005). Ms Larkin taught grades 1-4 and Ms. Cuzzens taught grade 5-8. They both taught many local Black families that are still around today; Wilson family, Crosby family, Mulder family and The Grayer family (refer to plate A.4) to name only a few. Ms. Larkin pleasingly recalls a piano being available in the school for music lessons and, Bible readings were incorporated every day as part of the curriculum. Ms. Larkin also speaks of parents being more involved with the children's education at that time and children had much more respect for teachers and authority figures. Many of the local Black families knew Ms. Cuzzens therefore the children knew to be on their best behavior.

Up the road from S.S. No. 11 was S.S. No.4, the "White" school (refer to plates A.5 –A.7). Although Ms. Larkin agrees that segregated schools legally did not exist during this time, school integration was not a part of the culture, and it was "just the way it was" in the Colchester/Harrow region.

Ms. Larkin fondly remembers learning from Ms. Beulah Cuzzens and calls her a great mentor. She strongly believes that students today need encouragement and participation so they are not sliding through the educational system. (Ms. L. Larkin, personal communication, May 3, 2007).

**MERCER STREET SCHOOL**



A.1

**S.S. No.11**



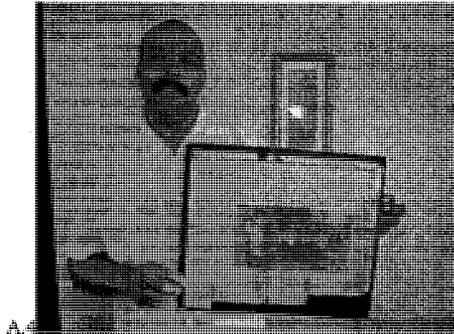
A.2



A.3

S.S. No11 in Colchester, Ontario (May 3, 2007)

**Former S.S. No. 11 Student**



Steven Grayer, a Colchester, Ontario resident, attended S.S. #11 as a child. He currently lives two doors down from the old school house. Mr. Grayer holds the original Globe and Mail newspaper article of November 9, 1964 which profiled the struggle with segregated schools in the area. Mr. Grayer recalls walking to S.S. No.11 while the school busses passed by the Black children as they drove the White children to S.S. No. 4 up the road (May 3, 2007).

**S.S. No. 4**



A.5



A.6



A.7

S.S. No. 4 in Colchester, Ontario (May 3, 2007). This was the school that only white students could attend.

### *The Role of Churches and other Organizations in the Schooling of Black Students*

Some of the churches and mission societies across Canada West were becoming increasingly aware of the disadvantages and their limited educational opportunities for Black settlers. In some of these communities, church members founded schools and teachers to facilitate learning (Hill, 1981). As previously mentioned, education for Black Canadians was not formalized in the early years. It was not uncommon for teaching sessions to take place inside the churches and facilitated by church leaders and missionaries (Winks, 1971). One such school was The Buxton Missionary School at Elgin proved to be so successful, White parents preferred to send their children to this school, rather than their common school (Hill, 1981).

At such a dark era in Canada's history, it is inspiring to know that there were compassionate people in the community who wanted to assist Blacks with the circumstances they were faced with. In an attempt to ensure Black children received a proper education, there were the steadfast efforts of Pastor Dean T. Wagner of St. Alphonsus Church located in Windsor in 1888. He was concerned about the Black population that had migrated from the southern U.S. to his parish, many of whom were orphaned. He set out on a mission to provide education for these Black men and women and their children (<http://www.hdgh.org>). Dean Wagner felt it was necessary to organize a mission for Black people. Once he received permission from the Bishop, he began to raise funds in the community and abroad of a dime or more to create a school for these children (<http://www.hdgh.org>).

One of these fundraising letters reached the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph (RHSJ) in Montreal. Mother Bonneau, Superior at the time, inspired by his devotion that she sent him \$2.50 adding that if he contemplated building a hospital in Windsor they would be happy to help in this enterprise. Dean Wagner seized this opportunity to invite the RHSJ to come to Windsor to establish a hospital with the stipulation that teaching Black children would be the secondary objective (<http://www.hdgh.org>).

After a few years of planning and preparation, the orphanage and school for the Black children were opened in 1890. Regrettably, due to low enrolment this type of apostolic work was not very successful and was discontinued after four years. However, it was important because the interest in this work led to the establishment of Windsor's Hotel Dieu-Grace Hospital (formerly known as Hotel Dieu of St. Joseph Hospital). (<http://www.hdgh.org>).

With increased urbanization Black children were admitted into integrated city schools. Until relatively recently the average Black person had a lower educational level than the average White, but the new migration is changing this situation dramatically. Black immigrants have a higher standard of educational achievement, on average, than the overall Canadian population. In addition, special programs, such as the Transition Year Program at the University of Toronto and, Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, are correcting the long-standing heritage of educational disadvantage (<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com>).

This study is concerned about the pursuit of post-secondary education by Black youth and the socio-cultural and personal influences which filter into their decision

making process. Education in Ontario for Blacks has improved significantly since these early days. Early Black settlers in Ontario fervently fought for many, many long years to garner the right to the same quality education as the Whites received. Today legal separation or segregation based on race does not exist in the school system, although there are some exclusive private schools which may be considered all-White due to student demographics such as socio-economic status. Unfortunately, the significance of this historical struggle and ultimate triumph is lost on many of our youth. Problems with and concerns about Black education remain. There is a strong sentiment that the current structure of the public education system has not brought success to the majority of its Black clients and might be incapable of doing so.

### **Purpose of the Research**

#### ***Education for the Masses: The Struggle Continues***

There was a time when attending an institution of higher learning was only accessible to those privileged enough to afford the opportunity. Today, post secondary education is possible for all students of all races and socio-economic status. Yet, there are many Black students in Windsor, especially Black males who I believe are choosing not to pursue post-secondary education. According to my observations and anecdotal evidence, there are a disproportionate number of female students attending post-secondary institutions as opposed to male students. In my field of employment, I observe this problem first hand. As a Student Recruitment Officer for the University of Windsor, I

travel to a number of secondary schools across the province not only to promote the University of Windsor as the place to pursue post-secondary studies, but, to promote post-secondary education in general. One component of my portfolio consists of visiting secondary schools throughout the Windsor Essex County region. When I conducted my post-secondary school presentations in Windsor secondary schools during the fall of 2005 and 2006, I was bewildered by the small number of Black students that attended these presentations. The numbers were few to none. What is peculiar about this situation is the fact that I visited schools with diverse student populations. I later discovered that students must register to attend these information sessions with their guidance counsellor, who would grant approval or make recommendations as to whether or not a student should attend the session. From my discussion with guidance counsellors, students were allowed to go to certain post-secondary presentations based on their curriculum stream. For example, if a student is on the Academic stream he/she is allowed to attend a university presentation. Students on the Academic stream are enrolled in high school courses that will put them on track for admission to university. A student on the Applied or Essential stream (Applied students would be enrolled in classes which would prepare them mostly for college admission; the Essential stream would prepare students academically for vocational schooling or school to work programs) would not be encouraged or allowed to attend a university presentation. Guidance Counsellors viewed it as a waste of time for the student and the presenter. This led me to question why I was not seeing more Black students at the presentations. Once witnessing the problem first hand, as an educator, it elevated my interest in pursuing this research topic in an attempt to understand the issues Black youth in Windsor face when it comes to pursuing post-secondary education.

This research investigated the post-secondary educational aspirations of Black high school students in Windsor and the factors that influence their aspirations and decisions. There are several factors to be explored such as the amount of attention and career counseling the student has received in school; encouragement from parent(s); academic performance; and financial considerations. For some Black students who may not hail from middle or upper class families, paying for post-secondary education is a serious concern. Allen and Vailancourt (2004) reported that for the year 2000, one in seven bachelor's graduates owed \$25,000 or more in government student loans upon graduating. This is a financial burden that not many people are willing to bear. Furthermore, children and adults living at or below poverty levels do not receive the same academic or vocational training as do people within higher socioeconomic levels (Henriksen, 1996). In addition, according to research conducted in the United States, there are studies indicating that cultural bias in the educational process for African American students does exist. Although schools declare they offer a quality and equitable education for African American students, there are some cultural beliefs that suggest schooling for African American students is deliberately sabotaged (Dei, Mazzuca, McIsac, Zine, 1997).

Research conducted by Dei et al. (1997) has furthered the belief in the dire state of affairs concerning Black youth in Canadian schools and that their total lack of participation in the post-secondary education system is a travesty. Dei et al's research in this area investigated whether Canadian schools are culturally racist and the notion that education in Canada is becoming increasingly racialized and that the current set up of the education system in Canada is failing our students. The findings from Dei et al. found

that many of the students who fail in school are the poor, ethnic minorities and females. They go on to list several contributing issues such as White teachers having low expectations of Black students; minorities are denied respect in Canadian schools; curriculum is no more than 'White' studies; and, Black students and parents are perceived as troublemakers. Furthermore Dei et al. suggest that Blacks are over-represented among the low achieving, bottom-streamed, 'at-risk' students. Blacks have mixed attainments, that is, above average high school completion rates and, below average university completion rates. Based on this, some Canadian schools are changing to include courses on Black history, ESL and, anti-racist education, to name a few. The Royal Commission on Learning (1995) reported on the crisis among Black youth with respect to education and achievement. In Chapter 16 under Equity Considerations, the commission recommended the following

141. That in jurisdictions with large numbers of Black students, school boards, academic authorities, faculties of education, and representatives of the Black community collaborate to establish demonstration schools and innovative programs based on best practices to bring about academic success for Black students
  142. That whenever there are indications of collective underachievement in any particular group of students, school boards ensure that teachers and principals have the necessary strategies and human and financial resources to help these students improve.
- (<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/abcs/rcom/short/short12.html>).

There also exist the issues students are facing with respect to Black youth and identity which have contributed to them falling victim of having to fit into stereotypical roles of 'talking Black' and not being a 'wannabee' White person. This is especially true for those Black youth who have dropped out of school.

The number of Black students not obtaining post-secondary education qualifications is a critical issue in education. As an educator, I feel it is important to assess why many of these students have elected to effectively stunt their intellectual growth and limit their employment and career opportunities and life chances by not pursuing post-secondary education. On a National scale, Marshall (2003) provides research that shows that the level of education obtained by Canadians had grown significantly in the past 50 years. For example, the number of post-secondary graduates increased by 2.7million people between 1991 and 2001. There appears to be significant gains nationally but, the growth amongst the Black student population in Windsor appears to be stagnant. This is based on observational data rather than research. The Windsor school boards claims not to collect data based on the racial background of their students. As a result, the statistical tracking of Black students and their transition from high school to post-secondary is not possible at this time.

### **Educational Significance**

This research is of educational relevance due to the serious growing threat of an immobile, uneducated Black youth community in Windsor. As an educator, I feel it is important to ensure that all children in the community receive a quality education. Educated children will grow into educated adults who in turn become valuable

contributing members of society. It is discouraging when students from one cultural group do not appear to be achieving the same high level educational objectives as their peers from other cultural groups. When Black students choose not to pursue post-secondary education, they are restricting their intellectual growth, limiting themselves in terms of upward social and economic mobility, and faced with significantly less career opportunities. Studies have been conducted that show individuals who pursue post-secondary education will earn significantly more money in their lifetime as opposed to an individual who does not pursue post-secondary education. Statistics Canada reports that the chances of making it to the top earning levels are most directly associated with educational attainment, and particularly with a university degree (Statistics Canada, 2003). Furthermore, 60% of earners in the lowest earnings category (\$20,000 or lower) had no more than a high school education. However, more than 60% of the earners at the top category (\$100,000 or more) had a university degree (Statistics Canada, 2003).

Black students need to be aware of the fact that they can aspire to become professionals in any discipline. They are not limited to careers as singers, rappers, entertainers and athletes which is the stereotypical route for Black people, especially considering that the likelihood of those pursuits coming to fruition are relatively small. A study conducted in the United States reveals that only five percent of high school athletes go on to compete in their sports at the collegiate level. Additionally, those who went to college on athletic scholarships, 65% to 70 % never graduate from the school they represent in sport (Edwards, 1988). Black youth being lured into school sport has a long standing history. Solomon (1992) suggests that student life for Black students in multiracial schools consists of embracing physical activity and extra-curricular sports,

more so than White students. The “White mind, Black ideology” that pervaded the U.S. educational system at the turn of the century as suggested by Tyack (1974) argues that intelligence testing provided the technology for the stereotyping of Whites as mentally superior to Blacks and Blacks as “hand-minded” and “motor minded.” Further research goes on to reveal that those involved with curriculum planning, anxious to reduce and cure truancy among “motor-minded” Blacks in inner city schools, instituted a strong program of physical education and athletics in their vocational and technical schools. This association of Black with physical rather than mental agility gained support from the eugenics movement and still influences the attitudes and behaviors of teachers and students alike today (Kane, 1971; Seldon, 1978). It is not the intention of this research to degrade career choices in the entertainment or athletic field or dismiss the artistic and athletic ability that students may possess. Although these are all great, lucrative careers, there are those in the Black community who believe, based on my experiences that feel these means are the only means to achieve high levels of success. The media propagates this belief onto impressionable youth by heavily presenting images of entertainers and athletes, flaunting their wealth and lifestyle in which a select few clearly display their lack of verbal communication skills and further depict themselves as recipients of an inferior education. Cashmore (1982) believes that Black youth use these successful figures as blueprints for their own development. They engage in role modeling, organizing their personal aspirations and commitments around visible models. As an educator, the ultimate goal is to provide students with the skills and the knowledge they need to make informed decisions. Additionally, it would be my hope to see Black students pursue academics with the same passion and competitive spirit as they pursue

athletics. The greater the number of options presented to students, the more opportunities they have to excel.

Some schools and educators can intentionally or unintentionally perpetuate many Black stereotypes as well. Kai James (2000) speaks of his experience as a Black male student in high school. He speaks of the image of Black students as athletes and Whites as academic achievers. In addition, he felt Black students were at a disadvantage because Blacks were lured by guidance counsellors into taking general-level courses as opposed to advance level courses. This placement was based on skin colour not academic ability (James, 2000). Basic, General, and Advanced levels of streaming were part of the Ontario curriculum where students were placed according to their academic prowess. Students' enrolled in general level courses typically were not "groomed" for university. Today, in the high school system, these streams have now been replaced by Essential, Applied and Academic, with the same connotations and same implications for Black students.

In addition, it is important to note that teachers are to provide all students across the province of Ontario counselling on post-secondary education and career aspirations. According the Ministry of Education, The Guidance and Career Education Curriculum Guide for Grades 11 and 12 (2000) outlines what teachers/guidance counsellors are required to teach students in terms of preparing for life beyond high school. For example, in Grade 11, one of the strands to be taught is Designing Your Future. One of the goals of this unit is to prepare students to make successful transitions to post-secondary work and education or training. In Grade 12 they teach Advanced Learning Strategies: Skills for Success After Secondary School. One of the goals of this unit is to improve students'

learning skills, preparing them to make successful transitions to work and post-secondary education and become independent, lifelong learners. This is a demographic group that is slipping through the educational cracks at an alarming rate and research such as this is important in shedding light on root causes and possible remedial actions.

This research study provides the type of ethnographic research that has never been conducted in the Windsor region. The results of this research would not only be beneficial to the Black community in Windsor, but to all educators and school boards who will find this information useful when teaching Black children as well as for cultural and diversity programming.

Historically Blacks have been regarded as the inferior race. Unfortunately many Blacks were deceived for so long into thinking this was true. This belief has allowed far too many Blacks to set limitations on themselves and, ultimately drowning themselves in self-hatred and self-doubt about the level of success they should achieve, and are capable of achieving. This belief dates as far back as any of us can remember. Carter G. Woodson (1933) touched upon this very issue in his writings about Black mentality in the late 1800's and early 1900's in his book, *The Miseducation of the Negro*. Many of the issues he addressed in 1933 are still relevant today. It is essential to familiarize oneself with this book when studying Blacks in education and/or working with Blacks in any capacity within the educational system. It is astonishing to read how issues concerning Blacks in America have not really improved significantly. This is especially true when it comes to issues such as: Business/Entrepreneurship-many Blacks are still afraid to take that leap and create their own businesses. Worse, when Blacks do create their own businesses, they

are not supported in the form of patronage by their Black consumers. There is also the belief in the fear of failure. Culturally, many Blacks are not risk takers because they do not have a safety cushion or financial safety net. There is the feeling that if I try to build success and wealth on my own and I fail, that's it. I am through because there is no financial safety net securing me (Woodson, 1933). Self-hatred and the lack of confidence in oneself and abilities to succeed based on the colour of their skin. The mentality for many still remains, Blacks are inferior to any other race (ibid). With regard to education, Woodson (1933) discussed the high drop-out rates among Blacks, especially Black males. The lack of direction and focus in school is palpable. Education has seemed to fail Black students. They have either not been challenged enough in terms of the curriculum or, they have been instructed by uncaring teachers (ibid). In the past, Blacks were the outcast in an integrated school. Today, this has changed with the influx of various cultural groups in our schools. However, Black kids are not receiving academic guidance to the same extent as their White peers. Woodson (1933) went on to discuss the Career Paths pursued by Blacks. He feels that there exists a strong lack of self confidence in terms of their skill and ability to pursue a certain career because of the colour of their skin. I feel many strides have been made in this area due to many Blacks becoming lawyers, doctors, surgeons, teachers, dentist, engineers, and entrepreneurs. However, we still have a long way to go so Blacks no longer hear the phrase 'he/she is the first Black to become a .....' because others will have paved the way.

The issues concerning Blacks in America since this book was published over 70 years ago remain problematic issues in Black America today. This book expressed the notion of having a 'slave mentality' in terms of not feeling that one is capable or worthy

of success. Unfortunately, many Blacks still lack the self-confidence and motivation to aim high to achieve the 'American Dream'.

The sentiments expressed by Woodson were made in the American context but, research indicates they are very applicable to Canada. For instance the works by Carl James (1996), George Dei (1997), Rinaldo Walcott (2003), Karen Braithwaite (1996) and Vincent D'Oyley (1978) all speak of the plight of today's African Canadian youth.

There is an old saying that you don't know where you are going unless you know where you have been. In order for educators to understand the problems of today, they must look to the past to seek solutions. This research will provide educators, parents and all Black-residents within the Windsor-Essex County region with useful insight into the origins of school within the education system in Ontario. These turbulent beginnings provide an anchor for Blacks in the community who realize the importance of obtaining an education beyond the idea of becoming knowledgeable. Blacks put their lives on the line in order to seek equality in the education system. Yet today we are dealing with issues of Black youth possibly not adhering to the educational system.

The factors influencing Black students and their pursuit of post-secondary education will provide valuable pieces of information for students, parents and educators. The research reveals whether or not Black students today experience struggles within the education system, if these youth have the desire to attend post-secondary education and, if these students are encouraged to attend post-secondary institutions by their family, teachers, and/or guidance counsellors in high school. As well, this research reveals whether or not these students feel prepared academically to pursue post-secondary

education. Additionally, there is a great deal of concern about Black students being channeled into 'dead-end' courses that will provide them with few options or prerequisites for higher education. This research examined these ideals and provides understanding of this contentious issue.

### **Definition of Terms**

For the purposes of this thesis, the following terms will be defined as follows:

African American:

This term is used to describe Black persons of African decent who are citizens of the United States.

African Canadian:

This term is used to describe Black persons of African descent living in Canada. In this context, African Canadians are defined as individuals who are descendants of Black African slaves who came to Canada along the Underground Railroad and settled in Canada.

Afro-Caribbean:

This term is used to describe Black persons living in Canada or the United States whose country of origin is one of the Caribbean islands.

At-Risk:

This term is used to describe students from any cultural group who are identified as disengaged from the educational process, not achieving academically and are on the verge of drop-out or expulsion from school.

Black:

This term is used to describe all individuals of African or Caribbean descent regardless of the country of origin with brown or dark brown skin pigmentation.

Disengagement:

This is defined as a student's negative attitude towards school and the process of learning. The student begins to withdraw physically and mentally.

Indigenous Blacks: see African Canadians

Streaming:

This is the belief that High School Guidance Counsellors purposely 'stream' Black students into a lower level curriculum stream (Dei et al., 1997). As a result, this would not allow Black students with the opportunity to apply to university due to insufficient courses taken at the secondary school level. Students have three academic streams to choose from depending on their plans to attend college, university or straight to work after graduation from High School. These streams are called Academic (university prep), Applied (university/college prep), Open (apprenticeship or school to work prep).

Underground Railroad:

This was a movement during the 1800's where slaves escaped from the southern United States and headed toward Canada in search of freedom. Many of these slaves settled in various parts of Canada, including Southwestern Ontario where many of the descendents of the Underground Railroad still live today.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This research investigates factors that might affect Black students in Windsor, Ontario in their pursuit of post-secondary education. This literature review will reflect upon research conducted in this field which provided ground work for this research. This chapter will present research conducted in the area of educational aspirations and expectations. Although the main focus of this research is on Black students, the following compilation of research findings delves into important subcategories. These include race and educational aspirations; gender differences and educational aspirations; indigenous African Canadian, African and Caribbean students and their aspirations; racism in education; parental involvement and, issues regarding self-esteem.

#### **Race Differences and Educational Aspirations**

When investigating the educational aspirations of one race or cultural group, it is imperative to explore the educational aspirations of several cultural groups in order to determine if there is a need for concern and to possibly dispel any stereotypical beliefs.

In a study conducted by Davies and Guppy (1998) on race and educational attainment of Canadian students in the Toronto District School Board, it was found that Asians performed academically better than Whites while Black students were over-represented as being low achievers and at-risk. At-risk is defined as those students who were not able to graduate within five years. As well, parental factors were identified as possible determinants of these results. For example, it was found that parental occupation

greatly affected who proceeds further and, Blacks may be at an educational disadvantage due to socio-economic status (S.E.S) (Davies and Guppy, 1998).

Kao and Tienda (1998) researched the educational aspirations of minority youth created and maintained from 8th -12th Grade. Results suggested that family socio economic status not only contributed to ambitious aspirations in 8th Grade but, more important, to the upholding of high aspirations throughout the high school years. The research suggested that Black and Hispanic students were less likely to maintain their high aspirations throughout high school, due to lower socio-economic status. Aspirations among Black students were less concrete than those of White and especially Asian students. Focus-group discussions with adolescents supported quantitative findings that, compared to Whites and Asians, Black and Hispanic youth were relatively uninformed about college, which in turn, hindered the chances of fulfilling educational goals (Kao and Tienda, 1998).

Qian and Blair (1999) examined whether or not there was a difference in the educational aspirations of high school seniors among the different racial and ethnic groups. Using the National Education Longitudinal Study (U.S. based), they explored how human, financial, and social capital affected educational aspirations differently across racial and ethnic groups. While individual educational performance was important for all racial and ethnic groups, results indicated that human and financial capital had a stronger impact on educational aspirations for Whites than for minorities. Parental involvement in school activities, one measure of social capital, had a strong impact on educational aspirations for African Americans and Hispanics. The researchers then explored the causes for racial and ethnic differences in educational aspirations. When

individual characteristics and human, financial, and social capital were introduced, racial and ethnic minorities had greater educational aspirations than Whites. The results suggested that factors affecting educational aspirations are different across racial and ethnic groups and some of the racial and ethnic differences in educational aspirations can be accounted for by some other factor(s), not revealed in this study (Qian and Blair, 1999).

Another study conducted by Caldwell and Siwatu (2003) examined the promotion of academic persistence in African American and Latino secondary school students. A model intervention for academic persistence and motivation of African American and Latino high school students was provided in this article. The researchers suggest a theoretical and practical description of The Educational Navigation Skills Seminar (TENSS) as a demonstration of an educational persistence intervention. By reviewing the higher education literature, there were four protective factors: self-concept, alienation, realistic self-appraisal, and help-seeking strategies were developed into a curriculum of navigation skills. The authors suggested that pre-college programs should provide "affective based" educational navigation skills to prepare African American and Latino high school students, who are seeking to be the first in their families to attain higher education (Caldwell and Siwatu, 2003).

Additional research conducted by Thomas, Townsend and Belgrave (2003) investigated the relationship and combined influence of racial identity and Africentric values on African American children's psychosocial adjustment. Participants included 104 African American 4<sup>th</sup> Grade students (53 males and 51 females) attending an inner-city public school in a northeastern city. Child and teacher ratings were used to assess the

relationship between racial identity, Africentric values, and several indices of child psychosocial adjustment, including child behavior control, school interest, and teacher perceptions of child strengths and problems in the classroom. Child self-esteem and the effects of gender and cohort were used as covariates in several analyses in the study. Overall, findings from the study supported the usefulness of combining racial identity and Africentric values into a single model of ethnic identification for African American children (Thomas **et al**, 2003).

### **Gender Differences and Educational Aspirations**

Many of us growing up have heard of the belief that girls mature faster than boys and more males than females are encouraged to go into math and sciences as opposed to the social sciences, and on and on. The following research will present research finding on the educational aspirations and attainment between the genders amongst the Black students.

Research has shown that there are a disproportionate number of Black females pursuing post secondary education compared to the number of Black males. For example, Cohen and Nee (2000) looked at the educational attainment and sex differentials in African American communities. Results indicated that increasingly, Black women comprised the majority of African Americans receiving undergraduate and graduate degrees. Aggregate data was used to interpret the various explanations both for the decline and stagnation of Black men's participation in post-secondary education and for the educational progress that Black women had made. The research findings revealed that there was not a single factor to explain the disparity (Cohen and Nee, 2000). Possible

determinants included African American males being overrepresented in low ability groups and disproportionately assigned to vocational and special education programs (Bensen and Lareau, 1982; Oakes, 1985; Reed, 1988). As well, negative attitudes and low expectations of school officials toward African American students, males in particular and disciplinary and suspension policies that have disproportionately affected minority males (Brophy, 1983; National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1987; Reed, 1988; Williams and Muehl, 1978). For instance in Ontario, the government introduced the Safe Schools Act in 2000. According to the Ontario Ministry of Education, the purpose of this Act is to ensure that schools are safer learning and teaching environments for students and teachers (<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/safeschl/eng/student.htm>). However the Act is disproportionately affecting visible minority students and disabled students in terms of suspensions and expulsions from school ([http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/resources/discussion\\_consultation/SafeSchoolsConsultRepENG/publication\\_view?portal\\_status\\_message=Mail+sent.](http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/resources/discussion_consultation/SafeSchoolsConsultRepENG/publication_view?portal_status_message=Mail+sent.)).

Also, there is a decline in the number of high school graduates and those students deciding to pursue employment opportunities and deferring post secondary education (Cohen and Nee, 2000). Research conducted by the Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute in 1997 (as cited in Cohen and Nee, 2000) has reported that African Americans tend to be concentrated in schools that appear to be academically inadequate, since schools with a majority of African American students tend to be vocational/technical, special education or alternative schools rather than regular schools –which make for academically unprepared graduates, ill prepared financially and a low-desire for attending post-secondary schools.

Additional factors include the cost of attending college or university and limited financial aid available, African American males entering the military and, the increase of Black men (and women) incarcerated. In 1995 more than 750,000 African Americans were being held in state or federal penitentiaries and an additional 2 million were under correctional supervision (Bureau of Justice, 1995). It was predicted then that by the year 2000, 1 in 10 African American men would be in prison and they would account for nearly 50% of the prison population. Interestingly though Black women are outperforming men in the academic area however, they are the fastest growing population in American prisons, increasing by 78% between 1989 and 1994 (Magagnini, 1999).

Another study which spoke to the sex differentials in post-secondary education was conducted by Rouse and Austin (2002). The research was a cross cultural study that distinguished the difference between gender, motivation and academic performance. Findings revealed that African-American females showed the most motivation in beliefs about ability, control, and value or importance of education. Survey data revealed patterns of significance within-ethnic-group differences that varied across ethnic groups. In general, males demonstrated more motivation than females, though high-ability African American females showed the most motivation in beliefs about ability, control, and value or importance.

McMillian (2003) discussed the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the impact it has had on African American male students. The law was created in an attempt to create a more level playing field for disadvantaged students and helping to increase achievement scores by providing more education funding to certain school districts across the United States. Engagement studies suggested that African American students

and in particular, African American male students, were susceptible to academic disengagement. Specifically, research has suggested that education professionals' stereotypes about the ability of African American males were partly responsible for the disengagement and lagging achievement of African American male students in school (McMillian, 2003).

Roderick (2005) conducted a longitudinal study on the successful transition to high school among a group of African American male students. Two areas were studied, the academic performance prior to and after the transition to high school and, the school, familial, and developmental processes that helped to shape the school performance of African American male adolescents during this period. Thirty-Two African American students were studied from 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade. The researcher then presented an in-depth qualitative look at the experiences of the 15 males in the study. Having looked carefully at individual students' experiences, the research sought to gain insight into how school and families could better assist African American males in negotiating the tasks of adolescence and in promoting positive school engagement. Some of the findings included a link between disengagement from school and poor academic performance, as well, some students were found to have pursued degrees and others were unemployed or otherwise disengaged.

### **Indigenous African-Canadian, African, and Caribbean Students**

Just as there are differences amongst the races in terms of educational aspirations and attainment, within the Black culture, these aspirations vary as well. This series of

research findings will reveal information about attitudes and beliefs regarding education within sub-groups of the Black population.

One important aspect of this research is determining whether or not there exist differences amongst Blacks from various cultural groups towards post-secondary education. Solomon (1992) provided information regarding an ethnographic case study of the school experience of West Indian youth at a secondary school in Toronto. The study discussed how minorities failed to achieve upward social mobility through education and examines how schools contribute to the failure of Black students. The research brought several issues to the forefront. The main thread of the research centred on the unrepressed Black student subculture that exists in many inner city schools and the perceived bad attitudes of Black students by school administration. Certain attitudes, rituals, and styles of behavior, perceived as characteristic of Black culture, solidify Black identity and at the same time alienate the dominant-group culture of the school. Because these behaviors are at variance with the established social-order, indulgent students came into conflict with the authority structure of the school. The language patterns and communicative style among the Black students, specifically students of West-Indian descent, caused some opposition at this school, made these students a unique and distinct group. Their language form referred to as patois, "pidgin English" or Jamaican talk, departs from standard English in vocabulary and syntax. Solomon (1992) asserts that the use of this language, which is used throughout the school within the West-Indian subculture, dominates their school life for two reasons. One, it is an adequate functional language for Black Jamaican immigrant children who are more accustomed to speaking

this dialect than standard English. Second, it has become a major dynamic in Black youth solidarity, excluding authority from the communication process.

With regards to student achievement Wright and Tsuji (1984) found that West Indian students were represented in all levels of high school programs, from low-level vocational to high-level university orientated programs. However, data routinely collected by the Toronto Board of Education since 1970 showed that Blacks and Native Canadians have the highest representation in the low-level vocational and occupational programs and the lowest representation in high-level university orientated programs. Instead, they were being channeled into vocational and technical programs that signify status immobility and academic failure.

Solomon's research reports on the marginalization of Black students in school athletic programs and their unrealistic educational and career aspirations in those areas (Solomon, 1992). He reports the case of eight West-Indian boys who were at the centre of his research. They formed a clique of Black male athletes in the school, who move from one sports team to another. For these "Jocks", it was suggested that sports serve three main functions. First, it helps in the formation of Black culture and identity. Second, it preserves machismo and third, it is pursued as a viable channel for socio-economic advancement.

Trusty (2002) also studied the educational aspirations of African American students. His longitudinal study looked at background variables and family variables of students who were in the 8th Grade. Behaviour variables were then assessed when the same students were high school seniors. The subjects consisted of 875 adolescent African American women and 874 African American men from the National Educational

Longitudinal Survey (1988). Path models revealed differing processes for women and men. For African American women, the strongest direct effects were from reading scores and parents' expectations, and effects were positive. Other significant positive direct effects were from adolescents' high school involvement, socio-economic status, and school based parental involvement. There was a significant negative effect of high school behavior problems on educational expectations. Also, there were no significant effects of high school behaviour problems for women (Trusty, 2002).

The strongest direct effects on African American men's educational expectations were from mathematics scores and SES, and these effects, and high school behavior problems had negative direct effects. The direct effects of students' high school involvement and school based parental involvement were positive and significant, but somewhat weaker than other significant direct effects. The only direct effect that was not significant was that of eighth-grade reading scores. With regards to high school behavior problems for men, there were significant negative effects from students' high school involvement, home based parental involvement and mathematic scores. Overall, effects of early academic performance variables were strongest, followed by effects of family variables and high school behavior variable (Trusty, 2002).

Campbell and Cohen (2004) explored the academic performance differences between African American and Afro-Caribbean males (subjects were also self-identified as African Latino and/or Continental African). Research was conducted on Caribbean and African American male undergraduates at an urban university in the United States with a large minority student population. Factors assessed were grade point average as well as, attitudes and beliefs toward academic achievement. Interestingly, results of

questionnaires and scale data discovered no significant differences between subgroups in study habits, attitudes, or grade point average. Significant between-group differences were found based on factors such as parental socioeconomic status and level of education. For example, the fathers of Continental African subjects were of higher occupational status and education attainment than those of the other participants (Campbell and Cohen, 2004). Additionally, students with parents of higher socioeconomic status had stronger study habits and attitudes towards education. These same results were found amongst those students whose fathers had achieved a higher occupational status than the other subjects (Campbell and Cohen, 2004). As well, results indicated that African Americans fell behind their peers of other ethnic groups in terms of academic achievement and performance.

### **Racism in Education**

Racism and education have been two sides of the same coin since the beginning of schooling for Black children in North American. The research findings discussed in this section will provide information on current attitudes and beliefs within the educational system and how systemic racism is providing Black children with very little opportunity to succeed.

Factors such as racism cannot be overlooked as possible barriers to student success in high school. Dei (1999) researched the matter of systemic racism in schools. He argued that race is physical, social and cultural. Denying race is denying oneself. Dei's research shows that some students continually complain of low teacher expectations of Black students. There is the insidious attempt to deracialise students by

failing to acknowledge that racelessness is a privilege that is only afforded to White/dominant students (Dei, 1999).

Dei (1999) goes on to explain that race hierarchies shape and/or demarcate our schools, communities, workplaces, social practices and lived experiences. He argues that there is a 'normality' to systemic racism that is tempered with utter abhorrence when we are consciously aware of its existence. Our society is racially stratified. Dei's research findings also lead him to critical theorists who view schools as contested public spheres and political sites for the reproduction of power and social inequality. More importantly, the researcher sees structural poverty, racism, sexism and social and cultural differences as consequential to the schooling outcomes of minority youth (ibid).

Racism is manifested in many different forms. Henry and Tator (1994) examined the practice of racism in Canadian Society. The researchers describe racism in Canada as Democratic Racism. Democratic Racism is defined as an ideology that permits and justifies the maintenance of two apparently conflicting sets of values. One set consists of a commitment to a democratic society motivated by egalitarian values of fairness, justice and equality. There also exist a second set of attitudes and behaviours that include negative feelings about people of colour that carry the potential for differential treatment or discrimination. The researchers report on the changing and contradictory nature of racism by reporting that racism manifests itself within people, within groups, organizations and institutions. The researchers also suggest the subtle nature of racism and how it is expressed indirectly to the point where the intended person or group may not even be aware of its existence (Henry and Tator, 1994).

Henry (1978) conducted a survey to assess the racist beliefs and practices of Canadians. Results indicated that 16% of Canadian adults are confirmed bigots and 35% hold intolerant views. The reality is that people, the majority, will want to maintain the status quo in order to maintain or increase their power. It is believed that this theory carries over into the educational system as well. The researchers discuss several forms of racism that we experience today. These include: *The New Racism* which is somewhat overt and is concerned with maintaining culture and homogeneity. *The Aversive Racist*, who are those individuals that are prejudice but, do not act on their beliefs. They simply avoid contact with Blacks and other minority groups but, put on a façade when faced with unavoidable situations which require integration with Blacks. *Symbolic Racism* is the belief in maintaining the status quo. Symbolic racists do not want to see minorities in positions of authority. This method is executed through legal maneuvering and political power. They want to maintain that level of superiority and they do this with attempts to rationalize their beliefs and attitudes. Beliefs such as, 'there is no such thing as racism in Canadian society.' Also, suggestions to the fact that we are all victims of discrimination which minimizes the experiences of true inflicted within marginalized groups. There are also beliefs that blame the racial divide on the influx of new immigrants and race mixing and the notion that minority groups just refuse to 'fit-in.'

In order for students of all racial backgrounds to feel welcomed and comfortable in their learning environment, it is important for educators to implement anti-racism education into their schools and classrooms. Dei (1996) studied the importance of Anti-racism education in schools. He argues that to study racial discrimination fully, you have to investigate all forms of discrimination; race, sex, religion, class, sexuality-social

justice perspective. Anti racism education is a collaborative effort within the community which would involve working with stakeholders such as parents, business owners, church leaders, etc. Anti racism education must delve into the histories of cultural groups and consist of more than just having cultural days in the school once a year. There are several Principles of anti-racism education which the researcher discusses in this study that would be helpful for educators and for students and self esteem issues. These include:

The first principle recognizes the social effects of race. The concept of race is central to anti-racism discourse as a tool for community and academic political change.

Second, one cannot understand the full social effects of race without comprehension of the intersections of all forms of social oppression.

Third, questioning the relative power and privilege positions of members of society. More specifically, White privilege.

Fourth, the marginalization of certain voices in the community and the delegitimation of the knowledge of and experience of subordinated groups in the education system.

Fifth, every form of education must provide for a holistic understanding and appreciation of the human experience.

Sixth, the link between identity and school and the schooling process and educational outcome.

Seven, the pedagogic need to confront the challenge of diversity and differences in Canadian society.

Eight, acknowledge the traditional role of the education system in producing and reproducing not only racial, but also gender, sexual and class-based inequalities in society.

Nine, the school problems experienced by the youth cannot be understood in isolation from the material and ideological circumstances in which the students find themselves.

Ten, questioning the family or home environment as a potential source of the problems some youth experience in relation to school. Being careful not to deny or shift the blame. (Dei, 1996, pp. 27-35).

Farkas (2003) examined racial disparities in education, focusing on those that might be attributable to discrimination. The researcher asserts that Black students start out 'disadvantaged' in the school system and do not enter the school system on the same, level playing field as their Caucasian peers. The researcher presents information on what

is known about determinants of achievement and the magnitude of racial discrepancies in such achievement, discusses the most likely sources of discriminatory behaviors by teachers and by school district personnel, presents directions for action, and discusses likely future directions for the field. First, the research tells us that children must start out on the right path in order to ensure future success. This begins at the pre-school level. On average, African American, Latino, and American Indian children begin kindergarten or the first grade with lower levels of school readiness than do White and Asian Children (Farkas, 2003). The researcher goes on to claim that African American children begin elementary school approximately one year behind Whites in vocabulary knowledge; they finish high school approximately four years behind Whites. In other words, vocabulary knowledge of a Black seventeen year old is equivalent to that of a White thirteen year old (Phillips, Crouse, and Ralph, 1998). Farkas also suggest that a learning gap exists due to Black students entering lower income and ethnic minority elementary schools with lower skills and maturity, a less-demanding curriculum is taught in these schools, lower grades are given and, a higher percentage of children are retained in grade or placed in special education (Farkas, 2003).

Booker-Baker (2005) conducted research which indicates that schooling for African American students is deliberately sabotaged; despite their attempts to perform well academically in order to achieve some level of upward social mobility. To ensure success for all students, awareness and sensitivity to diversity issues should reflect the importance of presenting different cultural perspectives in education. For instance, it is reported that schools promote educational inequality through policies that allow large percentages of African American students to be tracked into programs that deny them a

challenging education environment (Cotton, 1991). The researchers also suggest that in many educational settings today, Black students receive more negative behavioral feedback and more mixed messages than do White students. African American students are expected to be difficult in school and are treated differently from their White counterparts. Another argument is that of biased IQ tests and standardized testing. This has sparked a longstanding debate about the cultural bias of standardized testing measures used in the United States. It is also argued that these tests in Ontario are biased against immigrant and aboriginal children. The researchers give consideration to the belief that some teachers who have preconceived notions about the inferior skill levels of the Black children in their classrooms and Black students are not given the encouragement to succeed in school (Booker-Baker, 2005).

Braithwaite (1989) explored the history of the plight Black youth have experienced with the education system. The research examines issues of self-worth and feelings of inferiority, Black students feelings in the classroom amongst their peers and, stereotypes about Black students and their academic abilities. The researcher also probes into the history of segregated schooling in Canada and the long struggle Blacks have had with education in Ontario in being under serviced which has lead to Blacks lagging behind (Toronto Board of Education, 1987). The education system has had a “long debilitating process of the negation of Black people’s aspirations in Canada...” (Braithwaite, 1989).

For over 20 years, public interest groups in Toronto have been discussing and seeking solutions for the problem of Black student drop in school and overall disengagement with the school system (Braithwaite, 1989). It took approximately 10

years for educational institutions and governments to recognize the inequality as a serious problem. This led to the development of the race relations policies by the Ontario Ministry of Education in 1987 (Braithwaite, 1989).

With regards to school perception of Black students, The Organization of Parents of Black Children documented a list of complaints and observations with the education system in Toronto. These included the low level of teacher expectations of Black student achievement; the high drop-out rate among Black students; the assumption that Black people are not part of the fabric of Canadian society; and, the over representation of Black students in non-academic schools (Braithwaite, 1989).

### **Disengagement from the Educational System**

How are the seeds of disengagement from the educational process planted into the psyche of many Black youth? Dei et al. (1997) investigated the schooling of Black/African Canadian high school students in Ontario and their experience with the education system. This study also incorporates research findings from a Board of Education in Toronto that Black students were not achieving as well as their peers from other ethnic groups. Additionally, research findings from this school board showed that among Black students who enrolled in high school in 1987, there was a 42% dropout rate by 1991.

The researchers also examined several factors which can lead to Black students feeling disengaged from the educational process. During their three year study, the researchers interviewed several students who discussed their positive and negative experiences in High School. These factors included such variables as teacher attitudes,

lack of parental interest or involvement, family life, peer pressure, racism and other life pressures. The study revealed many issues Black students are faced with in public high schools and explored causes that would influence them to leave high school before graduating. It is important to note how the researchers define a 'drop-out'. Based on their research, a student is given this label based on their behaviour which includes skipping classes, hanging out, acting out and not being involved in the formal aspects of the school (Dei et al, 1997). The researchers identify these characteristics as the first signs of student disengagement from school. Reason for dropping out included factors such as the 'hidden curriculum' and the attitudes and behaviours of teachers and other school personnel who may affect a student's decision to leave school. Other factors suggested for playing a role in a student's decision to drop-out of school include financial concerns, family problems, pregnancy, racial problems in the school, relationships with teachers and lack of academic success. Students also reported feelings of not belonging.

The researchers also report on feedback received from teachers and their notion of disengagement process for Black students. Some teachers suggested the difficulty of a single parent raising a child and having less time to spend with the child. Teachers also, feel that parents often lack the educational background needed to assist their children and the perceived overall ignorance of the school system. Teachers and students reported on student's lack of respect for the school system and the absence of effective disciplinary action to enforce the rules and regulations. Furthermore, some of the teachers report that the schools are not adequately addressing the needs of students who feel that school is meaningless and boring. The researcher's conclude that schooling for African Canadian

youth is sometimes sabotaged and, students are sometimes at school physically but not mentally.

The research also presents views of dropping out of school by those who have dropped out, those who are contemplating dropping out and, those who are determined to stay on the right path, despite the obstacles. For those students choosing to 'drop back in' the school system, they either return to their old high school or alternative institutions. Furthermore, the drop-outs that participated in the research expressed views of pain and a stigma associated with dropping out of school which made them feel less intelligent and mitigated against their return to school (Dei et al., 1997).

Furthermore, Dei et al. (1997) analyzed information from students who have witnessed or who have been victims of the 'streaming' and labeling that take place in the secondary school system. The researchers interviewed several high schools students who shared their experiences with this type of treatment. These reports not only show Black student's desire to learn, but the lack of respect these students feel that teachers have towards them. It is clear to see how the level of frustration can build for the students where they would just choose not to deal with these situations on a daily basis. The findings show that Black students experience a lack of encouragement, verbal abuse, ridicule and public humiliation. They continue to perpetuate the myths and stereotypes about Blacks in schools.

Braithwaite and James (1996) also investigated issues dealing with disenchanted youth and drop out in High School. Their findings indicate that Black youth from the Caribbean, have been labeled as having psychological problems, slow learners or learning disabled, suffering from attention deficit disorder, hyperactivity and being

assigned to special education classes (Christensen, Thornley-Brown and Robinson, 1980). Additionally, research has shown that Blacks place high value on education –they see it as a means to ‘making it’. For Caribbean students education is important as a means of mobility. Therefore, they are more inclined to be motivated and more achievement oriented and concerned about achieving high grades than Anglo-Canadians (Calliste, 1982). In addition, research conducted in the 1970’s and 1980’s reveal evidence of Black students regularly being streamed into lower level or vocational classes in Ontario. This evidence is based on a twenty year study conducted by the Toronto Board of Education which showed Black students were second to Aboriginal students as being highly represented in basic level programs of study (Wright, 1971; Deosaran, 1976; Wright and Tsuji, 1984; Cheng, Tsuji, Yau and Ziegler, 1987; Cheng, Yau, and Ziegler, 1993). Ultimately, the researchers believe that racism towards Black students is and has been the source of Black student’s disenchantment with school.

### **Parental Involvement**

A presumed essential component to a child’s education is parental involvement. Desimone (1999) examined the link between parental involvement and student achievement in school as well as race and income as potential factors in their academic success. Data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 was used to examine the relationship between 12 types of parental involvement and 8th-Grade mathematics and reading scores. The participants were Asian, Black, Hispanic and White students. Results indicated that there were no statistically significant difference in the relationship between parent involvement and student achievement according to the

students' race-ethnicity and family income (i.e., low and middle), nor between how achievement was measured, type of involvement, and whether it was reported by the student or parent.

Goodall (1996) suggest that in order for the Black parents to ensure the academic success of their children, they will need to work more closely with the school in terms of collaborative and co-operative Learning. This process would involve the parents, teachers, and the community working together in the educational process. Their study shows that this partnership helped to improve behaviour, attitudes and academic performance of Black children in the featured educator's classroom. It is important to note that the teacher/researcher of this study feels these results did not occur solely because the teacher/researcher was Black. He points out that the White children in the class also showed noticeable improvement using the model.

Gutman and McLoyd (2000) conducted a study of African American families living in poverty and parents' management of their children's education. In the United States, 33% of African Americans are living below the poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau, 1997). Using African American parents' answers to survey questions, the researchers examined variation in management of their children's education within the home, school, and community as a function of child academic achievement. Researchers felt in order to understand the factors that contribute to academic success of these students, they must examine the environmental elements surrounding them. Parents of high and low achieving students emphasized the importance of education, recognizing their role in helping their children. Results highlighted ways that these parents supported their children's academic achievement which includes verbal praise and rewards systems. For

instance, all parents surveyed reported that they assist their child(ren) with homework. Parents of high achieving students mentioned using specific strategies to assist their child(ren), for example supervising homework sessions, tutoring, having the kids do schoolwork during summer vacation. Also, more parents of high achievers reported being more involved with the school. This involvement was in order to maintain positive relationships with the school and to ensure success and progress. Parents of low achieving students were more likely to be in contact with the school if there were issues involving the child's ability or attitudinal problems. High achieving students tended to be more involved in extracurricular activities than low achieving students. As well, both groups of students were engaged in different types of activities. High achievers were more involved with art compared to low achievers. More parents of high achievers than low achievers discuss having their children involved with these activities as a means of encouraging their child's development.

Jeynes (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of 21 studies to determine the impact of parental involvement on minority students' academic achievement. Students were divided into six different racial groupings which consisted of the following: (a) mostly African American, (b) all African American, (c) mostly Asian American, (d) all Asian American, (e) mostly Latino and Asian American, (f) all Latino and Asian American. The impact of parental involvement was significant for all minority groups studied. Also for all groups, parental involvement affected all academic variables by at least two tenths of a standard deviation unit. However, among some of the races, certain aspects of parental involvement had a greater impact than others. Parental involvement was revealed to have benefited African Americans and Latinos more than it did Asian Americans.

Additionally, Overstreet, Devine, Bevans and Efreom (2005) looked at parental involvement in children's schooling. Instrumental variables identified included parent demographics, attitudes about education, school receptivity and community. All participants in the study were mothers or female caregivers who ranged in age from 20-78 years old. Two groups of students were examined; elementary and middle/high school students. Results indicated there was a strong correlation between parental age and education level and educational aspirations of the child. Older parents/caregivers reported completing fewer years of education than younger parents. Parents with higher levels of education had higher educational aspirations for their children. In addition, parental educational aspirations for the child and community engagement behaviors were significant predictors for both groups of parents. Parent level of employment was a significant predictor of school involvement however, only for parents of middle or secondary school students. Overall, parents with consistent employment, higher educational aspirations for their children, and more positive perceptions of school receptiveness to parental involvement, were more likely to be involved in their children's schooling.

### **Self-Esteem**

Researchers have used cultural differences to explain the high rate of school failure among students of colour. Jerry Lipka (2002) conducted a qualitative study that found "students faced with pressure to deny their heritage and embrace the values and goals of Western Schooling, chose instead to resist. The schools that participated in the study found assimilation costs were high, native cultures were weakened, students were

alienated and academic advancements and students' benefits were low. Self esteem issues were prevalent especially considering the lack of role models in the form of Black teachers for students and parents to connect with. The issue of self esteem within young children is imperative to explore in terms of engaging them in the educational process. Low self esteem is a common denominator for some African American students. The researcher attests that it can be caused by an infection within the educational system and can be contaminated by negative organisms such as racism and unequal treatment. Like other infections, low self-esteem alters natural functioning (Ballantine, 2001). Prevailing research has shown that "increases in self-esteem accompany an increased awareness..." thus positively affecting the students' attitudes toward learning (King, 1997, page 2). In the case of *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, the court ruled that low self-esteem "affects the motivation of a child to learn, and has a tendency to retard children's education and mental development." (Steele, 1992, p.68).

According to King (1997) self-esteem should receive as much emphasis as academics. Early research on self-esteem and correlations with achievement showed there was considerable emphasis on students' ability and family background. In addition, African American students feel they must assimilate with the school culture and climate by "giving up many particulars of being Black – style of speech and appearance, value, priorities and preferences", in order to succeed (Steele, 1992, p.70). The assimilation process is difficult for children as they are not able to find 'self' presented in the schools. This in turn sends covert messages to the African American students that their beliefs and values are insignificant. Therefore students may become discouraged and find it hard to succeed in school because school administrators are unable and unwilling to work with

them until the children conform to traditional characteristics (Hale, 2001; McDavis, Woodrow, Parker, 1995).

Roberts-Fiati (1996) reports on societal expectations and group norms amongst Black youth. The researcher's main focus is that of building self-esteem in children which begins the very moment they first attend school. The researcher touches upon the disturbing trend regarding Black students and their sole interest in becoming sports stars and making it big in the entertainment field, rather than focusing on academics.

Roberts-Fiati (1996) explored the issue of inclusive schooling which would involve recognizing all cultures in the classroom everyday as part of the overall learning process to be integrated into the teaching and learning curriculum. It is suggested that feeling accepted in the school system is an important factor that starts from the first day of school. The researcher argued that teachers must have lessons and classroom environments designed in such a way as to honour and respect children of various cultural backgrounds. This will make children feel accepted and respected in the school environment.

The researcher reports on the relationship between self-esteem and student achievement. When Blacks or any other ethnic minority group are not represented in the classroom either in books, peers, or other classroom materials, these are all clear but subtle messages of exclusion in the schools. Which in turn, work to create feelings of isolation which makes it difficult for children to feel a sense of affiliation. The emotional outcomes of acceptance are the development of a positive sense of self, motivation and pride, whereas exclusion creates very negative emotions like self-doubt and shame.

Ultimately these feelings will interfere with learning and motivation (Roberts-Fiati, 1996).

The literature reveals the issues that Black students in the United States and Canada experienced and the several pre-existing factors that could influence a Black student's decision to pursue post-secondary education. There are several themes that emerged from the literature review. These include the differences between the races in terms of aspirations, between the sexes, and between Blacks of various cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, the systemic racism students experience within the educational system, their subsequent disengagement from the educational system, parental involvement, and issues dealing with their level of self-esteem.

The research will reveal whether or not these were issues faced by the participants in the study and if these factors truly influence their pursuit of post-secondary education.

## CHAPTER III

### DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### Overview of Methodology

This study employed a Mixed-Methods research approach. This is an approach which involves collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell, 2003). Additionally, this technique is characterized by the following set of procedures:

- Sequential; in which the researcher seeks to elaborate on or expand the findings of one method with another.
- Concurrent; in which the researcher converges quantitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem.
- Transformative; in which the researcher uses a theoretical lens as an overarching perspective within a design that contains both quantitative and qualitative data.

(Creswell, 2003)

Based on this understanding, for the purposes of this research study, the following will be used to define the mixed methods approach:

The class of research where the research mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study.

(Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.17)

A mixed-methods approach was selected for this research study because of its flexible approach to research which allows for more in-depth analysis of the research

findings. It also allows for the researcher to expand on the understanding from one method to another and to converge or confirm findings from different data sources (Creswell, 2003). This research also involves challenges for the researcher with regards to the amount of time spent analyzing text and numeric data.

The type of mixed-methods approach used for this research was the Concurrent Nested Strategy. This method is characterized by its use of one data collection phase, during which quantitative and qualitative data are collected simultaneously (Creswell, 2003). A nested approach has a predominant method (quantitative or qualitative) which guides the research and is nested or embedded into the corresponding approach (quantitative or qualitative) (Creswell, 2003). This approach is used so the researcher can gain a broader perspective that could not be achieved by using one method alone (Creswell, 2003). Using an approach with a supplemental strategy such as this are used in mixed-methods analysis to increase the scope and comprehensiveness of the study. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) suggest that in a quantitative study, that these strategies then aid in the interpretation of data in the core project, provide explanation for unexpected finds or supporting results. In a qualitative study, the supplementary strategies serve one of the three functions:

First, they may be used to identify notions, ideas, or concepts that are then incorporated into the main study;

Second, they may provide different information or insights as to what is happening in the data as well as different explanations or ideas about what is going on –ideas that are subsequent interviews or the collection of additional information to verify emerging theory;

Third, they may be used to reexamine a category in the main study from a different perspective. (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003).

For this research study a qualitative approach has been imbedded into this predominately quantitative approach to this study. This is due to the fact that qualitative data enhances the numerical data that was collected.

### **The Context of Study**

The intention of this research was to investigate the various factors at play which impact on the post-secondary aspirations and pursuits of Black high school students in Windsor. The research sought to unravel the fundamental dynamics and complexities of this issue in identifying the aspirations of Black students towards higher education and the obstacles that stand in the way of their fulfillment of these aspirations. The research focused on the post secondary educational aspirations of Black high school students in Windsor and the personal, socio-economic, socio-cultural, gender related, career counseling initiatives, among others, that shape their aspirations. The research reports on findings regarding whether or not these students aspire to post-secondary education and what factors prevent students from actually pursuing post secondary education. An important issue will be the realistic ideals of students' aspirations in the context of their academic performance and knowledge of University and College requirements. The interviews were conducted amongst Black students, in grades 9 to 12 in various high schools across Windsor.

The study took place at the Sandwich Teen Action Group (S.T.A.G) Community Centre and the Youth Connection Association Community Centre. These community

centres provided two different environments. One community centre is a well respected organization in the community which is regarded as a safe haven for youth and provides programming for teens which helps keep youth off the streets. It is located in a former catholic elementary school in the heart of an urbanized west-end corridor in the city.

Many Black youth frequent this facility after school as a safe place to ‘hang out’ and have fun with friends or participate in recreational activities such as basketball. The other community centre, is another highly respected community organization that is located in the centre of the Windsor’s down-town core. This centre facilitates many tutoring, mentoring and after-school programs primarily for Black youth. Although these two community centres cater to a large Black population, it is important to note that these facilities are frequented by youth of all cultures. These centres were selected for this study because of the prompt rate of response they could provide in order to get the research approved relatively quickly. Also, these organizations had the desired target population of students for this study.

## **Research Participants**

### ***The Population***

The ideal strategy when designing this research was to have the participation of at least 30 subjects for this research. Creswell (2003) suggests 30 participants as being a good size for this type of ethnographic study.

### ***The Sample***

A fairly large representative sample was desired to ensure a wide cross-section of views was presented. Ultimately, 29 participants were involved in this study. The breakdown included 15 males and 14 females who participated. Additionally, the sample included Black students from different cultural backgrounds – Canadian born, continental Africans, Caribbean and Iraq.<sup>2</sup> Subjects comprised of a mixture of grade 9 to 12 students attending local secondary schools. The age range of these students were between 15-19 years of age. Mixture of single parent households, various career, aspirations, various academic levels, various cultural backgrounds, different schools and school boards.

In addition, it was vital that a fair number of subjects were in either grade 11 or 12 as it was essential to assess the aspirations of students who were graduating from high school in the near future. Students that were selected attended local public and or catholic schools and frequented the selected local community youth centres.

### ***Recruitment Process***

The objective was to recruit Black students who attended local secondary schools. Black students were canvassed by the researcher and asked to volunteer in the research project.

The first step was obtaining approval from the Research Ethics Board at the University of Windsor. This proved to be a daunting task as it took several attempts before receiving permission to proceed from the Board. This was due to the fact that the Board wanted to ensure that the research objective was clearly defined. Once this step was complete, contact was made with the Directors of the local youth community centres that were frequented by Black high school students. Preliminary details were provided to

them regarding the research and the purpose. Letters were later drafted and sent to provide the Directors with more indepth information about the study (Appendix D & E). The purpose of these letters was to seek permission in recruiting their students to participate in the study.

Once consent was given by the Directors, posters regarding the research study were created and put on display in their organization in order to recruit participants (Appendix F). Those who volunteered to participate in the study were provided with a proposed schedule as to when the researcher would be at the community centre to meet with them to discuss post-secondary education. This would then allow the researcher to meet the students in a group format or for one on one discussions where a full explanation of the research project would be provided. Once students gave their permission, the researcher began administering the survey and collecting data from the participants. There were instances where the researcher was approached by students who did not sign-up to participate in the study. Based on their keen interest, an interview was granted once a full explanation of the research topic was given, the purpose of the research was provided and, issues of confidentiality were discussed.

### **Research Questions and Hypothesis**

This research will address three main questions:

1. What fundamental factors shape the aspirations of Black high school students towards post-secondary education?
2. What is the nature of the relationship between students' aspirations and actual pursuit of post-secondary education and what factors determine this relationship?

3. How prepared are students for post-secondary education? (This will relate to stream, credit accumulation, knowledge of university or college requirements, etc.)

Based on repeated themes found in the literature, this general question was divided into a number of smaller, more specific questions. These include: socio-economic status; cultural background; career counselling; family background and; gender.

### **Instruments and Protocols**

#### ***Interviews***

The researcher used interview techniques to gather data. The interviews took place in the participating community centres during the spring and early fall of 2006. The interviews focused on eliciting information from Black students about their plans and aspirations for post-secondary education and the factors that influence their decisions. Attempts were made to also tease out issues related to the general preparation of the participants for post-secondary studies in terms of their academic stream, number of credits, knowledge of University and College entrance requirements. The interviews were designed to be free flowing rather than structured. The questionnaire (Appendix G) consisted of :

- Open-ended items which asked exploratory questions regarding their thoughts on such as: (a) plans after graduating high school; (b) career goals; (c) encouragement they have received from guidance counsellors regarding career goals; (d) encouragement from family regarding career goals and post-secondary education; (e) factors preventing attending a post-secondary institution; (f)

financing post secondary education (g) plans if not attending post secondary institution.

- Closed-ended questions were asked about self such as: (a) age; (b) level of study; (c) type of school attending; (d) immigration and cultural status; (e) grades; (f) which post secondary institution they plan to attend; (g) course selection; (h) meetings with guidance counsellors; (i) reasons for pursuing post secondary education; (j) financing post secondary education.

With open-ended items, the intention was to engage in conversations with participants giving them the opportunity to explain themselves candidly. Responses to all interview questions with all participants were written on the survey forms. All students were to write their own responses to questions that they were comfortable with.

### ***Field notes and Jottings***

Some field notes and jottings on observations and interviews were taken during the course of this research. These notes document important things seen, heard and experienced during the course of collecting and reflecting on the data. Field jottings were also made. These are quick notes about items that the researcher might choose to explore further at a later point. Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) suggest that this approach will help the researchers recall much detail which could not have been recorded during an observation or interview. These field notes and jottings are used for descriptive and reflective purposes.

### ***Instrumentation***

This research utilized the ethnographic research tradition. This approach was used in an attempt to obtain a holistic view of the topic being investigated (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2003). The focus was on in-depth interviewing. This approach revealed nuances, and subtleties that would have been missed by other methods and which lead to rich, thick descriptions at the analysis and reporting stage of the study.

Ethnographic research methods were used which in the form of in-depth interviews which provided the researcher with background information in determining if any of the predetermined factors influence students in their pursuit of post-secondary education. The survey questionnaire (Appendix G) consisted of 35 questions. These questions were attempts to gain information about the student, their age, the school they attend, how well they are performing academically, educational goals and career goals.

### ***Strategies for Inquiry***

Qualitative and Quantitative questioning methods were used for this research study. Both of these methods were implemented for their ability to obtain in-depth information that could be obtained with a single method

The survey was designed and utilized to obtain as much information as possible without being intrusive or to make the subjects feel self-conscious or uncomfortable. The subjects were able to write freely without imposed time restrictions and provide answers in their own words which would minimize the likelihood of misinterpretation. If certain answers did appear obscure, it gave the researcher the opportunity to probe deeper into the questions which would allow them to expand on their thoughts. For questions

the subjects chose not to answer, I did not probe further. As mentioned, participants had the right to refuse not to answer any question they were not comfortable answering. The use of surveys also provided me the opportunity to interview more than one student at a time in which case I would follow up with each student to review their responses before they left the research environment.

### *Data Analysis*

Qualitative and Quantitative measures were used to interpret the data collected in order to determine relationships between variables. The qualitative research approach involves the researcher making knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives. Meaning, the researcher seeks to obtain multiple meaning of one's experience (Creswell, 2003). A quantitative research approach is one in which the researcher employs strategies of inquiry using predetermined instruments for obtaining statistical data, such as experiments and surveys (Creswell, 2003).

For the purpose of data analysis, the surveys were entered into an SPSS statistical software program. This program would then allow the researcher to obtain specific data that was entered into the system to reveal relationships between variables. The survey consisted of closed ended and open ended questions. Numerical codes were provided for questions that were closed ended in order to make the data less cumbersome to interpret. These questions were on topics such as age, year of birth, grade point average, level of study, status in Canada, plans to pursue post secondary education, application to a post secondary institution, meetings with guidance counsellors and plans to finance post-secondary education. Open ended questions were transcribed in full. These questions

included plans for fall 2006, career plans, caregiver, encouragement towards post-secondary education from family, encouragement from family regarding career, encouragement from guidance counsellors regarding post-secondary education, where they plan to pursue post-secondary education and what they plan to do if they do get into a post-secondary institution. These quotes will be utilized to provide solid background knowledge of the participants' feelings regarding these important issues.

Visual representations of the data will be provided in the form of tables, graphs and charts to assist with interpretation.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

This chapter will present the findings obtained from the data collected. Upon obtaining the data, several themes emerged which will be reviewed. The chapter will begin with a brief overview of the demographics of the participants and then move into the participant's feedback regarding aspirations towards post-secondary education and plans to attend a post-secondary institution. Determining the relationships between several variables was explored in order to reveal any significant meaning from the data collected. An analysis of these findings will reveal which participants are choosing to pursue post-secondary education and the factors that are most influential to these students in their pursuit of post-secondary education.

#### **Demographic Data**

##### ***The Participants***

##### ***Gender***

A total of 29 students participated in this study. It was determined that both male and female participants were desired to obtain a representative picture of this demographic group. The goal was to obtain 30 students for a 50/50 gender split. In the end, there were 15 males and 14 females who participated in the study.

### *Age*

The study attempted to obtain as much feedback as possible from participants who were students enrolled in high school and those who would be graduating from high school in the near future. As the data reveals, there is a slight variation with the age group but the majority of participants (48.3%) were at the age (18) when high school students should begin planning or in the process of applying to post-secondary institutions.

### *Grade Level*

The majority of participants (74.1%) were in grade 12. Twenty-seven of the 29 nine participants were currently in high school. The data reveals that one male and one female did not indicate grade level. All the students in the sample were enrolled at high school in the local public or catholic school boards. Overall, 15 participants attend public high school and 13 attend catholic high schools.

### *Immigration & Citizenship Status*

Table 4.1 outlines the citizenship status of participants. Fifteen of the students interviewed were immigrants while 14 were born in Canada. A total of 20 participants were Canadian citizens with the others being permanent residents and refugees. The immigrant and refugee participants were from a wide range of regions including the Caribbean, East and West Africa the U.S.A and the Middle East.

**Table 4.1: Citizenship status of participants**

<b>Citizenship Status</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Canadian citizen	20	69.0
Convention refugee	3	10.3
Permanent resident	4	13.8
Landed Immigrant	1	3.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>28*</b>	<b>96.6</b>

\*One participant did not respond to the questions

### *Family Background/ Primary Caregiver*

Table 4.2 outlines the distribution of participants by household structure. The majority of respondents indicated that they either live with their mother or another female caregiver. Thirteen participants interviewed reported living with a female caregiver. More female students were shown to live with a single parent female caregiver. Statistically, 31% of participants live with their mother, while 34.5% reported living with both parents. Immigrant students were more likely to live with both parents (25.9 % of those who responded) than Canadian born respondents (7.4%). The percentage of respondents living in single mother households did not vary according to citizenship and immigration status.

**Table 4.2: Distribution of participants by household structure**

<b>Primary Caregiver</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Aunt	1	3.4
Grandmother	1	3.4
Grandparent	1	3.4
Mother	9	31.0
Mother and sibling	2	6.9
Mother and Step-Father	1	3.4
Older sister	1	3.4
Parent (Mother or Father)	1	3.4
Parents (Mother and Father)	10	34.5
Self	1	3.4
Uncle	1	3.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>

When it comes to dual parent households, where the participants live with their mother and father, ten (34.5%) responded in this category. With regards to participants living in single female households, nine (31%) reported living with their mother. Two participants (6.9%) reported living with their mother and a sibling. Additionally, for those participants living with an Aunt, Grandmother or Older Sister, each category received one response each from participants. Furthermore, for those participants immersed in unconventional living circumstances, categorized as “Other” in the research, there was one response each for the categories of Mother and Stepfather, Grandparent, Parent, Uncle and Self.

#### ***Primary Caregiver by Gender***

The results of primary caregiver and gender of the participant reveal that ten (34.5%) of participants reported living with both their mother and father. According to gender, there was an even split. Five male (33% of male participants) and five females (36% of female participants) reported living with both parents. With regards to participants living in single female households, five male participants reported living with their mother and/or mother and sibling (45% of those living with their mother), while six female participants reported the same (54% of those living with their mother). One male participant lives with his Aunt, one female participant lives with her Older sister and, one male participant specifically reported that he lives with his grandmother. With regards to the “Other” or unconventional living arrangements, there was one response for each of the categories. One female participant reported living with her Mother and Stepfather while one male and one female participant reported living with a grandparent.

Additionally, one male participant reported living with a parent, another reported living with an uncle and another male participant reported living on his own (Self).

A Pearson correlation statistical test was conducted to assess whether or not there was a significant relationship regarding the household structure of the participants (with whom they live with) and their academic stream. The tests revealed that there is no significant relationship between these two variables.

## Academics

### *Level of Study - Stream*

Table 4.3 outlines the level of study/academic stream. The data reveals the level of study these participants are enrolled in high school in terms of academic stream. When comparing male and female participants, the data shows the total number of participants who are either on the Applied, Academic, Applied/Academic or Essential stream; and, further broken down in terms of gender and who is on the Applied, Academic, Applied/Academic or Essential stream.

Overall, 62.1% of participants reported being in the Academic stream while 20.7% reported being in the Applied stream. Only one student was in the Essential stream while two students (6.9%) were taking a combination of Academic and Applied courses.

**Table 4.3: Level of study/academic stream**

Academic Stream	Number of Participants	Percentage
Applied	6	20.7
Academic	18	62.1
Essential	1	3.4
Applied and Academic	2	6.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>28*</b>	<b>96.6</b>

\*One participant chose not respond to the questions

Study results indicate that more female students were on the Academic stream level compared to males. Of the 13 female participants who responded to this question, 84.6% or 11 students reported being in the Academic stream with one student taking a combination of Academic and Applied courses and, one student also in the Essential stream. It can be noted that no female participants reported to be enrolled in the Applied stream. This might be significant in terms of whether or not these students aspire to go on to university or college as students in the Academic stream are considered to be university bound while those in the Applied stream are generally seen as college bound or groomed for vocational training.

There was a more even breakdown among males with 6 of the 15 participants (40%) reporting they were in the Applied stream and 7 (46.6 %) reporting that they were in the Academic stream. Table 4.4 reveals the gender and level of study breakdown. The goal of obtaining this information was to determine if gender had any influence on the academic level of the participants. The results presented here suggest that it does. Females made up 61% of the students who reported that they were in the Academic stream with males made up 39%.

**Table 4.4: Gender and level of study crosstabulation**

Gender	Level of Study					Total
	Applied	Academic	Essential	Applied and Academic	N/A	
Male	6	7	0	1	1**	15
Female	0	11	1	1	0	13
<b>Total</b>	6	18	1	2	1	28*

\*One participant chose not respond to the questions

\*\* One male participant recently graduated from high school therefore did not report a level of study

Eleven female participants (39%) were in the Academic stream compared to 7 males (25%). While there were no females in the Applied stream, there were 6 males (21.4%). This means that all of the 21.4% of the sample who were in the Applied stream were male students.

### *Relationship between Academic Stream and Household Structure*

Table 4.5 outlines the level of study and primary caregiver. This cross-tabulation was important to determine if there is a significant relationship between these two variables. Six of the twenty-eight who responded to the question regarding level of study, live with their mother – solely. Seven of the twenty-eight respondents to the level of study question live with both their parents. Therefore, of the 18 students who reported being on the Academic stream, the data reveals that they either live solely with their mother or with both parents. This relationship is significant because it can provide further investigation into the notion of whether or not students perform better in school in either single or dual parent households.

This data was gathered in order to determine what the participant's home life is like. The data reveals that the participants live in various situations.

**Table 4.5: Level of study and primary caregiver crosstabulation**

Level of Study	Primary Caregiver								Total
	Aunt	Grand parent	Mother	Older Sister	Parent	Parents	Self	Uncle	
Applied	0	0	3	0	1	1	0	1	6
Academic	1	2	6	1	0	7	1	0	18
Essential	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Applied / Academic	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
N/A**	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	1	2	11	1	1	10	1	1	28*

\* One participant did not respond to the questions

\*\*This participant did not report Level of Study as he recently completed high school.

### ***Level of Study – Cultural Background***

Table 4.6 outlines the level of study and cultural background. The study sought to ascertain if there was a significant relationship between intra-group cultural background and the student's academic stream. The data indicates that immigrant students were more likely to be in the Academic stream than the Applied stream. Sixty-six percent of the students who were in the Academic stream were immigrants. Data from Statistics Canada consistently report that among racialized groups the immigrant population tends to have a higher academic achievement rate than their Canadian born counterparts (Dei, 2007). Although Table 4.6 shows a clear difference in terms of who is enrolled in each of the levels of study, the relationship between cultural background was tested against level of study and there was found to be no significant relationship (.184) overall between these variables.

**Table 4.6: Level of study and cultural background crosstabulation**

Level of Study	Cultural Background			Total
	Canadian Born	Immigrant	N/A*	
Applied	4	0	0	4
Academic	5	12	1	18
Essential	0	1	0	1
Applied/ Academic	0	2	0	2
N/A	1		0	1
<b>Total</b>	10	15	1	26

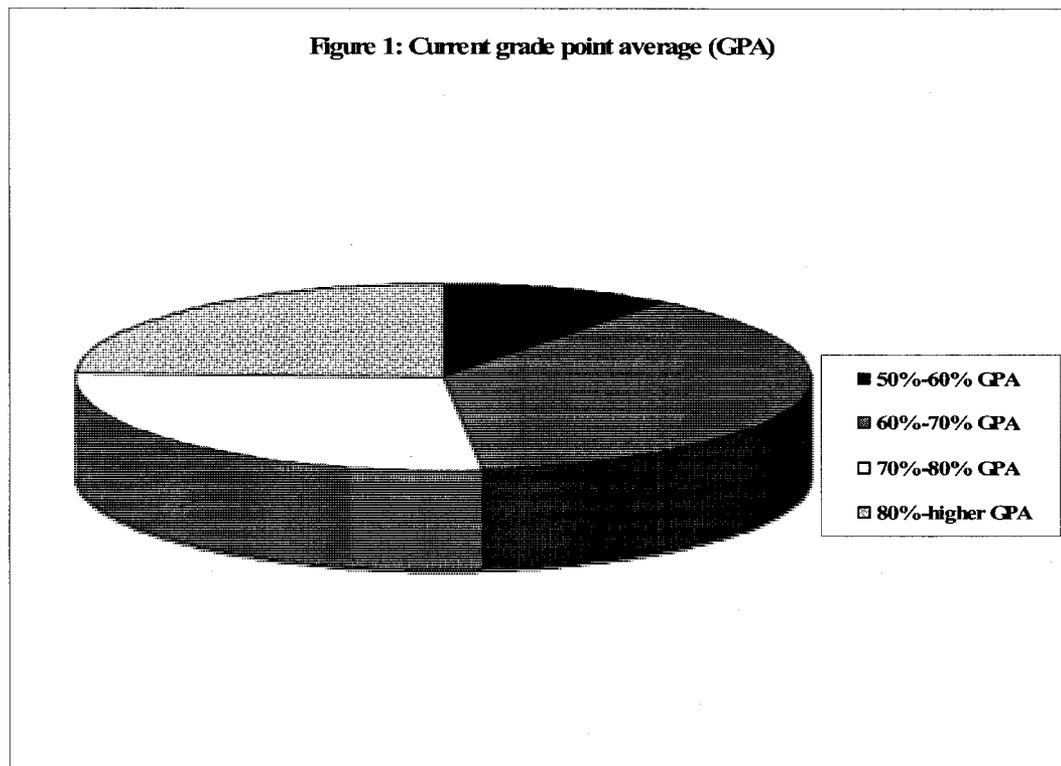
\* This participant chose not to respond to the question regarding cultural background

### **Grade Point Average (GPA)**

Table 4.8 outlines the participant's gender and grade point average. The majority of participants (89.6 %) reported that they were averaging over 60% in their high school courses. Fifty one percent reported an average of over 70% while 24.1% reported having a GPA of over 80%. In the next category, 37.9% reported scoring grades in the 60%-70% range. Of those participants who reported grade point averages in the 70%-80% range, 87.5% of those were male. Of those participants who reported grades in the 80%-or higher category, the vast majority of those participants were female (85.7%).

**Table 4.7: Gender and GPA crosstabulation**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>What is your current GPA?</b>				<b>Total</b>
	<b>50%- 60%</b>	<b>60%- 70%</b>	<b>70%- 80%</b>	<b>80%- higher</b>	
Male	1	6	7	1	15
Female	2	5	1	6	14
<b>Total</b>	3	11	8	7	29



When disaggregated by gender the data shows that 13 out of 15 males reported GPAs between 60-70 % compared to 6 out of 14 females who reported in the same percentage range. As well, 6 of the 7 students who reported a GPA of over 80% were females. Figure 1 summarizes this breakdown. A Pearson correlational test was conducted which revealed that there is no significant relationship (.132) between gender and grade point average of the participants.

Table 4.8 reveals cultural background and current GPA grade point average and cultural background (whether they are immigrants, parents or immigrants or Canadian born) to determine how well participants from various cultural backgrounds are performing academically.

**Table 4.8: Cultural background and current GPA crosstabulation**

Cultural Background	What is your current GPA?				Total
	50%- 60%	60%- 70%	70%- 80%	80%-higher	
Canadian born	1	4	3	3	11
Immigrant	2	5	4	4	15
N/A*	0	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	3	9	8	7	27

\* This participant chose not to respond to the question regarding cultural background

In relation to cultural background and GPA, 4 of the 7 participants in the 80% range were immigrants and immigrants were slightly ahead in all the grade ranges. However, a Pearson correlational test showed that there is statistical significance (.037) between these variables.

### Academic Awareness and Planning

#### *High School Credits*

Table 4.9 outlines student awareness of the number of high school credits required to obtain a high school diploma. Students were questioned to ascertain whether or not they were on track to graduate from high school and if they were aware of the requirements to graduate with a high school diploma.

**Table 4.9: Student awareness of the number of high school credits required to obtain a high school diploma crosstabulation**

Number of Credits	Number of Participants	Percent
0	2	6.9
4	1	3.4
16	1	3.4
24	2	6.9
30	16	55.2
31	1	3.4
32	2	6.9
<b>Total</b>	25*	86.2

\* Four participants chose not to respond to this question

Table 4.10 reveals the level of study and awareness of the number of high school credits required to obtain a high school diploma. Only 55% of the participants interviewed were able to correctly identify the number of academic credits needed to successfully complete high school and obtain an Ontario Secondary School Diploma. Twelve participants provided the incorrect response. Those that provided incorrect answers with substantially lower figures could possibly be attributed to misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the question. In analyzing the data I pondered the possibility that students thought I was asking about the number of outstanding credits they needed as opposed to the number of total credits needed even though the question was clear in the instrument.

**Table 4.10: Level of study and awareness of the number of high school credits required to obtain a high school diploma crosstabulation**

Level of Study	Number of Credits to Graduate		
	Wrong	Right	Total
Applied	1 (16.7%)	5 (83.3%)	6
Academic	9 (50%)	9 (50%)	18
Essential	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1
Applied and Academic	1 (50%)	1(50%)	2
N/A	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
<b>Total</b>	12 (42.9%)	16 (57.1%)	28

Although 9 participants on the Academic stream reported the correct number of credits needed to graduate from high school, a Pearson Chi-Square test revealed that there was no statistical significance (.382) between the participant's level of study and their knowledge of the correct number of credits needed to graduate.

Table 4.11 reveals gender and awareness of the number of high school credits required to obtain a high school diploma. This table reveals those who had the right and the wrong answer.

**Table 4.11: Gender and awareness of the number of high school credits required to obtain a high school diploma crosstabulation**

Gender	Number of Credits to Graduate		
	Wrong	Right	Total
Male	7 (46.7%)	8 (53.3%)	15
Female	6 (42.9%)	8 (57.1%)	14
<b>Total</b>	13 (44.8%)	16 (55.2%)	29

A Pearson Chi-Square test was conducted and revealed that there is no statistical significance between the participants' gender and their knowledge of the correct number of credits to graduate from high school.

Participants were also asked to provide information about their knowledge of the high school courses they needed in order to pursue their program of interest at a post-secondary institution. Participants responded with a list of various high school courses. Four participants, one female and three male, responded "I don't know" or "I'm not sure." One female participant wrote "I need to take at least 6 "U" or "M" courses this year and I need University English in order to be considered for the program I want to get into". Another female student not only listed the courses she needs to pursue a career as a Doctor, she also listed the course codes. She wrote that she needed, "Biology 4UI, Chemistry 401, Calculus MCBUI, Physics 401." Another female student, who also wants to be a Doctor wrote "I need all academic courses and it is essential for me to take chemistry, biology, and (I've) done math."

## Aspirations

### *Plans for Post-Secondary Education*

The research reveals that 28 of the 29 participants indicated that they do have plans for post-secondary education. The majority of respondents (48.3%) revealed aspirations to attend college while 37.9% planned to attend university. Two respondents were undecided on whether they would attend college or university while one participant intended to pursue football and the other wanted to be a rapper. Female students were more inclined to indicate that they were going to attend university while most of the males planned on going to college. Table 4.12 summarizes the answers given by the participants to the question of whether or not they intend to pursue post-secondary.

**Table 4.12: Gender and plans upon high school graduation**

Gender	Plans once you graduate high school					Total
	Become a rapper (sic)	College	College/University?	I plan to finish my last season of football with Essex	University	
Male	1	11	1	1	1	15
Female	0	3	1	0	10	14
<b>Total</b>	1	14	2	1	11	29

Only one male participant revealed aspirations for university compared to 10 females. Eleven male students reported plans to attend college. Both male and female participants have the admission average requirements to attend university in Ontario. Students can pursue university studies in Ontario with a graduating high school average of 70% (<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/postsec/admis.html>). A Pearson Chi-Squared statistical test revealed that there is a significant difference (-.183) between male

and female participants regarding the pursuit of post-secondary education. The test reveals that more female participants want to pursue a post-secondary education after graduating from high school, specifically at the university level compared to the male participants, who reported more often wanting to pursue a post secondary education at the college level.

In terms of cultural background, immigrant participants had plans for post-secondary education (13) at fairly the same rate as Canadian born participants (14), of the 27 who responded to this question. Furthermore, Pearson's correlational test revealed that there is no significant statistical difference (.192) between the two groups. The responses from the immigrant participants is not surprising given the still steadfast belief in many parts of Africa and the Caribbean that education is the key to success and social mobility. When it comes to level of study and plans for post-secondary education, a Pearson correlation test revealed that there is no statistical significance (-.015) between these two variables.

### ***Career Goals and Aspirations and the Pursuit of Post-Secondary Education***

Table 4.13 outlines the question why do you want to pursue post-secondary education? Participants were asked to explain why pursuing post-secondary education was important to them. Various responses were given and then categorized. This data revealed that 37.9% of the participants felt that pursuing post-secondary education would fulfill personal goals while another 31% feel it will provide career preparation.

**Table 4.13: Why do you want to pursue post secondary education?**

<b>Reasons to Pursue Post-secondary Education</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Full-fill personal goals	11	37.9
Increase knowledge	2	6.9
Career preparation	9	31.0
Other	3	10.3
All of the above	3	10.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>28*</b>	<b>96.6</b>

\*One participant chose not to respond to the question

The participants provided a variety of responses regarding career goals and aspirations. The main ones include: Social Worker, 13.8%; Doctor, 10.3%; Child and Youth Worker, Lawyer and Police Officer all at 6.9%. Perhaps not surprisingly, one participant responded that he wanted to pursue a career as a rapper. We had the opportunity to further discuss this career aspiration where he expressed that was his focus. He did reveal however, that his caregiver really wanted him to pursue post-secondary education. It was observed that females expressed more intentions to pursue post-secondary education right away while more males planned to do it later. Eleven of the 14 females planned to go on immediately while only 7 of the 15 males planned to implement their post-secondary goals immediately.

### ***Post-Secondary School Aspirations***

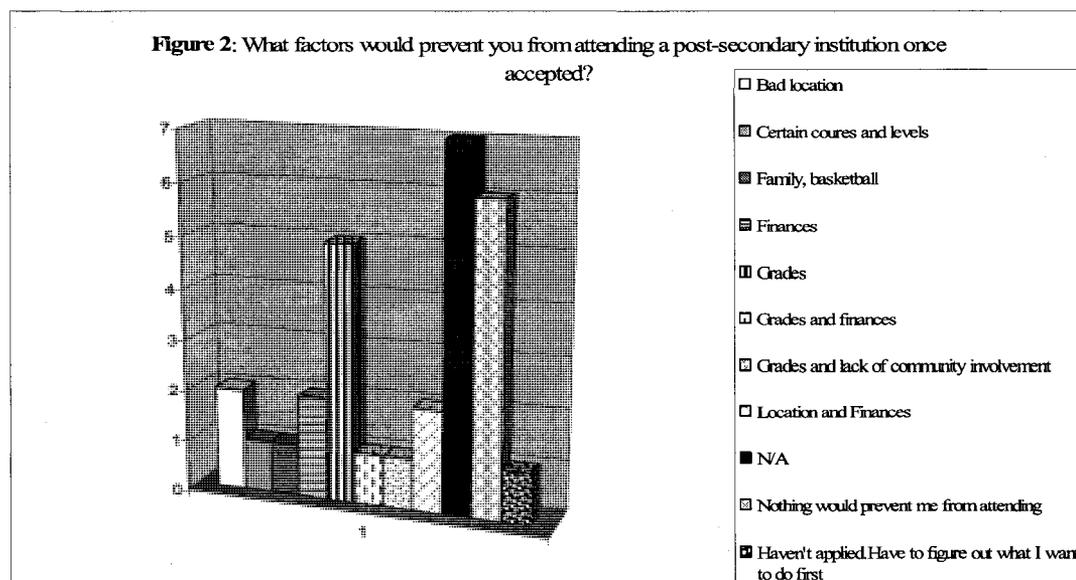
In order for the researcher to get a sense of what the participants know about post-secondary education, it was important to determine if they were preparing themselves by attending post-secondary presentations that took place at their schools. Of the 28 students who responded to this question 22 (75.9%) reported that they had attended an information session while 6 (21%) said they had not.

## Post Secondary School Admissions

### *Gaining Admission*

### *Prevention from Attending a Post-Secondary Institution*

Figure 2 outlines responses to the question what factors would prevent you from attending a post-secondary institution once accepted? Participants were asked to identify factors which might prevent them from actually accepting an offer to study at a post-secondary institution.



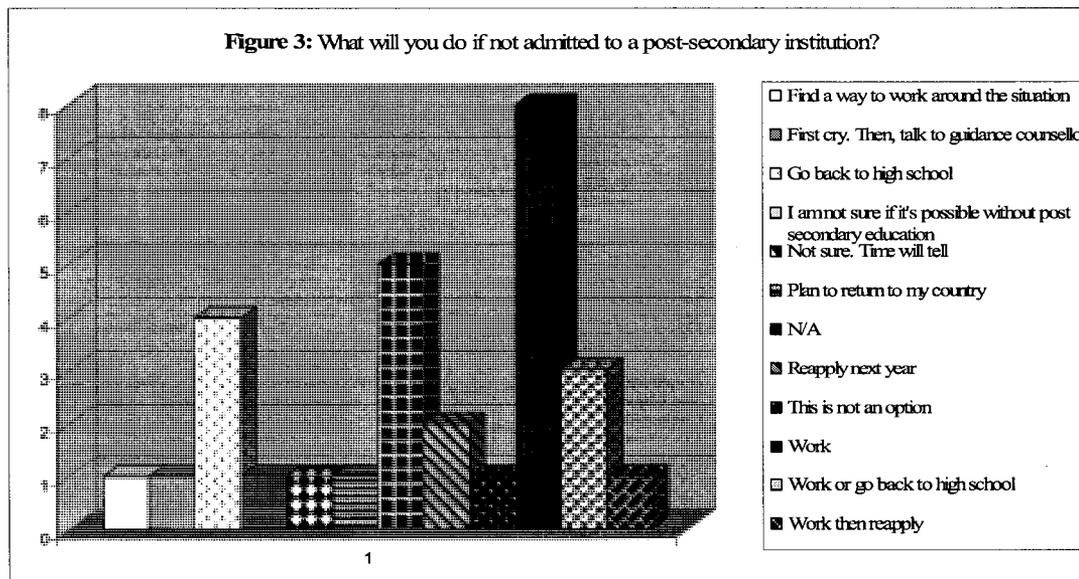
The data reveals a variety of responses. One of the figures marked N/A, where the participants chose not to write a response to this question could lead the researcher to believe that perhaps he or she does not know what could prevent them from attending a post-secondary institution. Or, by choosing not to answer the question, the participants could have been communicating that nothing would prevent them from attending and a written response was therefore not required. Other participants realized grades might be a

factor which would prevent them from attending a post-secondary institution. Also, some feel strongly that nothing will prevent them from pursuing post-secondary education once they complete high school. Lastly, the location and financial restraints for attending a post-secondary institution outside of Windsor or further abroad could be a preventative factor for some participants.

### *Non-Admission*

#### *Plans if Not Admitted to a Post-Secondary Institution*

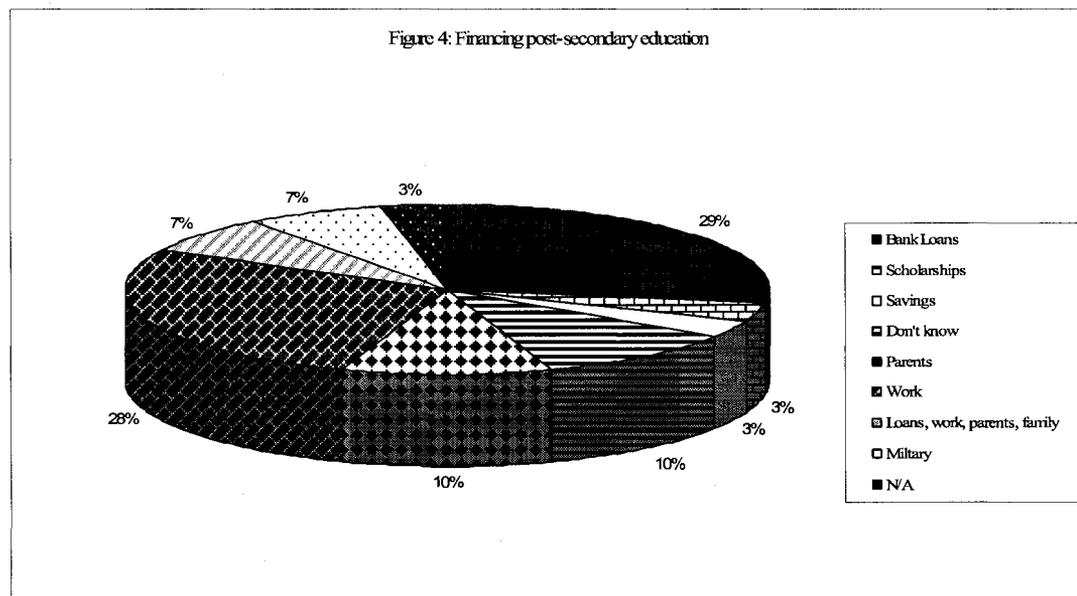
Participants provided their responses as to what they would do if they were not admitted to a post-secondary institution. The responses in Figure 3: what will you do if not admitted to a post-secondary institution?; reveals that the majority of respondents would go and find a job (work). The next highest group chose not to respond and the third highest group said they would return to their high school.



The majority of respondents (26.7%) indicated that they will also go straight to work if they do not gain entry to a post-secondary institution. Others (3.4%) would go back to high school and/or re-apply for post-secondary school the following year. One female student mentioned that not getting into a post-secondary school was “not an option.”

### *Financing Post-Secondary Education*

Figure 4: financing post-secondary education shows the funding options identified by the respondents. Participants were questioned about their finances for post-secondary education to assess their level of preparation to actualize their aspirations. Twenty-eight of the twenty-nine participants responded to this question. The data reveals that the majority of students will either work to get the funding or apply for a loan.



## **Encouragement Regarding Post-Secondary Education and Career Aspirations**

The level of encouragement the participants received from their circle of influence was an important variable to assess in this research. The purpose was to determine that the influence of parents, teachers and guidance counsellors on their decision to pursue post-secondary education and to pursue their career goals.

### ***Parental Involvement***

Participants were given the opportunity to freely discuss the encouragement they received from their family regarding post-secondary education. The comments varied greatly but, the one common theme that emerged was the fact that Black family members (whether mom, dad, aunt, uncle, etc.) are taking interest in supporting the goals and aspirations of their children and are advocating post-secondary education as an existential imperative. One respondent stated that she has “received tremendous support from my family.” Another stated that “I have always known that I would go to university” and that it is “a must” in her household. This sentiment was echoed by another participant who stated that “my mother and father will not take no for an answer.” One student has a mother currently attending the University of Windsor and feels encouraged because “she says to pursue post-secondary education.” Other comments include “they definitely push me to go further with my education” and “with God, nothing is impossible.” Other types of encouragement came in the form of students indicating that their parents would help them pay for tuition. One participant wrote “everyday we discuss my future and what might help me reach my goals.” One participant revealed the support he has received

from his brother-in-law who is a fireman and discussions with him about “what college is like.” It is also interesting to note that the student who wants to pursue a rap career and lives with his grandparent, states that when it comes to attending post-secondary education, “they (grandparents) want me to go so bad.”

Of all of the participants, three male students indicated that they have not received much encouragement from their parents. One lives with his mother, Canadian born and wants to become a police officer. The other lives with both parents and wants to be a “dental hygienist(sic).” He states that “They don't really(sic) give me a lot of encouragement because they know what I am doing.” Another student, immigrant born, who lives with his uncle said he got no encouragement from him at all.

Two male students, one immigrant and one Canadian born, indicated that they had not received any encouragement from family regarding career aspirations. One student has aspirations to attend college to become a computer technician and lives with his uncle. The other student lives with his mother and has plans to attend college to become a police officer. The vast majority of respondents indicated high levels of encouragement received from their parents or caregiver. Comments include “everyday we discuss my future, “it was always known that I would go to university”, “post secondary education is a must in my family”, “my mother and father will not take no for an answer.”

### ***Guidance Counsellor/Teacher Encouragement***

Participants were also given the opportunity to openly discuss their feelings regarding the encouragement they felt they received or have not received from their teacher(s) or guidance counsellor(s). There were mixed reviews as to the level of encouragement participants felt they received in regards to pursuing post-secondary

education. One participant did feel she received encouragement from teachers/guidance counsellors and went on to write “my teachers have told me to go to University and always remind myself and my peers about the importance of post-secondary education.”

Other female participants made such comments as “Teachers sometimes have discussions about our future goals and plans”; “They encouraged me by helping me apply to college”; “That I can do anything if I apply myself.” However, there were three female participants who expressed not so great sentiments towards their teacher(s) and/or guidance counsellor(s). In response to whether or not she felt encouraged by her guidance counsellor, one female participant responded, “No! Because what class I need they didn't give to me.” The other two female participants responded saying, “Not very much at all, except for a few teachers who did encourage me to continue with my schooling” and, “The teachers are helpful but the guidance counsellors dismiss your ideas.”

The comments male participants made regarding the level of encouragement they have received from their teacher(s) and or guidance counsellor(s) varied as well. There was some positive feedback which included comments such as “(Guidance counsellor is) helping me find the right courses and helping me apply”; “My counsellor has encouraged myself to look into something that interests me and something that I am good at”; “I have received much information about post-secondary options and the schools.” However, more male students (5) had negative comments to make about their experiences with these school officials than the female participants. One participant wrote that he receives “No encouragement from teachers or guidance counsellors.” Others simply said “None” or “Nothing much.” One biting comment came from one of these five male participants who stood out from the rest in regards to his feelings about his guidance counsellor. He recently completed high school and was very vocal about his dislike for his guidance

counsellor and stated the reasons why. When asked about the type of encouragement he received from his guidance counsellor, he stated “Absolutely none!” “My guidance counsellor seemed like she wanted to discourage me. All she did was put me down.” As well, he goes on to say “I was told I wasn't smart enough for post-secondary and should consider jumping right into the work force.”

Table 4.14 outlines the gender and level of study and number of meetings with guidance counsellor. The data was collected based on how often the participants met with their guidance counsellor through-out the school year. Table 4.14 clearly shows that the participants have made some attempt to meet with their guidance counsellor thus far.

**Table 4.14: Gender and Level of study and number of meetings with guidance counsellor crosstabulation**

How often have you met with your guidance counsellor this year to discuss post-secondary education?			Level of study					Total
			Applied	Academic	Essential	Applied and Academic	N/A	
once or twice	Gender	Male	2	3			1	6
		Female	0	7			0	7
	Total		2	10			1	13
3 to 4 times	Gender	Male	2	1				3
		Female	0	1				1
	Total		2	2				4
about 6 times	Gender	Male	1	2	0	0		3
		Female	0	2	1	1		4
	Total		1	4	1	1		7
once a week	Gender	Male	1	0				1
		Female	0	1				1
	Total		1	1				2
No meetings yet this year	Gender	Male		1		1		2
	Total			1		1		2

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the main findings of this research. This research study sought to investigate three main questions. First, to ask what fundamental factors shape the aspirations of Black high school students towards post-secondary education? Second, what is the nature of the relationship between students' aspirations and actual pursuit of post-secondary education and what factors determine this relationship? Lastly, during the course of the research, I wanted to determine how prepared students are for post-secondary education. (This relates to level of study, credit accumulation, knowledge of university or college requirements, etc.)

The information is organized according to the main themes that emerged while conducting the research. These include post-secondary aspirations, encouragement, socio-economic status, family and cultural background and expectations, and gender.

#### Summary of Key Findings

This research has revealed several key findings instrumental in understanding this topic. These key findings include:

- Male students were more likely to receive less encouragement from their teachers/guidance counsellors than their female peers.
- Sixty-five percent of respondents reported positive experiences with their teacher/guidance counsellor.

- More female students are enrolled in the Academic stream level of study compared to their male peers.
- All participants are aware of the importance of pursuing post-secondary education.
- Female participants are more willing to pursue post-secondary education immediately after graduation compared to the male participants.

### **Discussion on Key Findings**

#### ***Aspirations and Post-Secondary School Preparation***

The data reveals that the participants in this study have lofty aspirations for themselves beyond high school and want to succeed in their intended career fields.

A fair number (64%) of students indicated that they are enrolled in the Academic stream level of study in high school and are performing fairly well academically. The data also reveals that more female students are enrolled in the Academic stream compared to their male peers. However, observational evidence suggest that when educators such as myself or those on teaching assignments from the University of Windsor's Faculty of Education , when visiting high schools within the Windsor/Essex county region, very few Black students are seen to be enrolled in these Academic stream courses. Therefore, this leaves some doubt regarding the actual number of students enrolled in the Academic stream. This doubt could be attributed to a few things. For instance, in regards to reports on their current grade point average, some students may have misrepresented themselves by claiming their grade point average was higher than it

actually is. This can be said for level of study as well. Participants may have been hesitant about providing personal information, despite the assurance of confidentiality. Private, guarded information such as this can make one feel uneasy. Some participants may have made claims about grades and level of study in order to be perceived in a better light. To make themselves feel better. These actions are relative to self-esteem issues that many students are faced with. King (1997) discusses these self-esteem issues students have regarding their ability to assimilate into the school culture when it comes to values, preferences and even abilities. As an educator, I have witnessed this first hand. When university students were applying to a program I co-ordinated a few years ago, on their application they were asked to provide their grade point average. Students were aware that their grade point average would be reviewed by accessing their transcript before they could be accepted into the program. A minimum grade point average was required to gain admission to the program. Even when students met the minimum grade point average, some felt the need to inflate their score anyway.

Also, 55% of students reported having grades in the 70% range or higher. These fifteen students also mentioned that they were college bound. Although it is notable that these participants are choosing college as their choice for post-secondary education, further research should be conducted as to why more students with grade point averages in this range would not be university bound, especially since the minimum graduating grade point average requirement to attend university in Ontario is 70% (<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/postsec/admis.html>). This could potentially lead one to believe that the participants, although willing to participate in the research, were

not completely forthcoming or accurate with the academic information they provided or, not aware that university is a viable option.

### ***Encouragement***

There are several reasons why participants felt encouraged to pursue post-secondary education. One thing that emerged is that of family and parental influence. Parents and family appear to place a high value on education and they have tried to instill this in their children. Overstreet, Devine, Bevans and Efreom's (2005) research supports this finding which found that parents with steady employment, high educational aspirations for their child were more involved in the educational process for their children. These findings help to shatter any stereotypical notions about Black families and the low value they place on education for their children.

Another factor that emerged was that of finance. Participants are aware of the fact that there are options open to them. They can choose to work hard to achieve good grades for potential scholarships, work full-time or part-time or, apply for a student loan. Only one participant, who is originally from Nigeria, listed parents as their only means to pay for post-secondary education. This finding is supported by research conducted by Kao and Tienda (1998) which reveals that family socio-economic status is a significant factor in determining whether or not students will pursue post secondary education. The higher the socio-economic status of the family, the higher the aspirations to pursue post-secondary education. Additionally, research conducted by Goodall (1996) and Davies and Guppy (1998) discussed socio-economic status as it relates to parents encouraging their children with education. This research study did not ask participants about their

socio-economic status. This information could only be assumed based on the socio-economic status demographics of the neighbourhood (which range from middle, lower middle, to lower socio-economic status) in which these schools are located. This is information that could be pursued further in future research.

A third factor that emerged regarding student encouragement towards post secondary education is self-motivation. Some participants mentioned post-secondary education as not being an option but, all but one participant mentioned that they did not feel they needed post-secondary education in order to pursue their career. No one mentioned that they did not want to attend a post-secondary institution. Also, none of the participants reported being forced to pursue post-secondary education. All participants have goals beyond high-school. It is believed that this factor delves into the participant's level of self-esteem and their ability to successfully pursue post-secondary education. King (1997) discusses this matter in her research which reveals the major role self-esteem plays in the life of a Black student and their positive involvement in the education system.

A fourth factor which was discovered is that the majority of participants (65.5%) felt encouraged to pursue post secondary education from their teachers and/or guidance counsellors. Although eight negative experiences were reported (three females and five males), two-thirds of the students felt encouraged to pursue post-secondary education from their school officials. This is contrary to some popular beliefs in the Black community that Black students are being underserved by their teachers and guidance counsellors. Notably, the comments made by the male participants lacked the same energy that I got from the female participants. The language and the tone in the written

statements of the male participants were much more contemptuous compared to the females. The positive feedback regarding school officials is contrary to research conducted by George Dei (1999) for example. He has conducted research on these relationships and findings have brought to light the systemic racism that plagues the education system in Ontario which causes barriers to student success. As well, Farkas (2003) discussed the racial disparities that occur in the education system and the discriminatory behaviors from the teachers towards students. Also, there are research findings which indicate that education for Black students is being deliberately sabotaged, students have to deal with negative feedback from administrators and the disturbing reports of the high number of Black students being channeled into less challenging educational programs (Booker-Baker, 2005). Although one male student did state that his guidance counsellor was providing him support regarding pursuing college and the trades, for the most part, the research findings in this study found only a few cases (eight) amongst the participants that could support the research findings from Booker-Baker.

Furthermore, anecdotal evidence over the years has suggested an antagonistic relationship between Black students, teachers and guidance counsellors within the Black community in Windsor. Based on the feedback received from the participants in this study, the majority of respondents felt favourably towards their teachers and guidance counsellors dispelling any overwhelming myths of the existence of a negative or even hostile relationship between the two groups.

Parent and family support was a common factor mentioned in this research study. Participants shared the high value their parents and or family place on post-secondary

education. However, there are a few participants who stated the opposite. For example, one male student, who lives with his uncle said he does not receive encouragement. Also, another male student, who lives with his mother stated he too receives no encouragement. And, one male student, who lives with both parents, reported that he does not receive “a lot” of encouragement. With the exception of these three participants (who make up 10.3% of all of the participants in this study), these findings are contrary to any stereotypical beliefs about the academic abilities of Black students and parents encouraging their child to perform well in school and/or involvement in the education system. Even the student who wants to pursue a career as a rapper and does not feel the need to pursue post secondary education at this time reports that his family wants him to go to college or university “so bad”. Encouragement from parents was a proposed factor that was brought to the attention of participants in this study. The value parents place on the education of their children and the involvement that they have with the education system (whether hands on or from a distance) is evident when we review research conducted by Goodall (1999) who suggests that parents need to be involved in the education of their children by working with the schools in a collaborative and/or cooperative sense. These findings are also supported by Gutman and McLoyd (2000) and Jeynes (2003) who also have found in their research the positive affects of verbal praise and rewards from parents to their children when it comes to their engagement with school.

*Aspirations for Post-Secondary Education and Beyond*

The research findings revealed that the participants know exactly what career path they want to pursue and participants are choosing either college or university as their vehicle to pursue these careers, with the exception of one participant who wants to pursue a rap career. Seventy-six percent of the participants reported having attended post-secondary education information sessions, which is a big step in ensuring students are making informed choices. However, based on my experience as a post-secondary recruiter, I would have to suggest the number is slightly lower than the 76% reported. As mentioned earlier, guidance counsellors in many schools determine who is eligible to attend certain post-secondary information sessions based on whether or not they feel the student is college bound or university bound. This in itself could suggest a power struggle relationship amongst the students and the guidance counsellor. As a result, the finding in this research study does not support my original assumptions. The data unfortunately does not reveal whether or not the participants attended a post-secondary school presentation specifically for college or university. One of the objectives of this research was to determine if they have aspirations for post-secondary education regardless of the type of institution.

All of the participants indicated that they want to succeed after high school, and they also understand the importance of continued education. Although there was some discrepancy regarding whether or not the students were aware of the number or credits they need in order to graduate high school, the research revealed that all participants were on track to graduate from high school.

### ***Realistic Educational and Career Expectations***

One detail of great significance is that all of the participants have well defined career aspirations and not all want to pursue a career in various fields once they complete high school. Participants communicated that they are aware of the importance of post-secondary education and indicated that they would go to college or university in the near future. What was also significant was that these participants felt that if they were not going to be accepted into college or university on the first attempt, they were willing to go back to high school and upgrade and apply again. This shows their determination to succeed. However, research shows exactly who goes on to pursue post-secondary education whether it is by gender or cultural group. This point is further discussed below. Although the participants want to pursue post-secondary education, the discrepancy with their knowledge of the number of credits needed to graduate was disturbing. Also, participants were asked if they knew what high school pre-requisite courses they needed to gain admission to a post-secondary institution. Although there were some who revealed that they did not know, many students were able to mention the courses they needed and in some instances, the course code.

### *Cultural Expectations*

It was important for this research to compare various cultural groups within the Black community to determine if these educational issues were germane only to indigenous Blacks of Windsor to all Blacks regardless of their background. The data reveals that there are more immigrant born students on the Academic stream (12) compared to those that are Canadian born (5). As a result, the data in this study revealed no significant difference amongst the cultural groups and their pursuit of post-secondary education.

Cultural expectations do influence youth in their decision to pursue post-secondary education. This research revealed that some students of African descent, who are relatively new to Canada or whose parents are immigrants, disclose that the idea of not pursuing post-secondary education is not an option. In line with the discoveries made in this research study, recent research findings conducted by Campbell and Cohen (2004) found that students of African heritage performed better in school and parents had higher expectations of them. Due to these high levels of expectations from parents, Wright and Tsuji (1984) found that West-Indian students were overrepresented in low level vocational courses which would translate into limited options such as college or school-to-work preparation – which Black parents in Windsor have made complaints about for years. Furthermore, Solomon (1992), conducted research which focused on the Toronto school system and found Black students, specifically those from the Caribbean, were perceived as having attitudes because they are unwilling to assimilate into the dominant White school culture. This would then equal students falling into the disengagement trap

of detentions, suspensions and even expulsions and ultimately not earning the credits they need to graduate.

This attempt at the assimilation of Blacks by school officials is what Dei et al. (1997) describes as marginalized resistance. When Blacks choose not to conform, not out of spite but simply because they are choosing not to conform into something or someone, they are not. As a result, they are labeled as trouble-makers and begin the downward spiral of disengaging themselves from school and the educational system.

Ogbu (1998) explores the issues minorities from various cultural groups are faced with at it relates to their performance and interaction within the education system. He has devised the concept of voluntary (immigrant) minorities and involuntary (non-immigrant) minorities. These terms are used to describe how various cultural groups interact within their society. Voluntary (immigrant) minorities are described as those who willingly moved from there country of origin to North America in search of better opportunities. Although their experience in the school system may start out with difficulties due to language barriers, etc., these barriers are not long-lasting. The immigrants in this category include those people from Africa, Cuba, Central and South America and, the Caribbean to name a few. This information supports the findings made in this study regarding the importance immigrants (whether parents or students) place on education.

Involuntary (non-immigrant) minorities are described by Ogbu, as those groups that have been conquered, colonized or enslaved and who have become a part of (U.S.) society against their will (Ogbu, 1998). These immigrants did not choose to come to the U.S., they were forced. This minority group is characterized as less economically successful and whose academic performance is lower in school compared to voluntary

minorities. Black Americans who were brought to the United States as slaves are an example of a cultural group defined as involuntary minorities.

Involuntary minorities are aware of the importance of mastering Standard English and “master some White people’s ways of behaving” (Ogbu, 1998, para. 52) in order to succeed in school and obtain a good job. However, there is resistance to this because this group has shown that this is being forced on them by White Americans. Many in this cultural group have formed this identity in response to discrimination and racism at the hands of their White oppressors. Also, the group views the cultural and language differences as “markers of a collective identity” (Ogbu, 1998, para. 52) that they should not have to overcome. Ogbu’s research provides great insight into anthropological issues imbedded within the Black cultural group. Especially indigenous Blacks in Windsor who participated in this study.

### *Gender Expectations*

The research also reveals more females are on the Academic stream level of study and are more prepared for a university education than male students. Also, more females are entering the university system than their male peers. With more female students on the Academic stream, they have opened the door for themselves with more post secondary education options. The male students not on the Academic stream, have less post-secondary education options available to them. These research findings are also supported by the research conducted by Cohen and Nee (2000) which found that Black women were out-pacing Black men in their pursuit of undergraduate and graduate degrees. Additionally, Rouse and Austin (2002) found that Black women had higher

motivation levels and better academic performance in order to pursue post-secondary education. As well, Trusty (2002) found that females were strongly influenced by their parents' expectations than their male peers. I can attest to this as well. As an educator at a post-secondary institution, for years I have witnessed the disproportionate number of Black female students attending university in comparison to their male peers. Black males are underrepresented in various faculties such as Science, Engineering, Business and Education, to name a few. For both groups other significant factors that influenced their pursuit of post-secondary education include high school involvement, socio-economic status and parental involvement.

Another factor that was examined was whether or not participants, those who wanted to pursue post-secondary education, were planning on doing so in the near future. Eighteen of the twenty-eight participants (62.1%) who responded indicated that they were going to pursue their education right away. Nine said 'no' and one was unsure. Female participants are reported to want to pursue post-secondary education right away (11), compared to the male participants (7). The reasons students listed for not wanting to pursue post-secondary education right away vary from being in search of a career in entertainment, to being unsure about what they want to do with their life to needing to upgrade courses to gain admission, to financial barriers and wanting to find full-time employment first. This is in line with the research conducted by the Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute in 1997 (as cited in Cohen and Nee, 2000) which examined why African American students were deferring post-secondary education. Factors listed by the Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute attributing to this include academically

unprepared students and the cost of attending a post-secondary institution. These factors can contribute to a waning desire for students to want to pursue post-secondary studies.

### ***Factors to Prevent Students from Pursuing Post-Secondary Education***

The data uncovered several factors that might prevent students who want to pursue post-secondary studies from achieving that goal. For instance, financial means to pay for a post-secondary education was listed as a possible deterrent. The participants saw this as a challenge, indicating that they would either have to work full-time, part-time, apply for student loans or rely on family in order to achieve this goal. Some mentioned that they would be looking into scholarship opportunities as well.

Grade point average was also listed as a factor which could keep participants from gaining admission to a post-secondary institution. As mentioned, some students reported that they may have to return to high school in order to upgrade their courses. This could be due to students not being aware of admission requirements for the school they want to attend and the program they want to study. This falls in line with their possible lack of preparedness to move on to the next level.

Lack of encouragement from family can have a crippling affect on a student's aspirations. A small percentage reported not receiving encouragement from their family. Two male students also reported the lack of support they received from their guidance counsellor. This is indicative of what parents of Blacks students have commented on over the years in the Windsor community. That being, school guidance counsellors were not providing support and encouragement which is needed to help their kids achieve.

Self doubt was mentioned by one female participant who said this would prevent her from pursuing post-secondary studies. This is a valid concern as Roberts-Fiati (1996), who discovered that feelings of self-doubt and shame can hinder motivation levels and the desire to learn. Additionally, Woodson's (1933) claims, which were originally formulated over seventy years ago, still hold-up today. He suggests that many Blacks are lacking the self-confidence in their skills and abilities in order to obtain their goals. These are perhaps the thoughts racing through the minds of these students who are doubting themselves when it comes to post-secondary education

These factors are also supported by the research findings of Roberts-Fiati (1996) who exposed several factors that can potentially deter Black students from pursuing post-secondary education. These include race and gender differences, cultural differences, racial issues in the school, parental involvement and self-esteem.

### **Limitations of Design**

#### ***Self-Identification***

There is the possibility that the community centre(s) may not have identified all Black students who may have been eligible to participate in the study. For example, students of mixed cultural and racial backgrounds may not have been selected and therefore, the feedback from the missing students would not have been gathered.

### ***Attrition***

There is the possibility of mortality, loss of subjects due to lack of interest in the study or, the participant(s) may have moved to another school district or, dropped out of school. As well, students who were identified by the community centre Director as possible participants in the research may not be present in the community centre on the day of data collection. Furthermore, there could be experimenter bias because the researcher is of African Canadian descent and this could unintentionally influence the responses from the participants.

### ***Demographics***

By recruiting students from all socio-economic backgrounds, this would have allowed for a greater variety of responses regarding finances and whether or not students will choose to pursue post-secondary education.

Additionally, it would have been beneficial to interview students from a variety of academic capabilities. This would have also allowed for a greater variety of responses. I would have liked to see if there were more students enrolled in the Essential Stream of study for example, and determine how they are performing academically and, what their plans are for post-secondary education.

### ***Impression of Students & Willingness to Participate***

I was very pleased with the initial level of response received from the high school students who wanted to participate in this research study - especially with the level of

interest from Black male students. It was especially pleasing to witness the respondent's openness and candor with the subject matter.

Furthermore, participant's showed genuine interest as they became engaged in the study. The participants did not need much coaxing once I provided them with a synopsis of the objective of this research study and its purpose. They were eager to provide their input. It is in my opinion that this contributed to the candor that was conveyed in the responses on the questionnaires.

## **Implications and Conclusion**

When I first sought to conduct this research, my objective was to determine whether or not Black students in the Windsor community had aspirations for post-secondary education. I felt this was an important issue as an African-Canadian educator from Windsor because I felt throughout my university studies, Black students, especially Black males, were not attending university or college to obtain a degree or diploma. For many years, I have heard information which has been taken as anecdotal evidence regarding Black students. Parents were angered about the treatment their children received from high school teachers and guidance counsellors in the schools and felt that they were 'blocking' them from achieving success at the high school level. This included claims regarding lack of teacher-student encouragement, suspensions from school and channeling of students into lower academic level courses. Ultimately, these actions by school administrators could potentially lead to students' non-admission to post-secondary institutions. This research was an attempt to discover if there was any merit to these claims or determine if there were other factors at play. What also fueled my desire to conduct this research is my belief that there is an entire generation of Black males who have dropped out of high school in the Windsor community. Could these claims be the reason why?

The education of Black youth and their relationship with the educational system has been a contentious issue from the moment Blacks arrived and settled throughout the Ontario region. This research has briefly chronicled the evolution of the struggle Blacks

in Ontario have had to endure in order to gain access to education, to the present-day situation of the perceived disinterest and fading desire many have towards the educational process to, the potential implementation of inclusive Black schools.

Windsor and the surrounding region play a significant role in the history of segregated and separate schools in Ontario. A history that is not widely known. A history that includes educators and students who experienced limited school integration. Dividing lines were drawn and the Whites attended the White schools while the Blacks attended the Black schools. Parents fought long and hard in order to have their children receive a proper and equal education. Educators such as George Dei support the idea of establishing all Black schools in the Toronto area. He suggests that Black teachers would provide role models for the students and would be willing to go the extra mile for the students (Rushowy and Brown, 2007). There are those supporters who believe this would ensure students would learn about Black history and not fall victim to some of the rules and regulation set by the school board and the Ministry of Education that some feel work against Black students.

It is the opinion of this researcher that we cannot revert back to this type of educational isolation. We need to learn from the struggles that our Black forefathers in this region had to endure in order for Blacks to seek the level of equality in education that is available today. To ignore their struggle and justify exclusive or inclusive schooling to be the only answer is problematic. I know there are several factors as to why some educators feel all Black schools should be established. However, Black youth cannot live in a bubble. I am not oblivious to the issues of systemic racism that plague our educational system. There is even research that suggests inclusive schooling would boost

the self-esteem of Black students because Black representation in educational materials would be an integral part of their learning (Roberts-Fiati, 1996). Nevertheless, the Black community, as a whole, needs to support our Black youth. If Black students are experiencing difficulty being taught by non-Black educators and/or adhering to the rules set in place by the Board of Education and the Ministry of Education, then the Black community in Windsor, Toronto and elsewhere, needs to encourage these same Black students to become role models and pursue careers in education and work within the system. The community and parents need to establish better and more effective co-operative and collaborative relationships with the schools and the educational process. Black students will not escape following school rules because they are in an all Black school. We have to be aware of the pit-falls and ensure Black youth are not ensnared by them.

Canada likes to pride itself on how much of a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic nation we are. Many of us hear about this and talk about this with great pride. We always hear that we are this great melting pot of cultures and all the races can work together and live collaboratively ([http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/multi/respect\\_e.cfm#diversity](http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/multi/respect_e.cfm#diversity)). How could this be? If this were the case, why do we have to face the issue of inclusive schooling in this nation? Does the melting pot exist in those communities where minorities have chosen to assimilate? The level of tolerance we would like to believe exist in Canada is questionable. If it existed, we would not be faced with the idea of reverting back in time to provide what can essentially be called segregated schooling. This would not be necessary if educators and the education system would be willing to

challenge themselves and work harder to make learning happen in a diverse school environment. When inclusive schooling becomes a reality in cities like Toronto in the next year or so (Brown and Popplewell, 2008), the demand for educators to embrace diversity and face the issues that Black students are confronted with in the school may become irrelevant. However, I digress as this issue is not the focus of this research.

In conclusion, I am pleased with the research that was conducted and the findings that were obtained. I feel this research needed to be done in order to assess whether or not there are any problems regarding the post-secondary aspirations and pursuits of Black students in Windsor. Based on these research findings, students appear to be successful, goal oriented and, for the most part, experiencing positive relationships with educators in their schools. As mentioned, this research has revealed that 96.5% of the participants in this study have aspirations for post-secondary education. The research also limited barriers that would impede their progression in order to pursue post-secondary studies. Also, there is clearly a high level of family support that plays a role in the lives of these participants. It is safe to say based on the research findings that any real barriers to their progression would be within themselves and the belief in their abilities. I was surprised and pleased with these findings to learn that these participants do not represent a new generation of students who do not aspire for anything beyond high school. These research findings do not support the claims that have been made about Black youth and the education system in Windsor. Therefore, do these results reveal that Windsor is not faced with the same race and cultural related issues within the education system as an area such as Toronto? This would have to be investigated with further research.

### **Future Research and Recommendations**

This is an issue that desperately bears further exploration. Based on the information obtained, the next step would be to conduct a longitudinal study. A longitudinal study would follow these participants once they have entered a post-secondary institution and follow up with them every six months until they graduate from college or university – either in 2 years or 4 years. The research could assess whether or not participants graduate from their chosen post-secondary institution, if they are indeed pursuing the goals they set for themselves in high school or, determine if their priorities have changed.

Continued research could allow for research to be prepared with the following themes in mind:

#### ***Preparation for Post-Secondary School***

Continued research would allow the researcher to determine if Black youth are succeeding beyond high-school and going on to pursue successful careers and becoming contributing members of our society. Continued research could potentially reveal if these and other participants felt ready mentally to pursue post-secondary education once they graduated high school.

#### ***Academic Probation***

Future research in this area could answer the question “Are Black students in college and university disproportionately on academic probation after the first semester

or first year”? If so, why? Would this go back to academic and mental preparedness for college or university? Research could also delve into the level of encouragement Black students receive once they are enrolled in college/university level. Determine whether or not participants sought academic advising once they began to experience problems with their post-secondary studies.

### ***Continued Education***

It would be beneficial to learn if these students or participants from a similar future study would go on to pursue post-graduate studies. This investigation could help to shatter any stereotypical beliefs about the capabilities of Black students.

### ***Motivation***

Research could assess the motivational level of these students. We could learn what is driving these students to pursue post-secondary education. Assess their intrinsic and extrinsic levels of motivation and perceived rewards. In order to obtain this information, research could be conducted within several areas. For instance, at the high school level (from grade 9 and follow them through to grade 12) in order to determine if attitudes and aspirations have changed.

In addition, continued research could explore the motivation levels of Black male and female students when it comes to pursuing post secondary education. As well, determine the graduation rates amongst these two groups.

Continuous research could also reveal whether or not minority teachers/or the lack of minority teachers at the high school level has an influence on the aspirations of Black students.

Additionally, an investigation into the Parent's educational level could reveal motivation levels. This would determine if this has an influence on the post-secondary education pursuits of their children.

### ***Mentorships and Role Models***

Future research could potentially reveal the effectiveness of mentorship relationships on this student population. Would graduation rates at the high school and post-secondary level increase if students were mentored along the way? Special attention could be paid to young Black males.

Establishing and monitoring mentorship relationships from the elementary level to post secondary. This could potentially be a 20 year study. An Academic could spend their entire career researching this demographic group. Furthermore, this research could potentially reveal how the education of Black youth (or lack thereof), affects the Windsor community.

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**APPENDIXES****APPENDIX A****CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH – STUDENT FORM**

**Title of Study:** Factors Influencing Black Students in Windsor and Their Pursuit of Post-Secondary Education.

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Marium Tolson-Murty, a student researcher from the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor under the supervisor of Dr. Clinton Beckford. The results of this study will contribute to a theses for the Masters program within the Faculty of Education.

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This study will investigate the various factors at play which impact on the post-secondary aspirations and pursuits of Black high school students in Windsor. The research seeks to unravel the fundamental dynamics and complexities of this issue in identifying the aspirations of Black students towards higher education and the obstacles that stand in the way of them meeting these aspirations. The researcher wants to find out what post secondary education aspirations do Black high school students in Windsor have and what personal, socio-economic, socio-cultural, gender related, career counseling and other factors shape these aspirations. I also want to find out what factors prevent students from actually pursuing their post secondary educational dreams. An important issue will be how realistic are students aspirations in the context of their academic performance and knowledge of University and College requirements.

**PROCEDURES**

Participants in the study will be engaged in up to three research activities:

**1<sup>st</sup> Interview:**

You will be provided with some background information about the study and why it is being conducted. All participants in the study will be assured confidentiality. The first requirement will be for you to identify yourself as African Canadian. African Canadian being defined as a Canadian citizen and one or both of your parents are of African decent (descendants of the Underground Railroad and born in the Windsor-Essex County Region) and one or both of your grandparents are of African descent. The second criteria, is a student of African or Caribbean descent who are Canadian citizens, whose parents were born in the Windsor-Essex County Region. Second, you will be asked to complete a survey to provide the researcher with more information about yourself – mainly demographic, quantitative data. This entire procedure should take about 45 minutes to one hour.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Interview:**

An initial interview will be conducted to collect qualitative data about student's post-secondary school plans. This process should take about 45 minutes.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Interview**

The final brief interview will be conducted with students who have applied to post-secondary institutions after colleges and universities have sent out their offers of admissions to students. This process will take about 45 minutes.

**POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

Subjects that choose to participate in the research will not be subjected to physical harm. There are no foreseeable psychological risks however; the subject matter may be emotional for some participants. If subjects do feel disturbed by content presented in the survey(s), you are encouraged to contact the researcher.

**POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

There are no direct benefits from participating in the research study. Participants may get a sense of satisfaction in terms of becoming aware of themselves and their future goals.

Due to the fact a study like this has never been conducted in Windsor, the results of this study may be beneficial to the African Canadian community and school boards when addressing diversity issues.

**PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

Participants will not receive monetary compensation for participating in the research. Students may use the time spent assisting in the research study towards the 40 hours of community service required for all Ontario secondary school students before they graduate.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Your real names will never be used and your personal information will be accessible only to the researcher.

Participants in the study will not be required to provide us with their real names. Pseudonyms will be given to all subjects to ensure privacy is protected. The information collected will only be viewed by the researcher(s) conducting the study in the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. Once the data has been collected the theses will be written and then defended. After the defense, access to the study will be made available at the Leddy Library at the University of Windsor.

**PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

It is your decision if you would like to participate in the research study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any

questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. The subject may not have the option of retrieving any data once it has been submitted for the research study. Due to the anonymous nature of the data and the level of confidentiality involved, the subject is not at risk of being revealed.

## **FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE SUBJECTS**

Research findings will be made available on the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board website at [www.uwindsor.ca/reb](http://www.uwindsor.ca/reb)

## **SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA**

There is the possibility that the results of this study will be used in subsequent studies conducted by the researcher.

## **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You might also choose not to answer specific questions with which you are uncomfortable. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3916; e-mail: [lbunn@uwindsor.ca](mailto:lbunn@uwindsor.ca).

## **SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE**

I understand the information provided for the study **A Relationship between parental involvement and cultural expectations and the pursuit of post-secondary education amongst African Canadian students @ as described herein**. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B



## LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

**Title of Study:** Factors Influencing Black Students in Windsor and Their Pursuit of Post-Secondary Education.

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Marium Tolson-Murty, a student researcher from the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor under the supervisor of Dr. Clinton Beckford. The results of this study will contribute to a theses for the Masters program within the Faculty of Education.

### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study will investigate the various factors at play which impact on the post-secondary aspirations and pursuits of Black high school students in Windsor. The research seeks to unravel the fundamental dynamics and complexities of this issue in identifying the aspirations of Black students towards higher education and the obstacles that stand in the way of them meeting these aspirations. The researcher wants to find out what post secondary education aspirations do Black high school students in Windsor have and what personal, socio-economic, socio-cultural, gender related, career counseling and other factors shape these aspirations. I also want to find out what factors prevent students from actually pursuing their post secondary educational dreams. An important issue will be how realistic are students aspirations in the context of their academic performance and knowledge of University and College requirements.

### PROCEDURES

Participants in the study will be engaged in up to three research activities:

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Interview:

You will be provided with some background information about the study and why it is being conducted. All participants in the study will be assured confidentiality. The first requirement will be for you to identify yourself as African Canadian. African Canadian being defined as a Canadian citizen and one or both of your parents are of African decent (descendants of the Underground Railroad and born in the Windsor-Essex County Region) and one or both of your grandparents are of African descent. The second criteria, is a student of African or Caribbean descent who are Canadian citizens, whose parents were born in the Windsor-Essex County Region. Second, you will be asked to complete a survey to provide the researcher with more information about yourself – mainly demographic, quantitative data. This entire procedure should take about 45 minutes to one hour.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Interview:**

An initial interview will be conducted to collect qualitative data about student's post-secondary school plans. This process should take about 45 minutes.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Interview**

The final brief interview will be conducted with students who have applied to post-secondary institutions after colleges and universities have sent out their offers of admissions to students. This process will take about 45 minutes.

**POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

Subjects that choose to participate in the research will not be subjected to physical harm. There are no foreseeable psychological risks however; the subject matter may be emotional for some participants. If subjects do feel disturbed by content presented in the survey(s), you are encouraged to contact the researcher.

**POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

There are no direct benefits from participating in the research study. Participants may get a sense of satisfaction in terms of becoming aware of themselves and their future goals.

Due to the fact a study like this has never been conducted in Windsor, the results of this study may be beneficial to the African Canadian community and school boards when addressing diversity issues.

**PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

Participants will not receive monetary compensation for participating in the research. Students may use the time spent assisting in the research study towards the 40 hours of community service required for all Ontario secondary school students before they graduate.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Your real names will never be used and your personal information will be accessible only to the researcher.

Participants in the study will not be required to provide us with their real names. Pseudonyms will be given to all subjects to ensure privacy is protected. The information collected will only be viewed by the researcher(s) conducting the study in the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. Once the data has been collected the theses will be written and then defended. After the defence, access to the study will be made available at the Leddy Library at the University of Windsor.

**PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

It is your decision if you would like to participate in the research study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. The subject may not have the option of

retrieving any data once it has been submitted for the research study. Due to the anonymous nature of the data and the level of confidentiality involved, the subject is not at risk of being revealed.

## **FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE SUBJECTS**

Research findings will be made available on the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board website at [www.uwindsor.ca/reb](http://www.uwindsor.ca/reb) by Winter 2007.

## **SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA**

There is the possibility that the results of this study will be used in subsequent studies conducted by the researcher.

## **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You might also choose not to answer specific questions with which you are uncomfortable. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3916; e-mail: [lbunn@uwindsor.ca](mailto:lbunn@uwindsor.ca).

## **SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE**

I understand the information provided for the study **A** Relationship between parental involvement and cultural expectations and the pursuit of post-secondary education amongst African Canadian students **@** as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

## **SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

## APPENDIX C

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

**Title of Study:** Factors Influencing Black Students in Windsor and Their Pursuit of Post-Secondary Education.

Your child has been asked to participate in a research study conducted by Marium Tolson-Murty, a student researcher from the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor under the supervisor of Dr. Clinton Beckford. The results of this study will contribute to a theses for the Masters program within the Faculty of Education.

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This study will investigate the various factors at play which impact on the post-secondary aspirations and pursuits of Black high school students in Windsor. The research seeks to unravel the fundamental dynamics and complexities of this issue in identifying the aspirations of Black students towards higher education and the obstacles that stand in the way of them meeting these aspirations. The researcher wants to find out what post secondary education aspirations do Black high school students in Windsor have and what personal, socio-economic, socio-cultural, gender related, career counseling and other factors shape these aspirations. I also want to find out what factors prevent students from actually pursuing their post secondary educational dreams. An important issue will be how realistic are students aspirations in the context of their academic performance and knowledge of University and College requirements.

**PROCEDURES**

Participants in the study will be engaged in up to three research activities:

**1<sup>st</sup> Interview:**

I will ask your child to provide with some background information about the study and why it is being conducted. All participants in the study will be assured confidentiality. The first requirement will be for you to identify yourself as African Canadian. African Canadian being defined as a Canadian citizen and one or both of your parents are of African decent (descendants of the Underground Railroad and born in the Windsor-Essex County Region) and one or both of your grandparents are of African descent. The second criteria, is a student of African or Caribbean descent who are Canadian citizens, whose parents were born in the Windsor-Essex County Region. Second, you will be asked to complete a survey to provide the researcher

with more information about yourself – mainly demographic, quantitative data. This entire procedure should take about 45 minutes to one hour.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Interview:

An initial interview will be conducted with your child to collect qualitative data about student's post-secondary school plans. This process should take about 45 minutes.

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Interview

The final brief interview will be conducted with your child where at this point he/she would have applied to post-secondary institutions and colleges and universities have sent their offers of admissions to students. This process will take about 45 minutes.

## POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Subjects that choose to participate in the research will not be subjected to physical harm. There are no foreseeable psychological risks however; the subject matter may be emotional for some participants. If subjects do feel disturbed by content presented in the survey(s), you are encouraged to contact the researcher.

## POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There are no direct benefits from participating in the research study. Participants may get a sense of satisfaction in terms of becoming aware of themselves and their future goals.

Due to the fact that a study like this has never been conducted in Windsor, the results of this study may be beneficial to the African Canadian community and school boards when addressing diversity issues.

## PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

Participants will not receive monetary compensation for participating in the research. Students may use the time spent assisting in the research study towards the 40 hours of community service required for all Ontario secondary school students before they graduate.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Your real names will never be used and your personal information will be accessible only to the researcher.

Participants in the study will not be required to provide us with their real names. Pseudonyms will be given to all subjects to ensure privacy is protected. The information collected will only be viewed by the researcher(s) conducting the study in the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. Once the data has been collected the theses will be written and then defended. After the defence, access to the study will be made available at the Leddy Library at the University of Windsor.

## PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

It is your decision if you would like to participate (and/or your child) in the research study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to

answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. The subject may not have the option of retrieving any data once it has been submitted for the research study. Due to the anonymous nature of the data and the level of confidentiality involved, the subject is not at risk of being revealed.

## **FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE SUBJECTS**

Research findings will be made available on the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board website at [www.uwindsor.ca/reb](http://www.uwindsor.ca/reb) by Winter 2007

## **SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA**

There is the possibility that the results of this study will be used in subsequent studies conducted by the researcher.

## **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You (and/or your child) might also choose not to answer specific questions with which you are uncomfortable. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3916; e-mail: [lbunn@uwindsor.ca](mailto:lbunn@uwindsor.ca).

## **SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE**

I understand the information provided for the study **A** Relationship between parental involvement and cultural expectations and the pursuit of post-secondary education amongst African Canadian students **@** as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

## **SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

## APPENDIX D

Kenny Gbadebo, Executive Director  
Youth Connection Association  
647 Ouellette Ave, Suite 109  
Windsor, ON N9A 4J4

February 24, 2006

Dear Mr. Gbadebo:

I am a student researcher from the University of Windsor, pursuing my Masters degree in Education. I am conducting a study on the factors Influencing Black students in Windsor and their pursuit of post-secondary education.

In order to begin my research, I would like to request the opportunity to recruit students who regularly visit your community centre to participate in this study. Please be assured that the students recruited for this study will not be harmed in any way and any information collected will be completely confidential. Participation would be strictly on a voluntary basis.

I would like to request a meeting with you to discuss further the details of this research and the procedures that we will need to put in place in order to recruit your students. I will be in touch with you again soon however, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 253-3000 ext. 2035.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Regards,

Marium Tolson-Murty, B.A (Hons), B.Ed, M.Ed (Candidate)  
University of Windsor – Faculty of Education  
253-3000 ext. 2035  
marium@uwindsor.ca

## APPENDIX E

John Elliott, Director  
Sandwich Teen Action Group  
3735 King St.  
Windsor, ON N9C 1P7

February 24, 2006

Dear John:

I am a student researcher from the University of Windsor, pursuing my Masters degree in Education. I am conducting a study on the factors Influencing Black students in Windsor and their pursuit of post-secondary education.

In order to begin my research, I would like to request the opportunity to recruit students who regularly visit your community centre to participate in this study. Please be assured that the students recruited for this study will not be harmed in any way and any information collected will be completely confidential. Participation would be strictly on a voluntary basis.

I would like to request a meeting with you to discuss further the details of this research and the procedures that we will need to put in place in order to recruit your students. I will be in touch with you again soon however, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 253-3000 ext. 2035.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Regards,

Marium Tolson-Murty, B.A (Hons), B.Ed, M.Ed (Candidate)  
University of Windsor – Faculty of Education  
253-3000 ext. 2035  
marium@uwindsor.ca



## APPENDIX G



**FACTORS INFLUENCING BLACK STUDENTS IN WINDSOR AND THEIR  
PURSUIT OF POST SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Questionnaire: Please be assured that any information you provide will remain strictly confidential.  
If you are not comfortable answering some of the questions below, please feel free not to respond.

1. **Gender**
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  
2. **Please circle the grade level you are currently in.**  
9                      10                      11                      12
  
3. **Will you be attending High School in September 2006?**  
 Yes                       No
  
4. **Which level of study are you currently studying in High School?**  
 Applied  
 Academic  
 Essential
  
5. **How is your attendance at school? Have you had to miss days? If so, why?**
  
  
6. **What year were you born? (please circle your response)**  
1986  
1987  
1988  
1989  
1990

7. **What is your current age?** *(please circle your response)*  
 16                      17                      18                      19                      20

8. **What type of Secondary School do you attend?** *(please circle your response)*

- Public
- Catholic
- Private
- Other

**8 (a) What is the name of your High School?**

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9. **Nationality/Origin** *(please circle your response)*

- Canadian born
- Immigrant

**9(a)** If immigrant, identify your country/region of birth.

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**9(b)** If immigrant, how long have you lived in Canada?

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10. **Parental Background** *(please circle your response)*

- a. Canadian Born
- b. Immigrants

**10(c)** If immigrant, how long have your parents lived in Canada?

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11. **What is your status in Canada?** *(please circle your response)*

- a. Canadian Citizen
- b. Convention Refugee
- c. Permanent Resident

12. **Who do you currently live with?**

**13. What is your current grade point average in high school?**

Below 50%      50%-60%      60%-70%      70%-80%      80%- higher

**14. What are your plans after graduation?**


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**15. Do you have plans for post-secondary education?**

- Yes                      No
- 15(a) if yes, do you plan to attend**
- i. college
  - ii. university
  - iii. trade school/vocational school

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**15(b)** Do you plan to pursue this in the immediate future? (eg. Fall 2006)

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**15(c) if no, why not?** *(please write your answer)*

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**15 (d) What are your career goals?** *(please write your answer)*

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**16. What High School qualifications/courses do you need in order to pursue your career or to enter the post-secondary program you wish to enter?**  
*(please write your answer)*

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**16. (a) Have you taken any or all of these courses?**

- i. Yes, some
- ii. Yes, all
- iii. No

**17. Have you already applied for college or university or another post secondary institution?**

Yes

No

18. What encouragement have you received from teachers or guidance counsellors regarding your career goals?

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19. How often have you met with your guidance counsellor this year to discuss post-secondary education pursuits and career counseling this year? *(please circle your response)*

- Once or twice  
 3 to 4 times  
 about 6 times  
 once a week  
 have not yet met with guidance counsellor this year

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

20. What encouragement have you received from teachers and guidance counsellors regarding post-secondary education?

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21. Have you attended any college or university information sessions at your school?

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22. What encouragement have you received from family regarding your career goals?

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23. What encouragement have you received from family regarding your post-secondary education?

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**24. Why do you want to pursue post-secondary education?**

- Full-fill personal goals
  - Increase knowledge
  - Preparation for career field
  - Meet new people
  - Other:
- 

**25. How do you plan to finance your post-secondary education?**

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**26. If you were offered admission into a university or college (or other post-secondary institution), what factors would prevent you from attending? (please write your answer)**

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**26. If you have applied to a post secondary institution, what factors might prevent you from attending being accepted?**

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**27. What courses do you plan to take or which program will you chose to major in if you plan to attend college or university or vocational/trade school? (please write your answer)**

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**28. How many high school credits do you have right now?**

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**29. How many high school credits do you need to graduate grade 12?**

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30. Are you on track to graduate High School?

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31. Have you already received your offer of admission?

To:

- College
- University
- Other

32. Where do you plan to attend school in Fall 2006?

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33. What will you do if you are not admitted to the post-secondary institution of your choice?

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34. What will you do if you are not admitted to a post-secondary institution?

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*Thank you for your participation in this University of Windsor, Faculty of Education*

*Research Study.*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	
NAME (first name only):	
PHONE #:	
EMAIL:	

#### SECTION FOR GRADE 11 STUDENTS ONLY

We may want to contact you in the Fall of 2006 to ask you just a few follow up questions. Can we contact you in the fall to ask you about your plans for post secondary education? Please be assured that any information you provide will remain strictly confidential.

## FOOTNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Although the term Black is used in this study to describe persons of African or Caribbean descent, the term Negro is being used in some sections of this document based on the historical information obtained from the Robin Winks text, *The Blacks in Canada: A History* (1971).

<sup>1</sup> The participants self-identified themselves as Black. By having a participant reveal that he is from Iraq, this indicates that not all participants who identify themselves as Black were born in Canada, Africa or the Caribbean.

## VITA AUCTORIS

Marium Tolson-Murty was born and raised in Windsor, Ontario into a large African Canadian family. Marium is the youngest child of George Tolson and Martha Elliott Tolson. A graduate of W.D. Lowe Secondary School, Marium went on to obtain her Honours B.A. in Communication Studies from the University of Windsor. As a University of Windsor undergraduate student, she became involved with many volunteer activities. This includes volunteering in various capacities with the Students Orientating Students program through the Educational Development Centre; volunteering with the Centre for Career Education; also, participating in the Volunteer Internship Program during its inaugural year.

Upon graduation in 1996, Marium worked in the areas of marketing and promotion for organizations such as the Media Centre at the Greater Essex County District School Board, Bowes Publishing and Compu-Quote. In 1997, Marium was hired as the Co-ordinator of the Volunteer Internship Program- the program she volunteered for a year earlier as a student. As the Co-ordinator of Canada's first Volunteer Internship program, she was able to increase awareness about the program to all students on campus; designed methods to increase enrolment into the program; supervised approximately 250 students per year in the program, developed learning strategies for students; assisted students in obtaining career related volunteer experience; and built relationships with community organizations who participated in the program.

In 2003, Marium obtained her Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Windsor and is currently completing her Masters in Education degree for Summer 2008. In 2005, Marium switched gears and was hired as a Student Recruitment Officer

for the Office of Liaison & Student Recruitment for the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Windsor. In this role, Marium provides prospective students with information about all of the programs offered through this faculty and travels to various high schools across Ontario working with students and guidance counsellors to promote the University of Windsor.

Marium continues to be involved in the community. She has volunteered with the Big Sister's organization through the In-School Mentoring Program; also, she is on the executive of the Hour A Day Study Club; she is currently serving her second term as Vice-President of the Windsor and District Black Coalition. Additionally, in 2007 Marium became a chartered member of the first Canadian chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority – Psi Delta Omega Chapter.

Marium's future plans include possibly completing her Doctorate and continuing her mentoring and research in the areas of minority student aspirations and attainment of post-secondary education.