Introduction

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I am honored to provide an introduction for the special issue of *Urban Education Research and Policy Annuals (UERPA)*. As a research institution, Tennessee State University (TSU) faculty value their role in molding the next generation of scholars. Guided by TSU researchers Dr. Kisha Bryan and Dr. Andrea Tyler, our graduate students and their co-authors embrace the discourse around urban education topics. For instance, Arnold reflects on the growing debate of privatization in public education. As urban educators strategize on providing optimal opportunities to its students in metropolitan areas, the value proposition of public schools comes into full view. Arnold delivers a macro-level perspective of how public schools must function to sustain themselves.

Similarly, Iriogbe focuses on the development of self-regulation as a vital aspect of early childhood education, inserting the importance of early childhood education teachers in child development. Kaley examines sex education programs that examine those issues from multiple perspectives. These two articles advocate for P-20 education support a futuristic paradigm, embracing a multiculturalism approach to ensure student development in policy and implementation. The discussion that unfolds will be useful as this discussion is held among the system's stakeholders and covers the spectrum of topics needed for effective school systems.

Greer and Webb conduct a micro-level analysis of the impact of an educational infrastructure on the experience of young African American men. The scholars center on the constructs of self- esteem and self-concept; however, scant research has considered the construct of mattering. Greer and Webb as they consider the educational foundation and its impact on young African American men, reviewing different school systems and subsequent effect on self-esteem and self-concept.

The remaining articles consider the historically black university (HBCU) as the primary unit of analysis. Baker conducts an empirical study of an intervention strategy on student retention and academic performance. The author examined the effect of tutoring on retention. Mohamed and Bryan conduct a qualitative analysis on perceptions of international students in an HBCU setting. The authors review the contextual factors that influence the construct of belonging and also discuss the role of culture and religion to the extent to which students perceive levels of belonging. Finally, McKoy and others consider the factor of persistence among African American women undergraduate students in engineering.

These articles contribute to urban education and pose relevant areas for future research.