Continued Directions for Urban Education: Towards a Model of Promise, Practice, and Possibility
An Editorial for the Inaugural Issue

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There have been great strides since the landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) where the separate, but equal doctrine for public schools was considered unconstitutional. However, these triumphant victories in the pursuit for equality for marginalized populations can only be considered indication markers for the journey moving forward. Nearly five decades later, racial segregation in schools persist under the façade of redistricting neighborhoods, and parental income status (Anderson, 1988; Kozol, 2005; Meyer, 2000). And sadly, the populations who have been historically marginalized and/or ostracized for their differing economic, social, and cultural backgrounds is still at the greatest loss in terms of educational opportunity and promise (Ford & Moore, 2004; Gibbs, 1988; Kozol, 2005; Majors, 2001). Much research has described the racial disparities that continue to serve as detrimental factors for African American/Black and Hispanic/Latino (a) students' academic success: school discipline policies (Dillon, 2010; Fenning &

Rose, 2007; Goodman & Hilton, 2010; Lewin, 2012; Lewis, Butler, Bonner, & Joubert, 2010), special education (Artiles & Trent, 1994; Grossman, 1995; Jordan, 2005), student tracking (Ansalone, 2010; Buck, 2010; Oakes & Saunders, 2008), and overall low attendance and graduation ratings (NFES, 2011; Toldson & Lewis, 2012).

However, there has also been a surge in research that seeks to find resolution to these unjust issues in order to change the paradigm surrounding deficit models of education for this demographic of students. In recognition of the educational potentiality for Black & Latino students, research asserts that the heart of this matter directly involves, but is not limited to: reshaping teacher perceptions and overall attitudes about diverse learners (Chapman, 2011; Landsman & Lewis, 2011), creating a culturally aware environment for students (Ladson-Billings, 2011; Millner, 2009), providing alternative schooling types such as charter models (Bettinger, 2005; Tatum, 1997), and advocating for college-

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preparedness and readiness programs that will encourage students to look beyond primary and secondary educational goal attainment (Toldson & Lewis, 2012; Swail, 2005). These contributions have made a significant impact on the field of education and have provided rationale for the notion that research must continue onward and upward to advancing urban student academic outcomes.

But, there is still much work to be done in terms of meeting the needs of diverse learners that not only face the traditional and historical challenges of schooling, but are also privy to new challenges that include technological advancements and innovations that can either ignite or dampen future opportunities (Lewis, 2011). It is with this sentiment that the theme of this issue is timely for providing educational practitioners, administrators, and stakeholders with ways to increase student achievement amongst the new and ever-changing demographic of urban school populations.

The *Urban Education Research & Policy Annuals* is a graduate student publication that provides an educational platform for perspectives from developing scholars while illustrating advocacy for reform initiatives and impetus on advancing opportunities for traditionally marginalized student populations. This need is well-warranted to the extent that many inequities in education continue to exist for traditionally marginalized student populations. The purpose of this inaugural issue was to highlight research that can assist in the shaping and re-shaping of educational promise, practice, and policy. And in that, the purpose was fulfilled; in congruence with the theme of providing implications, directions, and policy reform for increasing student achievement, contributing authors provided insights to the state of urban education by investigating racial and gender inequities in public school settings, illustrated effective strategies and interventions to increase student achievement, delivered theoretical perspectives that can enhance teaching methods, and reviewed policy structures that have impacted minority demographics.

In the first article, Rohn examines current literature on matters of race, class, and gender equity in mathematics education by using critical race theory, feminism, and post-structuralism as a theoretical lens. The author advocates and provides recommendations for educational reformists to consider single-gender schooling as an alternative for addressing racial inequities. In the second article, Glover elaborates the ties between cultural identity, home-language speech patterns, and academic performance ratings for speakers of African American English (AAE). She provides strategies and recommendations for teachers to recognize and appreciate cultural and linguistic differences from this demographic of students in order to facilitate academic success.

In the third article, Hopper argues for the implementation of both behaviorism and constructivism in urban school environments as a means to building learning communities. Reviewing theorists such as Dewey, Piaget, Vygotsky, and Thorndike, the author illustrates educational models that are aligned with Common Core Standards and curriculum. The policy brief provided by Menand, highlights educational policy reform initiatives such as No Child Left Behind, Race to the Top, and Common Core State Standards and their historical and potential impacts on African students.

The author provides recommendations that utilize culturally relevant curriculum approaches as part of teacher education models in order to ensure the success of these diverse learners. It is my hope that the research presented inside this issue will provide insights to educators, administrators, and stakeholders so that we all can continue the momentum for educational equity for urban school populations.

Lakia M. Scott
Editor

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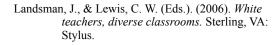
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