

## A Foreword

In recent months, college students and administrators have increasingly turned their attention to issues of race on campus. High-profile protests at Yale, the University of Missouri, and other institutions have sparked renewed public interest in racial equity in higher education (Dean, 2015). At the same time, the Supreme Court has once again taken up the issue of affirmative action in college admissions (Savage, 2016). This confluence of events has led to widespread public dialogue about the experiences of African American students in higher education, in K-12 public schools, and in broader society.

The articles that comprise this fourth volume of *Urban Education Research and Policy Annuals* constitute a substantive contribution to that ongoing public dialogue. Our contributors consider issues facing African American students and leaders in higher education, K-12, and special education; dimensions of African American identity; and how African American students and educators navigate STEM fields. Combined, these articles provide valuable insight into both the challenges facing African American students, and opportunities to provide equitable opportunities for learning for all students.

This issue has been divided into five themed sections. The first section includes pieces from authors who critically examine higher education in the context of African American students. Ramon B. Goings makes the case for a greater focus on high-achieving, nontraditional Black male college students to counter the dominant narrative about African American males in higher education. Tammy D. Lane assesses the obstacles presented by financial aid to African American students pursuing their degrees. In a time of increasingly scarce campus resources, Kimberly Sanders makes the case for the importance of Black culture centers on college campuses. DeWitt Scott provides recommendations for how predominantly White institutions can recruit and retain African American male administrators. In his examination of African American foster youth in higher education, Kenyon L. Whitman considers how these students are doubly marginalized. These articles shed new light on how African American students and faculty navigate higher education.

The articles in the second section of this issue take up the theme of identity and intersectionality. Devin D. Moss considers how queer Black males navigate educational and professional spaces. Moss ultimately argues that the intersectional nature of these and other identities mandates more complex and multidimensional policies to combat bias and homophobia. Shawna M. Patterson takes a similar look at the intersectional nature of identity for Black females. Patterson demonstrates that traditional frameworks of African American identity development fail to account for gender, and proposes a new conceptual framework for female African American identity development. In her complementary piece, Keisha M. Baylor reports on a qualitative study of the experiences of African American female doctoral students in educational leadership. Baylor describes how these students navigate institutional and professional hegemony in the context of their racial and gendered identities. These scholars provide important insight into the juncture of race, gender, and sexuality.

The third section of this issue focuses on K-12 education. Julia C. Ransom considers the impact of an ethic of care on Black male students in an alternative GED program. Laura Reid Marks, Cirecie A. West-Olatunji, and Rachael D. Goodman describe a newly piloted instrument for evaluating the parenting proficiencies of African American parents in a culturally responsive way. They consider the possibilities of the instrument for predicting student academic achievement. With respect to K-12 educational leadership, Phillip A. Smith evaluates the evidence of racism in the hiring and promotion of school leaders. Lastly, Jasmine D. Williams

presents a phenomenological study of African American male homeschool students. These pieces push the boundaries of the extant body of knowledge about African American students in K-12 schools.

In the fourth section, authors take a critical look at special education. The overrepresentation of African American students in special education is well documented (Lewis, Chamber, & Butler, 2012), making this a key issue in urban education. Using the ecological model of human development, Farris Muhammad proposes a model to explain how race, class, and gender converge to produce this overrepresentation. Shawn Robinson provides a fresh perspective on Black males who qualify for special education services and also are identified as gifted. Robinson articulates the Triple Identity Theory as a lens for understanding the academic and social experiences of African American males who are gifted and have a disability. The articles in this section add nuance to the ongoing conversation about race and special education.

The fifth and final section of this issue revolves around science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, both domestically and abroad. Tonisha B. Lane documents how undergraduate research opportunities can create spaces for African American students to resist microaggressions and stereotypes in STEM. Similarly, KiMi L. Wilson explores how African American students develop identities as math and science learners in K-12 settings, and how this early identity development impacts STEM participation at the college level. Taking an international perspective, Olalekan O. Idowu investigates school factors impacting high school math achievement in Nigeria. Lastly, Jessica A. Wilson and Natalie S. King report the findings of an autoethnographic study of the experiences of African American female directors of informal STEM programs. These authors highlight the challenges faced by African Americans in STEM education, but also the opportunities for resistance and transformative change in these spaces.

As a whole, the articles in this volume represent both the tremendous progress that has been made to advance equitable education for African American students in urban schools, and the tremendous work yet to be done. My hope is that this volume of *Urban Education Research and Policy Annuals* will inform future research, policies, and school practices to advance the cause of social justice through education.

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#### References

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