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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

EMERGING LEADERSHIP AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALE  
EDUCATORS

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

ALLYSON RENÉ LEGGETT

Norman, Oklahoma

2002

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EMERGING LEADERSHIP AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALE  
EDUCATORS

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

BY

Mary John O'Hair  
Drey Gamm  
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Courtney Dang Co  
Dan O'Hair

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In my life I have set forth many goals. It is only because of my Savior Jesus Christ working in my life that I accomplished them. It is my lifelong goal to carry out what I have been placed on the earth to do, and by completing this degree, I am better equipped to fulfill His will for my life.

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## DEDICATION

To my grandmother Doris Gertrude Huge, who with continued support,  
recognizes what is inside of me and encourages me to make my mark while on  
this earth.

In memory of my late grandparents:  
Louise Houck, Great-Grandmother  
Alice E. Leggett, Grandmother

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## PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to understand the process of why African-American female teachers seek administration early in their teaching career. This study examines the chronological stages of five women teachers that have begun preparing for an administrative position, thus the researcher is provided key factors to use in further studies.

The phenomenological method of qualitative research allowed me to interview five African-American female teachers to find out why they want to go into administration. Through open-ended interview questions, the interviewee responses revealed common themes, including the importance of mentors in developing leadership skills, post-graduate educational training, community involvement, personal goal setting and meaningful teaching experiences. Despite their limited administrative experience, the African-American women in this study proved successful by capitalizing on these themes.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

Throughout history, a relatively small number of African-Americans have held leadership roles in public and private school systems across the country (Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995). In roles as administrators, both in common and in higher education, the number of African Americans continues to remain low. However, during the last decade, black women have pioneered and forged new frontiers as educational leaders (Rusher, 1996). Because of these contributions, more should be known regarding the ambitions and visions that motivate such women. The purpose of this phenomenological study is, therefore, to understand the visions of African-American women teachers who seek administration early in their teaching careers, specifically the principalship.

### Historical Background of the Problem

The removal and decline of African Americans as educational leaders began as early as American history (Shakeshaft, 1989; Williams, M., Jackson, K., Kincy, M., Wheelter, S., Davis, R., Crawford, R., Forte, M., & Bell, E., 1979). Slaves, who were subject to keeping house, could often sit near a lesson given to their master's children and as onlookers, become familiar with the alphabet and the sounding of words. To educate others, these slaves would use what they learned from their masters and frequently the Bible was used as a teaching tool. When slavery was abolished freed slaves were allowed to set up their own

schools. Teachers were given used supplies and textbooks to teach with and conditions were certainly unequal (Foster, 1997; Reid-Merritt, 1996).

Following the Emancipation Proclamation, the rush for “Negro” education expanded (Reid-Merritt, 1996). The federal government assigned over \$5 million to supplement funds for school buildings, teachers, and teachers’ salaries through the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (Lerner, 1972; Reid-Merritt, 1996; Shakeshaft, 1989). African Americans were taking the initiative to begin free schools for black youth; black leaders began to found industrial schools and normal training institutes. Merritt (1996) further explained that the federal initiative for African Americans was well under way until the 1876 election compromise between Democratic candidate Samuel Tilden and Republican Rutherford Hayes. The ballots of the election were close; four states contested the votes and they were recalled. After a year of disagreement began, the Democratic Party agreed to let the Republican candidate Hayes serve as president in exchange for the end of the Reconstruction. For African Americans this meant the end of many freedoms, including educational opportunities. Hayes appointed a Confederate leader to his advisory cabinet and soon after efforts to make African Americans equal citizens were eliminated. All educational gains and employment opportunities for blacks were eradicated after this election. African Americans who successfully established schools before the election fought to keep them. Because of segregation, blacks did not have the freedom to attend White schools so enrollment in black schools increased. Educators who were fortunate enough to complete college before the civil rights movement often attended historically black institutions. Career options were limited for the

graduates, however, because of their nurturing school environments, often, students were extremely successful (Reid-Merritt, 1996).

In 1954, *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* declared segregation unconstitutional. While a positive milestone, an unintended consequence of the ensuing civil rights movement was the displacement of several thousand African American teachers and principals (Fenwick, 2001). During desegregation and the civil rights movement, African Americans were often dismissed from their posts in formerly segregated schools and replaced by white teachers and principals in the gradually integrating ones (Irvine, 1988). The men and women who had overcome significant odds in this time of racial inequity had a commitment to their communities and some of their credentials surpassed those of their White counterparts (Fenwick, 2001).

Even so, in Title VII of the 1964 U.S. Civil Rights Act, employment discrimination based on race, gender, and other diverse attributes was eliminated. In 1965 "affirmative action" was established by Executive Order 11246 to oversee the hiring and promotion practices of federal contracts with specific regard to African Americans. In John Kennedy's presidency affirmative action began to take shape with the clear intent to redress years of race and sex discrimination (Reid-Merritt, 1996). It is important to note that Kennedy set the precedence for equality among African Americans before his death, however, President Lyndon Johnson carried out the movements. In 1972, the Executive Order was extended to women as well. Because of this, employers were given a mandate to adopt formal goals and schedule how each would be accomplished. These measures were to ensure female and minorities had the chance to gain

equal status and employment opportunities in America. After the order was implemented there was a phenomenal increase in the number of minorities in higher education. Programs were developed, such as Upward Bound, which challenged minorities and at risk students to pursue education (Reid-Merritt, 1996).

Such sentiment gave rise to the “reverse discrimination” cry.

*Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978) was a pivotal case against affirmative action, decided by the Supreme Court. This case examined a white male who was denied admission into medical school twice because of slots allocated by underrepresented minorities. The plaintiff argued that minorities were ranked against each other, rather than the entire pool of applicants; he therefore challenged affirmative action based on fairness in admissions requirements. The court ruled that the special admissions program to which the university abided, violated the equal protection clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, thus, the reverse discrimination issue emerged (*Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, 1978). Moreover, recent court decisions question affirmative action claiming that it is unfair. In the case of *Hopwood v. State of Texas*, 1996, similar reverse discrimination claims were addressed. This case examined Texas university law school students who were denied admission into law school because minority applicants were given favorable admission based on their race. The court ruled that the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment did not allow institutions to discriminate in order to elevate one race over the other (*Hopwood v. Texas*, 1996).

More recently, the U.S. Army lost a case in 1997 in a federal district court (*Lt. Colonel Raymond Saunders v. Thomas E. White*, 1997). The court examined

the promotion of women and minorities in the U.S. Army and ruled that preferential treatment had been given to women and minorities (*Feminist Daily News*, 2002). The court's decision ordered members of the evaluation board to re-evaluate applications for promotion and choose the "best qualified" applicant rather than base decisions on race or gender. The court ruled that only when applications reveal that women and minorities are underrepresented should the army reevaluate the affirmative action policy.

Affirmative action opponent Gerald A. Reynolds took a seat in the current Bush Administration to head the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). This office is entrusted to protect the civil rights of minorities, women, and people with disabilities from kindergarten through graduate school. Reynolds held leadership positions as former president of the Center for New Black Leadership and counsel to the Center for Equal Opportunity; both organizations strongly oppose affirmative action for minorities and women (*Feminist Daily News*, 2002). Fearing the end of affirmative action is near, Reid-Merritt (1996) writes,

To stop affirmative action now only means that all of our children and grandchildren will have to confront the old issues of inequality down the line. Affirmative action has helped many black women get off the ground that hadn't before. In some areas their achievement appears to surpass that of black males. In those instances, black and white men complain that black women are hired as a 'two-for-one' affirmative action gain. (pp. 101-102)

Despite the apparent demise of affirmative action, currently, there are programs, developed under the Bill Clinton administration, and continued under the George W. Bush Administration, to accomplish goals similar to those that were a part of Johnson's, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers and Gear-

Up. These programs not only employ minorities, but also seek to encourage young people in disadvantaged minority communities to become educated leaders of tomorrow (Fenwick, 2001; Reid-Merritt, 1996). Unfortunately, the perception is that because such programs were and are in place, gender biases and discrimination have virtually been eliminated (Bonuso & Shakeshaft, 1982).

### Current Problem

In nearly 40% of American public schools, 90% or more of the student population are students of color and speak a first language other than English (Fenwick, 2001). According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2000), the number of minority school students is increasing. There is a significant number of teachers, specifically minority teachers, that will retire by 2005 (AACTE, 1988). Because effective strategies that lead to the production of minority teachers are not in place, it is also likely that by 2005, the number of teachers of color will decline by 5% (Goodwin, 1991).

In the 2000 report from the National Center for Educational Statistics, the data presented about the disparity between students of color and teachers of color was alarming. African American students made up 17% of the nation's public schools, but only 8% of the average teaching staff was African American (NCES, 2000). A mere 13% of the nation's teachers are minority, and this percentage is shrinking (NCES, 2000). The shortage of minority teachers may be attributed in part to some expanded professional opportunities that have opened in the post civil rights era, the horizontal shift and the decline of minority college enrollment, inadequate pre-collegiate teacher preparation, or certification barriers to the profession (Edson, 1988; Fenwick, 2001; Gordon, 2000).

According to Northouse (2001), underutilized women and people of color are the untapped value that organizations of all types need to enhance creativity, change efforts, teamwork, and financial benefits. With women of color, specifically African-American educators, a wealth of information will be brought to schools and communities where their effectiveness and expertise is needed, particularly, principals who deal with large numbers of students on a daily basis.

There is a basis from which to recruit such individuals because college admissions are increasing for minorities and females, despite the absence of African American female leadership in predominately white and black institutions (Rusher, 1996). The undisputable data states that African American women earning master's and doctoral degrees are at an all time high and surpass the number of African American men earning the same degrees (Rusher, 1996). According to Annette Rusher, these statistics indicate that the number of qualified black females do not coincide with the number of black females in leadership positions (1996).

The 1998 U.S. labor force surveyed 131.5 million people of which 60.75 million (46.2%) were women (Northouse, 2001). Seventy-four percent of the women in this group worked full time and earned \$0.76 for every dollar earned by men. The Catalyst report revealed that based on the U.S. labor force data, of the women that held administrative positions (leadership roles), 87.7% were European American, while 12.1% were African-American. The remaining percentages were held by Latino and Asian American women (Northouse, 2001).

The Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC) surveyed women in U.S. public schools for the 1999-2000 school year. The results were

based on the 1995 responses from the survey. The EEOC Aggregate Report on Elementary and Secondary School Employment published in 2000 reported that out of 1853 respondents, only 133 of the executives were minority and 32 were African American women. Executives and officials include executive superintendents in U.S. public schools. The EEOC Report on Educational Services (2000), which was limited to federally funded initiatives and programs, revealed that the total number of executives, administrators, and managers was eight thousand-seven hundred-twenty three. While White females held more than 50% of those positions, African American women held less than 5%, remaining numbers were held by Hispanic, American Indian, and Asian American women.

In the region that provides the setting for this study, the Oklahoma State Department of Education released the professional education staff summary for 2000-2001, which indicated that out of 429 superintendents across the state, four were African American. Of the four African American superintendents, one was female. The Oklahoma State Department of Education reports that there are 547 school districts. The remaining 118 administrative positions in the state are listed as assistant superintendent, and elementary superintendent. In K-12 school administration (principalship) the Oklahoma State Department of Education reported that there were 1403 building level administrators; 7% of those were African Americans, and 4% were African American women and 3% were African American men. Also in 2000-2001 there were 792 elementary school non-teaching principals. Of those, there were 403 White female elementary school principals and 39 African American female elementary school principals in the state of Oklahoma. Finally, there were 451 secondary school non-teaching

principals in the state of Oklahoma. Of the 451, 62 were female secondary school non-teaching principals, 81% were white females, and 16% were African American females.

Thus, the presence of African American women in leadership positions has been called the “invisible problem” (Rusher, 1996). Linda Darling-Hammond (1987) stated that the shortage of African American educators is a long standing problem. The term “token” has been referred to both White and African American women in higher education systems. When ‘token’ is used, it identifies one who has been hired because of her gender or race or both to fill a desired quota. In instances when African American women are hired under these circumstances, it is more difficult for them to overcome stereotypes from coworkers and colleagues. According to Dumas (1980), when African American women exhibit certain levels of occupational sophistication and leadership potential, they play symbolic roles while being denied the exercise of significant power. Rusher (1996) stated that African American women have difficulty balancing expectations and demands attached to their symbolic roles and those that come with professional status and responsibilities to their White counterparts. The acknowledgement that African American women in administration is far more than just a ‘token’ position will come about when the African American women critically study the nature of the institution in which they work, identify the culture of the people with whom they work, and involve themselves in the environment of the institution.

Apparently there are those willing to do this. In a 1997 report published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the area of principal

preparation was examined. Particularly relevant in this study, was the specific identification of the preparation for principals with less than four years of educational experience. The NCES study is also important for faculty in Educational Administration programs who are interested in improving the preparation of future principals. The NCES examined schools during the 1993-94 school year to find which principals indicated they participated in a district training or development program for aspiring school principals. NCES surveyed 79,618 public school principals. Of those, 24,445 had fewer than 4 years of experience; the remaining had more. Sixty-six percent of the minority principals indicated they participated in aspiring principals training, while only 44% of white principals participated in the program. The NCES report also stated that a greater female participation percentage was prevalent with 45% of the participants being female compared to 36% of the participants being male. The data also indicated that principals who lead in highly urban and central city areas were new administrators, meaning they had fewer than 4 years of educational experience. The NCES report concluded that a greater number of minorities participated in the aspiring principals program, had less than 4 years of educational experience, and were leaders in urban school communities.

Although some efforts have been made to increase the number of minority teachers and administrators, subtle factors seem to be aggravating the situation. Federal grants and privately funded initiatives have been developed to recruit teachers of color and retain them in their positions. By pursuing the need for administrators of color in this same way, through grants and initiatives, it may be likely that the numbers will increase in this area, however there are not very

many initiatives with this purpose in mind. A low 16% of the nation's principals are people of color and only 11% of those are African Americans (Fenwick, 2001). Further, Fenwick (2001) reported that the African American principals and teachers are more likely to hold a significant amount of educational experience, master's and/or doctorate degrees in educational administration, and professional credentials when they enter the principalship. In the last fourteen years there has been a 33% increase in the number of female school principals. In retrospect women hold a large majority of the teaching force at 73%. But there are still fewer women administrators than men (Fenwick, 2001).

Other studies confirm the Fenwick findings, indicating that minority rather than majority officials are more likely to give them that opportunity (Gill & Showell, 1991). An investigation of the hiring of women and minorities in institutions of education, both in public and private schools along with higher education institutions, research revealed that women and minorities were significantly more likely to be hired for jobs, organizations, and positions held by members of their own group (Konrad & Pfeffer, 1991). The researchers showed that the number of women in specific jobs across the institution, the number of women in administrative positions, and the fact that the predecessor was a woman all had a positive unique effect on the odds that a new hire was a woman (Konrad & Pfeffer, 1991).

### Significance and Purpose

Success is earned when African American women reach positions in educational leadership given the barriers that they face to obtain those positions (Edson, 1988). Barriers such as racism, sexism, and overcoming white privilege

are often dilemmas that African American women have to overcome. Scholar Judy Alston (1999) noted that issues of gender and race become so prevalent and interwoven that it is virtually impossible to determine one as a discrete variable from the other. The importance of identifying what black women are subsumed into within the confines of racism, and examining the challenges that black women overcome as overt or covert as they may seem, is part of the uniqueness of the problem (Alston, 1999; Jones & Montenegro, 1982; Pigford & Tonnsen, 1993). Although affirmative action can no longer be counted as a support system, factors in African American women's lives can be. Motivation from within, personal desire, and attention to the needs of the community, so often leads African American women into administration (Dumas, 1980; Merritt, 1996; Moses, 1980; Rusher, 1996). If institutions could develop programs that support women in leadership in colleges and universities, as well as school districts, the organizations would become more diverse and the women would become more successful (Rusher, 1996). This would in turn provide the women with successful careers and encourage them to actively recruit others with the same education and training and various career goals.

The purpose of this study is therefore to examine African-American female teachers who seek administration early in their teaching career, particularly the principalship. Almost 100 years has passed since noted black educator and school founder, Mary McLeod Bethune, envisioned and founded a school for African American girls, but her ideals proved an excellent conceptual framework for this study's findings. I hope that after reading these results, others will be so inspired or seek to motivate prospective educational leaders.

Specifically the study asks the following one question.

### Research Question

1. What visions motivate African-American female teachers to pursue administrative positions early in their teaching career, particularly, the principalship?

### Conceptual Framework

The women in this study are very similar to Bethune as visionaries. They believe that it takes a vision for what they want in predominantly African American schools. They have steadily put their vision to work by pursuing higher levels of education. They continuously serve their communities through service. They also chose to do their work in minority communities where they feel they can be most effective. By investigating the perceptions of these teachers with regard to personal goals, community involvement, and historical forces that have influenced their career choice it is apparent why they want to pursue administrative positions.

Bethune was born in the waning years of Reconstruction, shortly after the Emancipation Proclamation, one of seventeen children growing up in a strong religious family (McCluskey & Smith, 1999). All her life she heard about the atrocities of slavery from her parents. Her visionary agenda was to provide education and Christian faith to the lost (Reid-Merritt, 1996, pg. 121). Bethune acted upon that vision through many endeavors in education, politics, and community service. Eleanor Roosevelt, one of her most avid supporters, befriended Bethune because she too shared in the desire to educate the Negro race. Because of this friendship, Bethune became a voice for the Negro in the

political arena (McCluskey & Smith, 1999). She was advisor to many presidents and national organizations.

Like Bethune, the five participants, share a common desire to impart knowledge into their communities, inner city areas with a high minority population. Bethune struggled but successfully opened Daytona Educational Industrial Training for Negro Girls in 1904, (Flemming, 1996; McCluskey & Smith, 1999; Reid-Merritt, 1996). In April of 1923, Bethune signed a contract that merged Daytona Institute with Cookman Institute in Jacksonville, Florida (McCluskey & Smith, 1999). That merger created what is today, Bethune-Cookman College, a successful liberal arts institutions.

The Mary McLeod Bethune Papers (1922-1955) are documents linked to books, diaries, letters, interviews, and observations based on the life and historical accomplishments of Bethune. The magnitude of the information provided about this educator is too numerous to outline. However, for the purpose of this study, I will identify the beginning stages of her academic accomplishments because they represent the vision she had as an African American educator, through Bethune's vision, teaching and administrative perspective. Scholar, Elaine Smith (1995) wrote,

The unprecedented cornucopia of tributes to Negro women in separate-but-equal America, as exemplified in press comments, commemorated a personality whose impact was visual. For the gifted and charismatic Bethune, the high road was education. Following her mentors, (Emma Jane Wilson, founder of 1892, Mayesville Educational & Industrial Institute, SC; and Lucy Craft Laney, founder of 1886, Haines Normal & Industrial Institute, GA) she created the Daytona Educational Industrial Training School for Negro Girls. (p. 149)

Daytona Educational Industrial Training School for Negro Girls began with five little girls and Bethune who sold sweet potato pie to get funding for supplies.

Her total land and building purchase was \$1.50. When the school began, Bethune was the only teacher and she felt a need to take what she had learned from her formal education and impart it to the five girls. She taught the students reading, writing, math, home economics, and religion. Because of the lack of money for supplies, Bethune was innovative and used old boxes and wood splinters with stain for paper and pencil. Bethune's school that began with five students who were taught up to an eighth grade level, shortly became the largest most successful "Negro" school in the south with a record number of 72 students in 1920 (Smith, 1995). Bethune used her fast success as a resource to raise money from her white counterparts. The other school administrators were impressed with the ability of this teacher to bring in a new curriculum developed for kindergarten through 12th grade.

Bethune's role as administrator quickly emerged. She hired the top black teachers and trained children who were potential black teachers of the future (Smith, 1995). The success of the school became a problem at the state level in Florida. Florida politicians believed that to educate blacks, especially to pursue teaching and administration was absurd. The funding at the time for black students was \$5.75 and \$30 for whites (Smith, 1995).

Bethune incorporated three educational concepts, visions which are carried out to this day: "head-heart-hand." By incorporating the head, used to describe knowledge, Bethune believed that with knowledge others would be drawn. Once the knowledge was attained, she wished her students to incorporate their heart, "her highest priority," (Bethune-Cookman College Archives, 1938; Smith, 1995, p. 105). The heart was a means of creating an

environment to foster knowledge of Christian principals and biblical teachings and reaching out to others. The concept of the hand represented the training of blacks for jobs in the work force (Reid-Merritt, 1996). Patricia Reid Merritt (1996), studied phenomenal African American women. As educational leaders, she found that their personal role model had been Bethune. They noted also that Bethune was one of the most influential black women of the twentieth century. Today I would interpret head, heart, and hand to mean the following: head-to gain the knowledge and understanding imparted through education; heart-the willingness to do something with what you have learned, and hand-the service you impart to others to return the knowledge that you understand (Bethune-Cookman College Archives, 1938-2001) (See Appendix D for an in-depth account of Dr. Bethune's legacy and the most definite explanation of head, heart, and hand).

Bethune consistently used these three concepts as a springboard for further educational development until she emerged even further into higher education (Bethune-Cookman College Archives, 1938). Her vision was limitless and her students were very successful.

...As I look back now over the years, as I see the harvest from the seeds that have been sown, as I received the realization of the dreams of the years in these buildings, grounds, and equipments, and above all, in the thousands of young lives that have been touched and inspired-young men and women who are now bearing the torchlight of service here, there, and everywhere, I approach this moment with gratitude to the God we all love and serve, for the privilege of spending all of these years-thirty-eight long years-in this one service, and in bringing this school to the place where we now find it (McCluskey & Smith, 1999, p. 123).

Bethune increased her perspective on education and founded a four-year, liberal arts school Bethune-Cookman College, which now stands today. Bethune-

Cookman in Daytona Beach, Florida presently has an enrollment of over 3,000 students. This school has been noted to have top rank in Florida for graduating the most prepared teachers in the state with a high percent passing the Florida teachers certification exam (Bethune Cookman College, Division of Education Report, 1997-1998).

As the researcher, I quickly connected emergent themes from the data to Bethune's vision. More specifically, this study revealed five themes that are related to lead visions of emerging leaders: one must desire to give back to the community, have a vision and desire for the school organization, identify what effectual changes must be made, possess leadership ability both innate and trained, and have a mentor or role model. This last finding was particularly important because the participants knew little of Bethune, although they were using her ideas in their everyday work. By relating the five participants to this great woman, it was uncanny to hear and transcribe the continual overlaps. This is even more encouraging because of Bethune's success. The five women have a vision for education, which is why the relationship between Bethune and the participants in the study is connected. If these young teachers continue to act upon what their current ideas revealed, there is no stopping future development of urban, minority populated, schools or communities.

### Summary

This chapter addresses the problem that identifies the lack of African American women in educational administration. The increase in students of color and the decrease in teachers and leaders of color are at an alarming percentage (NCES, 2000). The research presented in this study will introduce five African

American women who aspire to educational leadership and who have prepared to assist in the decline of minorities in this field.

In the following chapters the reader will begin to understand the connection to the lives of the participants and their perceptions about entering educational administration. This will occur as the research question concerning the visions that motivate the participants is answered. Further, the reader will recognize the incorporation of phenomenological research methods as it relates to the problem of the lack of African American women in education administration. Additionally, the reader will be introduced to several theorists that substantiate the need for research such as this to be conducted.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Design and Methodology

#### Introduction

The phenomenological method allows the researcher to utilize the study of direct experience; these experiences are taken at face value and attempt to understand the meaning of events and reactions to ordinary people in a particular situation (Cohen & Manion, 1985). It is clear in the literature that there are few African American women in education administration (Collier-Thomas, 1982; Fenwick, 2001; Merritt, 1996; Shakeshaft, 1982). Seeking to understand why a particular group of these women chooses to pursue administrative roles, relays the life experience with which they are faced. After examining several methods of qualitative methodology, such as case-study, biography, grounded theory, and even ethnography to show emerging leadership among African-American female educators, phenomenology provided the opportunity to interview participants in-depth concerning reasons for wanting to pursue an administrative role. There are several differences among the above mentioned research methodologies that lead me to choose the phenomenological research design. Case study methodology is not considered a survey or an experiment because it is not statistical, rather, "case study is a design used to gain an in-depth understanding of a situation and how it effects an individual, group, intervention, or community" (Merriam, 1998 p. 18). The biographical research design is the study of "a single individual and his or her experiences as told by the researcher or as found in documents and archival materials" (Creswell, 1998, p. 232). In grounded theory,

the researcher analyzes a theory that explains an action, interaction, or process (Creswell, 1998, p. 240). The information is primarily accomplished through interview data collection and theoretical sampling (Creswell, 1998). Lastly, ethnography “describes and analyzes all parts of a culture or community by describing the beliefs and practices of the group studied to show how the group is unified as a culture” (Tesch, 1990, p. 29). Phenomenology is the most appropriate study for this research because it describes the meaning of experiences of a topic or concept for several individuals; the phenomenological design allows the researcher to reduce the experiences to the pure essence (Creswell, 1998, p. 236).

### Phenomenological Design

Phenomenological studies usually begin with the researcher selecting a topic of study in which he or she is interested. It is important for the researcher to go through the process of searching a challenging topic, while promising to contribute to personal development and social meaning, as well. Because phenomenological studies observe a particular phenomenon, it is imperative that the researchers conduct interviews. In order to begin data collection the researcher formulates the questions and narrows the terms of those questions (Moustakas, 1994).

In-depth interviews and conversations with the participants are the basis for a good phenomenological study. This allows for meaningful conclusions based on what we know and what we have learned about the phenomenon. “The phenomenon is the central concept being examined by the phenomenologists. It is the concepts being experienced by subjects in a study, psychological concepts

such as grief, anger, or love” (Creswell, 1997, p. 236). Further, Creswell (1997) states, “the phenomenological study describes the meaning of experiences of a phenomenon (or topic or concept) for several individuals” (p. 162). Thus, this study’s focus on educational vision is quite appropriate for a phenomenological study.

Because phenomenological studies are intense, they usually focus on a small number of participants. It is best to use the methodology of phenomenology when studying participants’ experience with vision. Phenomenological research gives the ‘why’ of a research question. The lived experience (noema) refers to the way a person understands as real, and (noesis) implies the interpretive meaning of the act itself (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenological research can be driven by theory but does not have to be. Because the findings of the study are related to each of its participants the researcher is provided various ways of looking at the phenomenon.

### Researcher’s Implications

Phenomenology describes a qualitative method of research in which the researcher is essential to the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Bogdan & Biklen, 1998;). In this particular study, I used the research question as a guide for selecting the methodology. This topic of research has been a strong desire of mine to explore. When I began a master’s program, I noticed several African-American women leaders that were actively pursuing administrative roles. At that time I only thought of this similarity as that, a similarity. It wasn’t until I began learning more about qualitative research that I realized I might design a study with participants similar to myself, thereby strengthening my own resolve to be an

administrator while investigating the visions of others. A well-known and respected qualitative researcher, and committee member, suggested the concept of studying African-American teachers who emerge into leadership. In my first qualitative class, I started researching the experience of African-American women administrators. The disappointment came when I found very little research about the topic and more specifically the literature revealed less about African-American women in administration. By consulting with this professor and proposing a research project, the concept became more of a reality. I could then continue perfecting the concept and proceed with how I would study it.

The women are similar to me in that we are all in pursuit of a common goal. Most of the women have done or are doing what I am or would like to pursue an administrative position. Because of my association with the research and its personal meaning, I can relate to the heuristic examples of research as defined by Clarke Moustakas. In heuristic research the self of the researcher is present throughout the process and, while understanding the phenomenon with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge (Moustakas, 1994).

Consequently, I reviewed several articles and books based on educational issues and have used the literature to outline and identify what direction to take with the participants in this study and noted several points to use in further studies. The literature yielded some help in developing the research question mentioned earlier, however history and experience were better indicators.

## Methodology

Essential criteria for selecting participants are outlined by Moustakas (1994). It is important in phenomenological studies that the participant has experienced the phenomenon and is intensely interested in understanding its nature and meanings, is willing to participate in a lengthy interview, grants the investigator the right to tape-record the interview, and supports publishing of the data in a dissertation or other publications (Moustakas, 1994). Usually five to fifteen participants are recommended in a phenomenological sample; if the data investigated in this number do not produce thematic responses, they very well might not exist (Tesch, 1990).

### The Participants

After extensive reading and receiving institutional review board approval, criterion for selecting participants was developed (See Appendix A for the IRB letter of approval). Each of ten women was selected for her dedication to teaching and expressed vision, particularly for urban schools. These women were referred to me by "community nomination," a selection process coined by Michelle Foster that means to solicit the names of teachers through black communities (1997). My decision to limit the age and number of years in education was based on recent vacancy announcements and job searches that indicate a minimum of two to five years of educational experience. I developed open-ended questions that were designed not to lead the participants, which would allow them to express the most honest answer. (See Appendix B for screening instrument.)

I met each prospective participant at an informal setting such as a luncheon, a conference, or a class session. During the informal meeting, I briefly shared my research topic with the participant without immediately asking questions regarding the study. After collecting the screening data, I organized them and noted the differences in questions that came from comments made by a participant. In this particular part of my research, I kept the themes of each interview very simple and connected them to the participants. The selection process assisted me in getting to know each of the ten women and allowed me find out their motivation for pursuing administration. Five of the ten women from the screening interview expressed a strong desire to pursue administrative positions within a two to five year time period. The remaining five were interested in administration but were uncertain about when or how they would pursue a position.

In phenomenological studies the investigator assesses the prior relevant studies, distinguishes their designs, methodologies, and findings from the investigator's own study, and indicates what new knowledge he or she is seeking and expects to obtain (Moustakas, 1994). I selected five participants, Donna, Linda, Tanya, Annette and Ellie. All five aspiring administrators taught in urban school districts and wanted to remain in such settings. Four of the five had completed their master's degrees and were pursuing principal's certification. They ranged in age from 22 to 37. They had been classroom teachers for two to seven years at the time of the initial interview.

Overview of the five participants. Donna, a twenty-nine-year-old single teacher [at the time of the interview Donna was twenty-nine and single, she is

currently married with no children and thirty years old] is from the northeast coast. Donna's family could afford to send her to private school throughout her life. She was born into an educated, prominent family who was well known and sought after by the public and local community. Donna was raised in a Christian environment and was taught the importance of teaching and learning. Her mother was a teacher and instilled values from a young age. Donna knew that public education was a focus for her mother and gained many experiences to take to the public school system with her, "Well like you, I too was fortunate enough to attend private school from first through twelfth grade, basically I was in a neighborhood that was mixed so I was given exposure to different races and different cultures. It was because of that experience that it helped me to further my education because I had exposure." Donna has been teaching for three and a half years and has been pursued by administration to hold a principal's position.

Linda is a single mother of three, raised by both parents who grew up in an urban public school that has been known for its high drop out rate and poor standardized test scores. Linda shared more about how she felt about schools than her personal life. Linda has taught for almost ten years and is being encouraged to pursue an administrative role by her colleagues. She is thought of as one of the most successful teachers in the urban school. Linda explained that her students produced high standardized test scores in the school and ranked in the top percentages within the district.

Tanya is married with no children and was primarily a student in private schools. Her opinion of public and private schools is based on her personal experiences. She witnessed both private and public school experiences as a

student and the daughter of a public school teacher. Tanya was the only participant that was an administrator during the latter stages of research. She shared experiences from her school and her duties as an administrator. She was successful and felt she was well respected by her peers, despite their apprehension at the time she was hired. Tanya was an assistant principal at a transitioning urban middle school. Her school district was known as a suburban district, however the school where she was an administrator has a very high minority population. She is responsible for discipline, curriculum development, and professional staff programs for the sixth grade students and teachers. Tanya was the only African American administrator in her school and the only African American woman administrator in her district. She obtained full support by her school principal and was often encouraged by him and other administrators in the district. Tanya was happy about her decision to become an administrator in a public, urban school.

Annette related religion to everything she experienced in school and explains that teaching derived from a total biblical concept and dates back historically from slavery. Annette was a leader in her church, family, and community. Annette believed that she could encourage success as a school leader by incorporating the best qualities from teachers and students. Annette is an ambitious person and was encouraged by school leaders who shared responsibility. She was known in her school as a teacher that involves students heavily in cultural activities. She felt that by improving each educational experience and relating it to the next, we teach more than what we learn and learn more than what we teach, the cycle continues.

Ellie is married with no children. Ellie was an excited, courageous teacher that was not willing to let anything stop her. Ellie taught in a school that was often considered a place where learning was minimal. She worked toward her administrative goals by assisting her principal with administrative activities. Ellie researched the newest approaches to teaching and learning and shared examples with her colleagues often. Ellie believed she would be an excellent administrator and prepared to carry out a shared leadership method of operation. Ellie learned from her experiences as a student, although some were negative, she strived to continually encourage students that were much like her, to accomplish greatness. (See Appendix E for additional information about participant demographics).

#### Data Collection

To begin with data collection for the research the interviews began. In my initial interviews, three lasted an hour and a half while two lasted a full two hours. The expectations I had for each of the interviews were positive. I knew all of the participants relatively well, and I had heard them speak to large audiences and address their personal goals in administration. I interviewed all of the participants twice. One of the interviews was not as informative. I assume the participant felt uncomfortable being audio-taped and would have preferred that I transcribe the interview by hand. I made note of this observation and assured her that for the second interview, I would manually transcribe. To make the participant more comfortable a second interview was conducted without the tape-recorder. In the second interview, I transcribed the information manually and

repeated phrases or sentences that needed clarification. (See Appendix C for the interview protocol.)

I went to the participants' sites and was able to speak with their administrators informally about my research and the interview I conducted with the participants. I did not interview the women's administrators, however, each of the participant's administrator was highly supportive and had good things to say about the women. Because each participant taught in urban districts, the administrators were from minority backgrounds. Three of these five administrators were males. One participant's administrator was glad that I was doing the interview because she felt that her employee needed encouragement and that my study would do just that.

### Trustworthiness

In phenomenological studies the lived experience is taken at face value and the participants' explanation of those experiences is the heart of the study (Moustakas, 1994). The criteria and trustworthiness in qualitative research of data refers to data credibility, dependability, and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

How does the researcher confirm that what she finds truly represents the participants' perceptions of their experiences with the phenomenon? Several means of trustworthiness have been incorporated since the beginning of the research. Once the collection of the data began I used three guidelines to examine each of the experiences: informal interviewing with my participants over the phone or at an informal meeting, open-ended questions in which they would feel comfortable and at ease in answering, and a topical-guided interview, which

the participant knew the formal questions and saw them on paper to use as a guide. In the phenomenological investigation the long interview is the method through which data is collected on the topic and question (Moustakas, 1994).

To validate the responses from the participants, each of them were given a copy of the transcribed interview. Through cross interview validity the participants were asked to confirm that the perceptions portrayed were reflected correctly. I received all five transcripts from the women and one of the five made minor grammatical corrections. Each interview was audio-taped and all five audio-taped interviews were used. The transcribed interview of the one participant was a supplement to the audio-tape. After the interview each participant had the choice of listening to the tape-recorded interview. Four of the five participants opted to listen to their interview and all four were pleased with their responses. In this study, I maintained a constant relationship with each of the participants and informally met to discuss the development of the study and how it was progressing. It was important for me to gather evidence of the participants' experiences, through interviews and their written personal histories. Each of the participants were asked to narrate her life story in biography specifically detailing her educational visions, separate from the interview. To cross validate the interviews and the text, I identified several overlapping elements with the participants' transcribed text and the text from the written biography. In addition, the participants personal statements found in Chapter 4 corroborate the themes identified in the data collection. I guaranteed confidentiality to each participant, and expunged real names from transcribed data.

## Data Analysis

Moustakas (1994) details two methods of data analysis. The first is the modified Van Kaam methodology and the second is the modified Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen methodology (Moustakas, 1994). In the Van Kaam methodology, Moustakas suggests the researcher incorporate the complete transcript of each research participant and reduce and eliminate unnecessary expressions (1994). By deleting the ideas not explicitly tied to the relevant themes, the researcher is able to use the relevant data to link the researched experience to that of the participants'. The Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen modified methodology utilizes the researchers personal experience of the phenomena, relates the participants' experiences into relevant themes, synthesizes the themes into descriptions, and reflects on the descriptions of the themes both personally and in relation with the participants (Moustakas, 1994). I used Moustakas' (1994) modified Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen methodology to analyze the data.

I utilized phenomenological reduction, which takes on the character of prereflection, and reflection with concentrated work aimed at explicating the essential nature of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas examined Husserl's approach to phenomenological reduction and noted that by using what is remembered or referred to in the interview should be considered the definite experience of the participant. Bracketing the major components of the interview helps the researcher narrow the experience into its true meaning. Once bracketing takes place the horizons of the text are present and any overlapping statements can be removed. Horizontalization is an important component in phenomenological reduction. It is the act of using statements from the

participants and placing them in equal values (Moustakas, 1994). After clustering the horizons the researcher uses the horizons to organize major themes. The interviews are gathered and coded into the themes based on what the text offers. After finding rich text in each of the interviews I horizontalized the statements into themes leaving only the textural meanings and invariant constituents of the phenomenon itself (Moustakas, 1994).

Five themes emerged and they conformed well to Mary McLeod Bethune's vision: Personal Background and Experiences; Urban schooling: The Need to Give Back to the Community; Leadership and Being a Role Model; Why I Choose to Pursue Administration, and How I can and will effectually make a difference in education. Before discussing them in detail, the five educators speak to and write about issues in the following vignettes. As I identified the themes and coded the data, I combined the most prevalent information from the interviews into three tables. In the three tables, the five themes are connected to head, heart, and hand.

### Summary

In this chapter, I explained the phenomenological method. I examined Mary McLeod Bethune as the conceptual framework by showing the connection between the five participants' desire for themselves as aspiring administrators and the beginning vision of Bethune. I identified the participants in the study and introduced the themes that emerged. Based on my research question, the phenomenological method provided the opportunity to gain the best results. In the following chapter, I will share the participant's voice through vignettes as they

related what their lived experiences have been and what their visions are for education.

## CHAPTER THREE

### TEACHERS AS LEADERS: AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN STEP UP

#### Results

It is imperative not to create a stereotype that all African American women in pursuit of leadership incorporate the same ideals. Each woman in this study is unique; each has a different personality and background. They are not to be clustered as a part of the whole group, rather viewed as individuals who happen to be African American women with a common vision. These women do however have a particular cultural standpoint as African American teachers, and they share that as a reflection of themselves (Dillard, 1995; Edson, 1988; Hill-Collins, 1991).

This chapter adds information in areas often neglected by scholars and educators. Although African American women seeking positions in educational administration are not often written about or asked to share their experiences, as the five women in this study did. The lives of five young women that aspire to become leaders are encouraging and insightful. These women have a true understanding of education and what it means to be an educated, young, black female in today's society. Although Donna, Linda, Tanya, Annette, and Ellie are from various backgrounds, their parents expected them to aspire to the highest level of education. They aspired to graduate school from the beginning of their careers. As students, they each had an experience throughout their lives that encouraged them to change and improve the lives of other students and the community. Through vision and determination, it is no surprise that these women

have accomplished what goals they set for themselves. From personal lives to experiences in schools, and their views on leadership, these women were open and willing to share themselves. This quote, taken from a speech given by Bethune, confirms the conceptual framework present throughout this chapter as the women share their stories:

I wanted very much, before I learned to read well, I craved some education so I could go out and help people. There was such a need for somebody to go and do something. Instinctively I felt that leadership was needed, someone to inspire and build a program to tell people something else aside from this very scanty life we were called upon to live. I wanted to train that I, myself, could be better prepared and above all, be able to help others (Mary McLeod Bethune (1940); McClusky & Smith, 1999, p. 41).

In this chapter, the reader will experience thematic segments, which emerge through the personal stories of these women. Each segment presented will detail the five themes with headings and will expand the connection to head, heart, and hand. In the second section of this chapter, it was important for me to map out demographics and educational issues that were important to the participants in tabular form.

#### Donna-A Born Leader

Donna grew up on the Northeast coast. She was born in 1971 to parents who were leaders in their community. Donna, is the second of six children, and from the earliest she can remember, she was always considered to be the leader. Donna grew up in an uptown neighborhood in the city, in “a big corner house.” She and her family shared a very close relationship with each other and their church family. Donna’s father, a minister of a large congregation, was affluent and patriarchal in the local community and in other countries because of his cultural origin. Donna’s mother “a beautifully strong woman” supported her

husband and their children emotionally and spiritually and demanded that they be exceptional. Donna's mother saw the leadership in Donna early and encouraged her to go into medicine because she was so smart. Donna talked to her mother one day about teaching because her mom was a teacher before she became a pastor's wife. Donna's mother saw the need for her to teach "she shared the desire [of teaching] with me but did not want me to go through disappointment from all that comes with teaching."

Donna went through high school and received her associate's degree at a community college in education. She taught at a private community school run by the church while pursuing her degree and after completing it, became head chancellor at the age of 23 at the same school. Donna received a scholarship to complete her studies and receive a bachelor's degree at a private Christian university. Donna moved and continued her matriculation in elementary education. Donna finished at the university with honors and while there, received several accolades and awards from the university. During her interviews for teaching jobs, Donna had the opportunity to choose to teach in an elite private school based on her records from the private Christian university. She also had the opportunity to teach in a disadvantaged public school. (See Appendix E for a table summary of the five participants.)

Urban schooling: The Need to Give Back to the Community. Donna began by sharing why she wanted to lead in urban areas.

I feel a need to work in urban areas with minorities so that they (the students) will have a role model to look up to. I had a friend who taught in an urban area and could see the need for great educators. You know like working out north (on the north side of town) the school is not properly integrated, so we have Black children who don't know Hispanic children or White children, and it's not benefiting either of the races because they're

lacking in that experience. You have students not knowing what it is like to go to school with someone of a different ethnicity.

Donna expressed her passion for schools. Donna grew up in a suburban neighborhood to a family that had what it needed to maintain an upper middle class lifestyle. Donna was in extra curricular clubs and had a cotillion debutante party. Donna did not indicate that she had a direct relationship with urban schools or the inner city area, however because the area where Donna grew up was so close to the inner city, she often saw the experiences first hand.

My heart goes out to the urban area. That's where my heart is! That is where I want to be because I see the need; you can do a work for that community. It [the work] makes a big difference. Even in the classroom, I try to go outside of the classroom and involve other people in the community to let them realize what's really going on in the school system. Yes, I know I could do things for that community [wealthy]. I just don't see myself being a benefit to those students. My mind would say, well they already have everything that they need.

Donna talked about her vision as a principal in an urban school. She spoke about a woman that she has observed in her school and identified what made her effective. She also talked about why she wanted to be an administrator.

The reason I vision myself in administration is because I know I can go in the classroom and do so much for my students and I do. However, in administration you can do a work for that particular community as well. We have someone who is implementing a new reading program for our students because our students are below level, so we are trying to raise the scores to get off the at-risk list. This woman is an African American female and she has a stick-to-it attitude. She let's everyone know that if we stick with it, it will pay off. You always get grief from some people. It's difficult for them to deal with paradigm shifts, and it's something that they can't deal with until they see that this is something that will work. We have some that give her attitudes or disagree with the way she does things, but in the long run they see that it's for the children, not what they like or dislike. What am I doing this for? To help the children improve. The attitudes change for the better. [The number one factor influencing me to become an administrator] The need for change and improvement!

How I can and will effectually make a difference in education. During Donna's second year as a teacher she noticed several differences in the way schools were being run in the urban district in which she worked. Donna taught fifth grade and when organizing school trips and activities outside of the classroom there was resistance from the leadership in the school. Donna particularly paid close attention to the inequity because more affluent schools, in the same district participated in learning field experience trips often. In addition, her students were not provided with several basic classroom needs. Donna's school did not have Internet access; Donna did not have a computer in her classroom and the students did not experience technology development in their most formative years.

The equity in the classroom in urban schools is poor; I would like to see the desegregation of schools. This goes back to equity-why should children on the North side not be equal with the children on the South side? We are all part of the same district, and everyone should have the equal right to education. If I have a new textbook because of the southern location of my school than the child on the North side should have a new textbook. These are the major issues, we have dilapidated buildings, and you can see the difference when you travel from the north to the south, (urban to rural or suburban) it is obvious! We are a Title I school, low poverty and income, majority black, large percentage on free and reduced lunch. We have a large special education department; they handle learning and emotional disabilities.

Donna recalled her students' experiences and talked about how teachers in her building were committed regardless of the students' situations or their race.

Many of our students come from broken homes; we have 450 students and have a balance of teachers. We have true teachers. We have a lot of white teachers that are truly making a difference, and they have a spirit of excellence. You see teachers that are really working to make sure students achieve. You have to be committed at my school, it is definitely a challenge; when you see the smiles on the students' faces-smiles that tell you they know they are cared about, hmm...it makes everything so worthwhile.

Donna answered a very difficult question and revealed what troubled her most about public education. She also addressed what it is she would like to see change.

Public education is lacking so much. I think we can offer our students much more than what we are doing. You know when I see basketball players making millions of dollars and we don't have funds to support the textbooks and materials that we need or the supplies that we need to enhance our schools it really shows where our concerns are in America and that doesn't sit too well with me.

Equitable pedagogy is another issue, that's something that I addressed at my alma mater. This is definitely an area that they really need to develop. I can remember sitting in class, my junior year of college and the professor just touched on the issue of cultural differences. It really blew up the classroom discussion because one girl said she didn't think it was necessary to learn about other cultures. I couldn't believe that I was sitting so close to someone that closed minded. It is really sad that we are so blind to racial equity. Because I am not this state, I see so many differences between blacks and whites that would not even be issues in the North.

As a leader, I wouldn't get upset easily. You have to realize that when you work with people there is always someone that has a different outlook. You have to blow it off. I just wouldn't let people get to me. Again dealing with equity, we think that inequalities have been eliminated but not so, especially in this state. The schools are not integrated like they are supposed to be. The funding-you need money to run a school. You need money to give students a proper education. Despite the downfall, children are learning. There are some children that do have success stories. Not to brag on myself, but I had students that went to middle school and came to visit me on their time off and each of them were honor roll students. They are doing well and they are achieving. They actually see the importance of the things that they learned in my classroom-you must complete your work, you must be responsible, the things that I said to them they carry on. I really think if we talk to our students we will know what's working. Let's talk to our graduates and twelfth grade students. What really touched them and convinced them to excel and further their education? If we do that the negative reports will change.

To be honest, I want to see standards raised in education. My exception would be for the teachers. I feel like the teachers are improving and should be given honor for what they do. Teachers that make a difference-that's a positive part of education. I get compliments on my teaching and leadership style. People say things like, "We see what you're doing, and the good things that you have done." Plus my students really boost me up.

I had my kids perform for the former superintendent and everyone talked about that. They see your face in the district and remember you. You do what you can do, and you do it well. They see me doing things, and they will seek me out, especially for administrative roles. In two years of teaching, I became team leader and acting principal. The kids make things memorable and everything they do reflects upon me as their leader. The state and government want people who make a difference as leaders in education.

Leadership and being a role model. Donna used her experience as a teacher to form a relationship with her students to break communication barriers. She reached out to them not only as a mentor but as a teacher that was sincerely concerned about their well-being.

I'm real, you know my kids are hardly ever absent, even the bad ones [she laughs]. You know I'm just real with my students. I let them know that I know what they are going through. I know their situations! When a child comes into the classroom and had a problem the night before, I don't get all hysterical like oh my goodness! We talk. I just say, what happened, what went down? And I think they relate to me...as a matter of fact I know they can relate to me because I'm real, and sometimes you don't want to be counseled you want to be treated like a person. A lot of times children are treated like a case, and they're not cases they are people.

When asked what it is that makes Donna successful in her classroom she mentioned the mutual respect that she and her students share.

I stand up for what I believe in. I stand firm on my principles and points, and one of my principles is this, as educators we are there to teach, not to babysit or observe, or draw negative data for the media. We are not there to impress or receive teacher of the year. You sign that contract to give those students the best education possible. I think when I visit different schools and observe a successful and an unsuccessful school the difference is in the attitudes. If you have people there who want to teach more than likely you are observing a good school. On the other hand, when you see bad attitudes you see the trickle down effect and it is in the students' attitudes too.

Why I choose to pursue educational administration. Donna shared what she felt made good school leaders.

Good leaders make plans of improvement, present them and follow through. An example of a good African American leader is at my school.

She is encouraging and pulls from within. She looks at what each individual in the school has to offer and uses what is inside of them. As an effective leader you need to know your material and the atmosphere in which you're working, the culture of the school itself. You have to see and know the people for their strengths and weaknesses. You have to have organizational skills, how to pull things together to make them work. You have to have a determined mindset to say this will happen. Whatever plans and ideas you have you must sell it to make it work.

From the time Donna began her undergraduate program she knew she wanted to pursue administration.

When I went into education, my goal was to do whatever requirements were necessary to obtain an administrative position. I would like to be the Secretary of Education for the United States! That will probably be in my late 40's, but it will happen. I am making sure of it.

Strong leaders are not just born, they are made! You have to realize what your potential is as a leader and make sure that you don't get stuck. Some teachers after 22 years are still doing the same thing when they can do more. I know that's in some teachers' hearts to just teach, and nothing is wrong with that, but, if you have that strong call in you to be in that leadership position to better the system, you should not sit 22 years in the classroom. Especially as a black person, we need to be in leadership because there are so many policies that affect our kids.

Donna believed that by mapping out her career goals and planning how she would be involved in the district, she would be a more successful leader. She also knew that she would have to develop her leadership practices by pursuing her master's degree. Through her preparation, and her high self-concept Donna also felt she was a role model to her students and encourages them to set and reach goals.

Personal background and experiences. Donna revealed how her mother felt about her going into public schools. She related her experiences and a conversation with her mother.

My mother gave me the taste of what it means to be an insightful educator. One of my mom's desires was for me to be in a public school setting. Therefore, it was through her that I got the encouragement. I knew

I would really be an asset to the public school children. Her words of encouragement led me to the public school system.

Donna believed in herself and intended to continue to working in schools that are in black communities. Donna has taken steps to begin a charter school and is going through training and learning how to raise funds. Donna was motivated by what she saw and wanted to improve. Donna believed that in the school where she worked, her peers respected her as a school leader. Donna mentioned in conversation that she intended to finish the school year as a teacher and begin her charter school next year.

#### Linda-The Optimistic Leader

Linda is a single parent and mother of three. She grew up in an urban area in the state to parents that shared love and encouragement. Linda was the second of three children. Linda was born in 1967, her parents, also natives of the Midwest, instilled educational values in Linda throughout her life. Linda knows how an urban school district was run and knew what inequities children faced. Linda attended school in the same urban district that she teaches. Her children also attended school in the same district. Linda concentrated on the changes that she would make in the urban school system. When referring to giving back to the community as a future administrator she took an optimistic approach and felt the best way to improve urban schools was to “maintain the culture and involve the community.”

#### Urban schooling: The Need to Give Back to the Community.

Linda was an advocate for the school district in which she works. Her family had watched the district improve through four generations. Historically

changes have taken place in the area and what may have seemed like an inequity through the eyes of an outsider looked more like an improvement to Linda.

In an urban community, I will incorporate a model school that is open to the parents. I want to listen to their concerns and work with the parents and the community to try to make sure that all students are on the level that they need to be.

How I can and will effectually make a difference in education. Linda shared her concerns about public schools, but also offered suggestions about how she would improve current trends.

Because I see where public schools are going and have a vision for where I want to see them, I think a charter school would be a fantastic option. I believe that I will open a charter school in about 5 or 6 years.

I believe that public education has a lot of good teachers and a lot of good administrators, but I believe they need to put more money into public education and give us (teachers/administrators) more leeway. As far as the curriculum, you know I understand changes, however not changing it every time a new superintendent comes will provide consistency. Every three years you have to go with this new method or that new method. Discipline has definitely changed. As children, we believed what the teachers would say, and they were in control of the classrooms. Now, students are real disrespectful towards adults. The disrespect comes mainly from parenting. They are disrespectful at home and then they bring it to school.

The changes I would make in public education are to have actual smaller class sizes. I wish there were a way for superintendents to place teachers in schools where students are failing that want to be there, not just put a lot of teachers in schools. Another problem I have noticed is that first year teachers are placed in low-income schools that have a high turn over rate of students and teachers. This is not beneficial for a teacher that hasn't had experience in schools like this, that are on the at risk list.

I see some good things as well, I do believe that the majority of the students are mastering the skills that they are being taught. Teachers are spending a lot of time with students away from their own families. Some of the policies in education are good.

To build upon the good I would offer after school programs to meet the need of working parents, have extended day, offer music or drama classes that the kids may not normally be able to participate in because they don't have the money. I would like to place quality teachers in the

classroom. I desire to open a successful charter school. Charter schools fail because of poor administration. They do not manage the money correctly. They do not have an adequate plan, and they have no teachers to teach the students. The teachers in a particular charter school [a small single grade level school] in the state that recently failed weren't being paid, because the administrator spent their budget of \$50,000.

In my charter school, I would look hard at the budget and make sure that the school was successful. Fifty thousand dollars is not a lot of money to run a school but there are many that have started a successful school with little money like Marva Collins.

Leadership and being a role model. Linda believed that through her leadership she was better equipped to handle the role of a principal. She worked with her colleagues often as an acting principal and portrayed what she felt like was a fair leader.

I believe I am a leader and role model first, because of my commitment to the kids. Because of my commitment to student learning, I will go the extra mile and stay late to help.

I am a team player, work well with others, and work on a task and complete it. I'm not too outspoken but I can communicate my ideas. I believe that as a principal your job is much easier because you are communicating with adults not 20 students. Some people may disagree but based on my experience, I believe it is easier to communicate with adults.

Why I choose to pursue administration. Linda was encouraged to go into administration, however once she began holding leadership positions she saw how much she enjoyed it.

As an acting principal and principal intern I participate in site improvement plans, stand in for the principal when she is out, take phone calls from parents, and chair the suspension review committee. I really enjoyed doing those things. After being in the classroom for almost eight years, I'd rather be in leadership than write lesson plans and teach class. Linda believes that she can make a greater difference as a leader.

She shared why she felt that way and what steps she had taken to become a principal.

The number one reason that I am pursuing administration is so that I will be able to impact more students outside of just one classroom per year. I have taken steps to pursue administration. I am preparing to take my test [principal's certification test]. I attended a state university and obtained a master's degree in educational administration. I am an influence to others in my school because they have more respect for me because I worked and went to school. Maybe it will inspire them to go back to school so that more teachers will have masters even if they still choose to be in the classroom.

Personal background and experiences. Linda spoke about two people that

influenced her and what it meant to prepare to be an administrator.

During college, I had a professor that spent a lot of time with me so that influenced me a lot. I was going into sports medicine and I switched over to elementary education. When I began teaching, my administrator, Ms. M. inspired me by telling me that I could do more than what I was doing and the more I was educated the better teacher I would become, and then I could prepare for administration and use my abilities as a leader.

Linda continued to serve as a teacher and administrative leader within her school. Linda passed the certification exam and will make a decision whether or not to apply as a principal for the following school year. Linda's students were successful and had maintained satisfactory test scores. Linda taught fifth grade and collaborated within the district to gain new ideas to use in the classroom and as a leader.

#### Tanya-The Subtle Transformer

Tanya, a soft spoken, charming leader was born in 1974. Tanya grew up in an affluent neighborhood in central State A surrounded by her family. Tanya was brought up with encouragement to pursue the highest educational aspirations. Tanya attended private schools throughout her childhood and her parents never considered sending her to public schools because they felt they weren't good enough. Tanya's take on leadership and teaching was very

interesting because she never had the opportunity to attend public schools until she enrolled in college at a state institution.

Urban schooling: The Need to Give Back to the Community. Tanya spoke about what influenced her to work in urban schools.

If I had a choice to teach in an elite private school or an urban public school, I would definitely go to the public school because the private school that I went to always had good teaching and administration- and still does. I think that knowing the activities and programs that they [private schools] provided, I could take and go back to my own public school and incorporate those and model that school around the best possible practices. I could make things in the public school like those in the private school, so the students could get the same opportunities. I would probably get less money but I could do so much more for the disadvantaged students.

You really get a chance to shape someone's future and I just wanted to do that. Special education was a way for me to help those who were not as fortunate as the others were. In urban schools, there is a high special education population.

Tanya's mother was a powerful educator and made differences in hundreds of lives. Tanya's mother taught in an urban school from the beginning of her career. Because she saw so many issues in the public school districts she wanted to shelter her children from that. Tanya's mother realized what children in urban schools needed and that was why she chose to teach there.

How I can and will effectually make a difference in education. Tanya was displeased with what she saw in urban school classrooms. She took the initiative to make her classroom better and in effect make her school better once she obtained a leadership position.

It seems like when I visited the department and when I did my student teaching I observed different classrooms and the SE (Special Education) students weren't receiving the type of education that I thought they needed, a lot of the classrooms that I've been in, SE classrooms in particular, the students were put in the back of the classroom and nobody really cared about them and a lot of people looked bad upon them. I don't

even think that their work was individualized like it was supposed to be. Each child had their own learning style and I don't think that the teachers addressed that adequately. I'm in the public education system. I think that there are a lot of good teachers. There are a lot of problems, but there are a lot of good teachers out there. The public education system has a bad rap because of the society and the news. But I think we have a really good system that just needs a few changes. I think that there are a lot of the things that need to be changed, because now the system is set up on a model that is ancient and old. They need to update the public school model and meet the needs of today's children. For instance we don't start school until 9:20 a.m., now a lot of children here (at my school) need time to run and these kids don't get that. They must sit down and even at lunch they are told to be quiet. There is no time given for socialization. I think there should be time for recess even at middle school level after lunch so that they can get their energy out before going back to class. Then I think time needs to be adjusted because some kids learn better in the afternoon. So time needs to be adjusted where school, not necessarily starts later than it starts now but maybe elective classes could be offered in the afternoon. Because a lot of kids come to school in the morning and they are just out of it. They don't want to do anything, they just sit there. In the public school system, especially urban, I haven't seen where they provide, any materials for hands on activities. They stress hands on activities but don't provide the materials; kids learn so much better with hands on activities. The special education population is so good with their hands that I wish I had more [materials] for them.

There are a lot of things that I would take away from the private school experience and use in public schools. I would like to change things that administrators push down in terms of curriculum. Because often the administration tries to push things like standardized testing and teaching to the test, the time limits and objectives like state curriculum skills must be met. So as a teacher I really didn't like that because I liked to be creative and the administration at the school I came from didn't allow for creativity. They want sit down writing and kids don't learn best that way some kids don't learn best that way, so I wanted to back out because of that reason, and a lot of teachers are getting out of teaching because they feel inhibited. Kids have so many different learning styles and I think we need to address those.

Leadership and being a role model. Tanya shared how her role model influenced her. She models her own mentoring roles after the relationship she shared with the woman who mentored her.

I had several role models! Too many to name, that's what I enjoyed most. The kids that went to my school were sons and daughters of doctors and

lawyers, and it was the wealthy area of the city. Seeing these [positive] role models every day really made me focus more on education because I wanted to be more like them.

One particular teacher really cared about me. I mean she went beyond just being a teacher. She was a mentor. She was a role model, a friend, and any good thing that you can think of she was to every one of her students, not just me. I really did like that relationship; unfortunately, I think that many kids today do not experience that.

It was my goal to model after her [the mentor] and provide that relationship to students. Sometimes people making decisions about students, and don't consider that in public schools there are so many kids, as an administrator to hire teachers like my role model, the students will get feedback and encouragement to succeed. As a leader, teacher and their role model, I want to know what is going on in their lives. I want to let them know that they can be somebody because most kids, especially minority kids, are not told that a lot. As an administrator, I can do that.

Why I choose to pursue administration. Tanya shared why she felt she was a good leader. She identified qualities in her life that she believed made her a good administrator.

I believe you need a lot of patience to be a good leader. I am calm and patient all the time, I never scream. I haven't written one referral all year or detention or Saturday slips. I may have written 2 or 3 within the years I've taught. That's the way my classroom was too, really calm, I broke things down. For example, I used a college textbook to teach economics; you would think this is a really big concept for LD students to comprehend but I have a good ability to break things down so that the students can understand the material. I think being able to bring out the best in anybody makes me a good leader. One thing that I strive to do everyday is to make people happy and believe in themselves. Consequently, what I pride in myself is making people happy because life is too short. So in my new position as an administrator I think being able to bring out the talents in everybody and being able to collaborate those talents is important. I have seen leaders recognize talents in people and ignore them for whatever reason. I have the ability to bring those out.

Because I work with projects and different things at schools as an administrator, I collaborate with the talents and it makes for a phenomenal learning and working environment.

Personal background and experiences. Tanya shared information from her personal life. She spoke about her mother and what influence she had on Tanya to become a teacher.

I would say my mom influenced me toward urban schools because she was a teacher in an urban school too, she still is as a substitute, and she really enjoys it. In addition, many teachers that I saw were very good. I enjoyed the lessons that I observed; I enjoyed the type of people that they were (because) most of the people that I had as teachers were very professional and I always looked at that. My mom, as I said earlier substitutes now, but when she was a teacher I got to see her in her classrooms and it just looked like so much fun.

Tanya was a product of private school training and during her first year as a teacher, she noticed several ways to improve the relationship with students, teachers, parents and the community. In the urban school where she taught she was quickly moved into leadership and placed on the principal's advisory. Not only was Tanya's focus on urban schools and the need to improve the community but also to sustain the improvements.

To give back to the community, I would publicize the good news and have more interaction with news and, current affairs. I would hold classes for parents and the public at the school even different classes after hours for children at the school. I would involve business partners that actually come to the school and take part in the goals and the mission statement that we are striving to reach. I think things like this will start to change the thinking and help others try to see what we are working towards.

At the time of this interview, Tanya was a teacher in an urban school in the district. Tanya was also a principal intern. During her internship, her principal empowered her to make decisions. In the setting in which she worked she realized that by incorporating democratic principles, getting all stakeholders involved in decision making, there was a big difference in morale. "I really think that getting parents involved in the decision-making is also important. They feel ownership and you get a lot more accomplished as an administrator," she said.

Tanya was a special education teacher. She recalled how she mentored her students by treating them like students without learning disabilities. Because of Tanya's patience and modification methods in the classroom, she believed that she would be a successful leader. Tanya worked as an assistant principal and after speaking with her about her new position, she felt the same way about her leadership style and the way she handled problems.

Tanya believed that urban schools were where she was needed most. She had several opportunities to teach elsewhere but believed that she was impacting the lives of students who were not given the same educational opportunities she had been given. Tanya taught successfully for three years at the urban school and perceived that she had changed many students' lives by giving them hope.

#### Annette-The Strong Religious Leader

Annette grew up in a rural area in central State A. Annette is one of six children. Her parents are heavily involved in the ministry and wanted the best for each of their children. Annette's mother, Lilly, was a full time nurse and worked for one of State A's most prestigious families. Lilly's employer always was supportive of her family and encouraged Annette to go to college. Annette had a gift to play music, music of all genres. Annette grew up poor but her family refused to live on welfare. She was very close to her father and always said, "he would break his back to take care of this family and keep them off of public assistance." Her father held three jobs during some of their worst financial times. Annette did not allow her family hardship to keep her from excelling. Annette's vocal and instrumental ability proved to be beneficial in college. She was very

involved in the college chorale and received scholarships and financial aid. "I always knew I wanted to be a teacher, a music teacher in an urban school." At the time of the interview, Annette was preparing to complete her master's degree in educational administration. Annette had been teaching for six years and believes that it is time to use her leadership outside of the classroom.

Urban schooling: The Need to Give Back to the Community. Annette wanted to involve the community in her school. She shared what she felt urban schools need and planned to enhance the needs in urban schools by pursuing administration there.

I teach in an inner city, urban school. I see great potential in this building however, funds need to be allocated to meet more of the need than anything. I don't think our goal should just be to keep up with curriculum across the country; we need to collaborate with the community. I will also pursue administration in an urban district. These kids need good administrators that are out to bat for them.

How I can and will effectually make a difference in education. Annette talked about keeping American traditions alive in schools. She felt that by embracing certain traditions and incorporating shared leadership schools will be better for students. Annette also plans to find ways to provide additional funding in her school, once she becomes a leader. As a church staff member Annette has written several funded government grants. She believed the same principles apply for schools.

Public schools in the United States provide students with a free and equal education. I feel that this was a great idea because as a nation we realize the value of teaching and learning and if we didn't value education we would be a less powerful and, illiterate nation than we are currently. I think that the public education may need to be changed somewhat but there are certain traditions that should remain. Traditions are things that bring you (people) together. There should be a certain amount of change; however, all of the traditional things are not bad. In any culture you will find

traditions that bind people together, in order for people to work together they have to come together in an area where they can agree and usually those terms of agreement are traditional.

Now, the way I imagine change is through the administrative structure. When I think about an authoritative administrator, one who most times micro-manages and delegates small amounts of power, I get discouraged about leadership. Then I imagine another leader who includes everyone's opinion in decision-making, a more democratic leader, but believe me some of the more democratic leaders breed a bunch of chaos. I really believe to be effective there should be a careful balance between these two types of leaders. You need to have leadership responsibility and hold the pen but you also need the workers who have great ideas and as the leader know how to incorporate them. If you can get administrators and workers on the same page then you can be successful at what you're doing.

I believe our goal should be to become the best citizens that we can possibly be, and when you teach citizenship in particular you teach responsibility. Changes in education need to happen and the best way to make those changes is from the top down. Many would disagree, although, I believe ideas come from the bottom and if you are at the top, you bring those good ideas from the bottom up. So instead of having a pyramid effect you have something that is shaped more like a rubber band where every one is involved and the ideas are flowing around and around. These are some of the changes I would like to see. Certain things need to be changed in our national government and dealing with funds and how much is allocated to each state for education. I think in some cases these funds should be taken on a one-to-one perspective.

Why I choose to pursue administration. Annette views the administrator as a positive facilitator. She believed that by involving everyone, the school was more successful. She knew that she could build upon the best qualities from every teacher. Annette utilized her skills as department and event coordinator at her school. "I want to become an administrator because there has to be a leader that will pull the best out of each individual, and I can do that," she said.

Here, Annette was speaking about leadership that incorporated the strengths of all teachers. She believed that she possessed the ability to bring out

positive characteristics in others. She had demonstrated this as a leader in her school and in her position at her church.

Personal background and experiences. Annette's Christian ties proved successful in her life. At 27, Annette was on the ministry staff at a church that rarely promoted woman as leaders of the congregation. As minister of music at this fairly large church, Annette successfully increased the churches attendance.

By leading for God and being successful in my school, I knew it was time for me to pursue school administration...Because of my strong religious beliefs, I use the Word of God as my guide. The Word has to be taught first then it is preached. To be a good administrator I believe you should also be a good teacher. We shape worlds: teachers are seed planters. As administrators, we must use what is instilled in us and plant those seeds among teachers.

Annette believed that the educational structure should be improved but maintained a conservative, traditional approach. Her ideals were not often embraced by the administration at her school but she was dedicated to carry out what she believed was best for children in any case.

#### Ellie-The Confident Leader

Ellie was reared in a single parent home with her mother and sisters. Ellie was happily married with no children. Ellie went to an inner city public school in urban State A. Ellie was born in 1977; at 22, she held several titles. Ellie excelled in everything. She always knew that she wanted to be a teacher and as a teacher she excelled as a leader. She was crowned Miss Black State A while attending college, Miss Homecoming during her senior year at a large, predominately white, state university in State A. Ellie refused to let circumstances stop her from achieving. Because Ellie attended urban schools and experienced unfair

circumstances as a student, it was important for her to go back to the community and change those inequities.

Urban schooling: The Need to Give Back to the Community. Ellie wanted to reverse the negative views that teachers held. She was working in the same district and school that fed into the high school she graduated from. "The school that I teach in now feeds into the school where I graduated, I am making a difference so that those kids know high school is not the end all."

How I can and will effectually make a difference in education. Ellie believed that as a leader she would incorporate better benefits for teachers. She also felt that by working with the media, leaders could improve the negative views that are often given to public education systems.

Public education has produced many great professionals. I feel that there are many areas that can be enhanced and ways that public education can better serve students, especially African-American inner-city students in urban areas. As a whole, public education has grown over the years; furthermore, it has quite a ways to go in order to provide each student with the best possible academic opportunities.

I would like to see a change in the availability of resources for some schools, currently there is a lack of resources for schools depending on location. It is also important to place more of an emphasis on all students being prepared for college. Teachers who are going beyond the call of duty should be monetarily compensated. As an administrator, I could change the negative view that public education has been given by providing the best possible opportunity for educational success for all students. As a principal, I will enforce the nations and districts efforts towards accountability and reach out to parents who are deemed unreachable while placing an importance on community relations and public awareness. With continuous evaluations and needs assessments, I can identify areas within the school building that should be worked on. Lastly, in order to change the negative view that has been placed on public education, I will continuously stress the school's and district's mission, goals and objective. There are many positive factors in education. Over the years, public education has proven successful in providing students with quality instruction. Committed teachers and

hardworking school personnel have helped shape and mold students into becoming skilled professionals.

Leadership and being a role model. Ellie spoke about people who influenced her.

Because she wasn't encouraged by teachers, she felt that she could be a role model while encouraging her students.

A combination of people influenced my choice to become a teacher. Not only good teachers but not so good teachers as well. They influenced my decision to teach, but also I saw an apparent need for more minority teachers within the (urban) district.

One of my mentors was a lady by the name of Juanita H. who truly made a difference in my life. Mrs. H. proved to me and the other seventh grade students that despite our circumstances, we were smart and would be successful. Through her commitment, sternness, intelligence and most of all love for education, I knew that working within the educational system would someday be my calling.

Ellie had been a leader from as early as she could remember. Although persons who were usually thought of as role models weren't encouraging her to pursue higher education, she used her leadership abilities to rise above the negativity.

During my senior year in high school, some of my teachers encouraged me and my classmates to begin higher education at a junior college first because we were not "college-bound." As a senior class president, I knew I had some leadership qualities. My sophomore year of college not only proved that I was "college-bound," but it also reinforced my innate leadership abilities.

Why I choose to pursue administration. Ellie believed a number of factors

influenced her decision to become an administrator. She shared why she felt administration was important to her and explained more about how her personal experiences effected that decision.

The strongest point that I feel I hold within my classroom is the demand for mutual respect and the intolerance to ignorance. I grew up on the north side of the state, and was continuously reminded through the media and

outside communities that as a student on the north side, I was less than others and would have a hard time being successful.

The personal characteristics that make me a leader are my communicative and organizational skills as well as my ability to be innovative, determined and motivational. During my second year of teaching, I realized that I was more concerned with the entire operation of the school system and the district. I began to have sympathetic feelings toward teachers who were not having as much success within the classroom as I was experiencing. As a result, I began meeting with teachers on my planning time in order to provide assistance in the area of classroom instruction and classroom management. My principal began to give me administrative responsibilities, I loved completing the jobs, and witnessing the positive effects, the changes and improvements, I had on the students and teachers.

I love the art and gift of teaching and I will forever be committed to children; yet, I feel that I must also assist in the foundational and structural areas of education. The most important factor influencing my vision for students and the desire to pursue administration would be the passion that I feel towards all students having the best educational opportunities possible within in an academically fostered culture and environment.

Personal background and experiences. Ellie decided to make a difference in

education based on her personal educational background. She was displeased with the lack of encouragement from her teachers.

As a child, I was influenced by many great educators, yet indirectly persuaded by poor teaching practices of other less effective teachers to join the profession in order to make a difference. I decided to become a teacher for many reasons. As I reminisce, I'm reminded of a foggy, non-productive middle school experience that centered around behavioral situations rather than educational opportunities. In the school that I attended [in an urban community], teachers didn't even encourage students to pursue a high school diploma. They told us to go to vo-tech or get our GED. The highest level of education that they felt we could achieve was an associate's degree at a community college. Now I know that I would not want anyone else to experience negativity like that.

Ellie had received "Teacher of the Year" for her school and several accolades in the district due to her leadership abilities. She was selected to participate in a district initiative for school leaders. Through the districts aspiring

principals program, Ellie incorporated her vision as an aspiring leader and tried to carry the vision out in her school.

## Part Two: Tables and Findings

The information gathered from my interviews with Donna, Linda, Tanya, Annette, and Ellie are only words on paper when compared to the passion and strong desire I could see in their eyes. In the findings section of this chapter, the reader will notice several overlaps gathered from the interviews through three tables along with additional passages from each woman. There are three tables represented because they incorporate the three concepts of head-heart-hand integrated by Bethune and others (Bethune-Cookman College Archives, 1938; Sergiovanni, 1967). The three tables will appear in the following order and the reader will note that some of the themes are combined: Table 1 Personal background and experiences-HEAD; Table 2 Urban schools: The Need to Give Back to the Community/Why I choose to pursue administration-HEART; and Table 3 Leadership and being a role model/How I can and will effectually make a difference in education-HAND. These passages are written narratives that the participants wrote to further explain their desire to pursue administration. The information in the tables was also gathered through phone conversations and informal talks with the women. Table 3 combined two of the five themes: Leadership and being a role model, and How I can and will effectually make a difference in education. The reader will find that this is the most detailed of the three tables because it incorporates the hand component of Bethune's head-heart-hand concept. The reader is reminded that hand stands for what is imparted to others, and the knowledge that is returned based on what is known

through education and training. In Table 3, some of the most important issues facing education administrators in general were brought out in my conversations with the participants. I felt that by elaborating on the twelve elements, educational administrators could understand the personal views of the five women and gain an understanding of what is important in urban school settings to some urban school leaders.

### Findings

The educational and personal background is provided in Table 1. It reveals the attributes from the interview statements made by each of the participants. In congruence to Bethune's head component, the participants identified how they felt a broad contribution to what their lives encompassed as it relates to personal and knowledge-based occurrence.

Table 1.

#### Personal Background and Educational Experiences: HEAD

| Attributes                 | Donna         | Linda                    | Tanya                                     | Annette                                | Ellie         |
|----------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------|
| K-12 Academic preparation  | Private       | Public                   | Private                                   | Public                                 | Public        |
| Educational Preparation    | B.A.<br>M.Ed. | B.S.<br>M.Ed.            | B.A.<br>M.Ed. +<br>doctoral<br>coursework | B.A.<br>Will<br>complete<br>M.Ed. 2002 | B.S.<br>M.Ed. |
| Administrative Preparation |               | Principal<br>Certificate | Principal<br>and Suptnd.<br>Certificate   |                                        |               |

#### K-12 Academic Preparation

The academic preparation of the participants was vital to understand their desire to pursue administrative positions as adults. The women highlighted aspects of their upbringing and the education they received without being

prompted by questions regarding that area. It was implied by all of the women that this was important to them. Donna and Tanya attended private schools throughout their K-12 preparation. Linda, Annette, and Ellie attended public schools. The differences between public and private school training did not seem to affect the decision that the participants had to work in public, urban schools. Donna and Tanya seemed to be enthusiastic about their private school training because they believed it gave them additional knowledge and skill to impart to their students as teachers.

Donna

I was fortunate enough to attend private schools. I really believe that I received the best education. I felt very prepared, even as a little girl. I would play school with cousins or friends of the family and they would put me in charge because they felt I knew enough to be the teacher. I think that public schools now are doing a great job to educate kids but there is something about the discipline that you learn in private school settings. I feel that being disciplined has made me a better teacher and will make me a more effective leader.

Linda

I went to school in the same district my children attend school now. I have seen this district change for the better and sometimes for the worse. I am very devoted to the communities and students in this school district. They need to see consistency in their teachers and leaders. Because I have been a student in the district, teach in the district and have children that attend school here I know first hand the quality of academic preparation. When I was a student in kindergarten through twelfth grade I was taught the basics. Now my children are getting more advanced preparation. I believe in public schools, I am an advocate for the teachers, students and parents.

Tanya

I didn't go through public education. I went through private schools and I had a pretty good educational experience; I really didn't have anything that I didn't like about my education in private schools. I went to a catholic school for elementary and for middle school and a Christian school for 9-12 grades. I was the only minority from elementary through 8<sup>th</sup> grade

though. So when I went to 8<sup>th</sup> grade there were no Caucasians, well there was one. He seemed to adjust okay. You could tell his parents had a different mind set from other white people in the state. They actually thought he could learn something in a black community.

Annette

I am so thankful to God that I went to school. I know that there are things I experienced as a child in school that other students don't see as blatantly now. Overall, aside from the negative conditions in the small rural neighborhood where I grew up, my schooling experience was pleasant. I had to take remedial classes when I got to college so that told me that either I hadn't been paying attention in class or my teacher wasn't teaching me what I should have been learning. I make sure now as a teacher I cover extra material for my students so they will be prepared for college.

Ellie

I wasn't prepared as a child or an adolescent. My training was not all bad but I specifically remember middle and high school. I had to plead with the admissions officer at my college to accept me into school. I had motivation from within and I knew that I had to go to college. I didn't even care if I needed remedial classes. I was determined to learn what I needed to in order to be successful.

### Educational Preparation

The pursuit of advanced degrees provided the participants with motivation and educational experience to be prepared for the careers they wish to pursue. The educational preparation component is fulfilled through master's, doctorate, and leadership programs. The necessity of a degree other than a bachelor is vital for these women. The information that they obtain incorporates theoretical linkages along with research to assist them in the practices that they will encounter as school leaders.

Donna

Of course, I knew that I needed more than a bachelor's degree and a passion for leadership. I completed my master's in Educational Administration, Curriculum and Supervision in 18 months. While in my

program I got involved with school policy and attended school board meetings. I work closely with the principal and got in his face about what he was doing, not to intimidate him, but to learn more. I needed him as a resource. I wanted to learn the steps that he has taken to be effective.

Linda

I learned about a master's program through some of my colleagues and my principal. They encouraged me to apply and I did. I got my bachelor's degree in physical education and I thought this master's degree would make me a better person and prepare me educationally. I was very scared about being in school again and being a good mother. I did it though. I am so glad that I did. I have used a lot of what I learned in my daily activities.

Tanya

I am currently working on my doctoral degree. When I finished my master's I knew that I needed to get a doctorate as well. It has been challenging and exciting. I really believed when I entered this program that having a doctorate would benefit me and I would learn new information that could mold my leadership style. I have my principal's certificate and I am preparing myself to be a superintendent some day.

Annette

My master's degree will be in Educational Administration. I will finish within the next year. It has been exciting to attend class, but it is also challenging to leave a school like mine and give students your all, and then come to class for three hours and maintain that excitement. I learn a lot from my classes, I just think doing the job will teach me a great deal more and will enhance what I have learned.

Ellie

I recently completed my master's degree in Education Administration and I am currently in an aspiring principal's leadership program. Both programs have assisted me in my plans for how I will carry out school leadership. The theory that I learn is very helpful, linking that theory to practice will be beneficial to everyone once I do become a school principal.

#### Administrative Preparation

The participants deal with a particular challenge of not being in the school system for a long period of time. As teachers they have obtained leadership positions given to them by their principal or as part of district training. Many

times, the opportunities to be leaders are based on internships that must be completed in order to receive degrees or certificates. The participants became involved in various voluntary leadership positions to help them learn how to be effective leaders. Two of the participants Linda and Tanya hold principal's certification. The remaining three participants have begun preparing to take the exam and have used their teacher leadership positions and experiences to help them prepare.

Donna

To develop my leadership as a teacher I made sure I was involved. I was the site coordinator for the decision-making committee, board of control, head teacher, principal's advisory council, drill team advisor, and public relations department member.

Linda

I am on several committees' in the school and serve as chair on many of them. Most of the positions are appointed through community members, the principal or faculty. I have been team leader, teacher in charge, acting principal, and discipline committee representative. These positions have all assisted me and are preparing me to be an administrative and instructional leader.

Tanya

In an administrative position you learn very quickly. I learn new things everyday that is not in graduate school textbooks. I have learned how to deal with parents, members in the community, other teachers, and my supervisors. It is important to treat everyone with respect. Now that I am in and administrative position, it is much easier to apply what I learn in graduate school to decisions I make.

Annette

Because I am so involved in school activities and the principal appoints me to head up programs, I feel I am gaining administrative preparation through those activities. I certainly don't believe that I will be prepared over night. I know that becoming a good leader takes time and experience. I witness this realization in my church as a church leader. I

work with my principal and ask him about his daily decisions. I evaluate them and think about how I would handle certain situations.

Ellie

Since I recently finished my master's and now I am in this principal academy I have had the opportunity to work as a teacher-leader under my principal for two years. I have been mentored and introduced to the position first hand. My principal has enough confidence in my direction as a future leader that she assigns several of her responsibilities to me and asks my opinion about school issues. I feel like this is preparing me and once I do become an administrator I know I will be prepared.

In Table 2, Urban School: The Need to Give Back to the Community/ Why I Choose to Pursue Administration-heart, as shown above, reveals the attributes from the interview statements made by each of the participants. Each participant made me aware that the above-mentioned implications were the basis of their decisions to pursue administration. The framework for this decision came from a desire linked to personal experiences, role models, educational experiences, and inequities that they relate to the world of education administration.

Table 2.

Urban School: The Need to Give Back to the Community/ Why I Choose to Pursue Administration-HEART

| Attributes                       | Donna | Linda | Tanya | Annette | Ellie |
|----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|---------|-------|
| Personal Desire                  | ✓     | ✓     | ✓     | ✓       | ✓     |
| Urban Renewal                    | ✓     | ✓     | ✓     | ✓       | ✓     |
| Cultural Diversity               | ✓     | ✓     | ✓     | ✓       | ✓     |
| Ethnicity                        | ✓     | ✓     | ✓     | ✓       | ✓     |
| Parental Involvement             | ✓     | ✓     | ✓     | ✓       |       |
| Community Partnership/Leadership | ✓     | ✓     | ✓     | ✓       | ✓     |

|                        |   |   |   |   |   |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
|                        |   |   |   |   |   |
| Assessment Achievement | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |   |
| Career Goal            | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| High Self Concept      | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

In all of my interview sessions, I believe that this was each participant's most important aspect of administration. Each participant may not have grown up in surroundings that would be considered urban, however, they all wanted to take what they learned to the communities and incorporate it.

By actively taking a role to pursue administration, the participants have opened the door for opportunities. The phenomenal aspect is that they want to provide a leading role in education. The interest may have been sparked by a family member or mentoring teacher, but know the pursuit is in their hands. This is what the participants stated regarding their career paths towards administration.

None of these participants wished simply to jump into leadership, they each used their first year to "test the water" and they jumped in full force during the second year of teaching. As teachers, the participants have already assumed the role as a model for students and other teachers in some cases. They use their natural leadership abilities at the school from the classroom to the office.

Bethune used her skills and knowledge to begin a classroom, out of that classroom she developed a curriculum and broadened a school; once the school had a strong foundation, she founded a college. As an administrator, the vision and direction you have is enhanced based on what you put into it. Although my

participants are early in their teaching careers, they already have a vision and note things that need to be changed in public schools. Once this vision is nurtured and brought out, positive changes in education as a whole are guaranteed to occur.

In Table 3, Leadership and Being a Role Model/How I can and will effectually make a difference in education-hand, as shown above, reveals the attributes from the interview statements made by each of the participants. By providing examples of leadership, including both negative and positive ideals of public education, each participant established a foundation for their personal beliefs and the leadership model they will use to carry out their administrative roles.

Table 3.

Leadership and Being a Role Model/How I can and will effectually make a difference in education-HAND

| Attributes                              | Donna | Linda | Tanya | Annette | Ellie |
|-----------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|---------|-------|
| Resources/Funding                       | ✓     | ✓     | ✓     | ✓       | ✓     |
| Access to Public Information/Technology | ✓     |       | ✓     | ✓       |       |
| Personal Satisfaction                   | ✓     | ✓     |       | ✓       | ✓     |
| Personal Vision                         | ✓     | ✓     | ✓     | ✓       | ✓     |
| Personal Role Model                     | ✓     | ✓     | ✓     |         | ✓     |
| Cultural Diversity                      | ✓     | ✓     | ✓     | ✓       |       |
| Challenges/Problems                     | ✓     | ✓     | ✓     | ✓       | ✓     |
| Revitalization of Public Education      | ✓     | ✓     | ✓     | ✓       | ✓     |

|                       |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Equity                | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Service/Need          | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Democratic Leadership | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Discipline            | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |   |

Table 3 provides information that the participants feel will make them effectual leaders. Table 3 directly relates to the vision that they possess and the attributes examine how they will change education for the better. I will provide an explanation of each attribute from Table 3 as it relates personally to the participants and as the attributes are related to research. It is important to note that these attributes are specific changes that the participants desire to see change in urban, African American schools.

#### Resources/Funding

Resources and funding are often areas of school renewal that are a challenge to improve (Glickman, 1998). O'Hair, McLaughlin, and Reitzug (2000) state, "Due to inequities in funding, inner city schools are often not maintained at the same high level as schools in affluent suburban school districts" (p. 306). When school budgets are allocated from the district, the school leader has almost no control of what his/her school is given. The financial appropriation is based on the projected number of students enrolled. Resource inequities exist between states, schools, classrooms and students (O'Hair, McLaughlin, & Reitzug, 2000 p. 311). Consequently, school leaders find their hands tied when it comes to planning activities, providing copy paper for teachers, incorporating field experiences for students, and carrying out any other activities outside of

number of daily school operations that are budgeted. In this segment, the women share how they will go about seeking outside resources to meet the needs of their students. Bethune went about seeking resources for her school by writing letters to persons of influence. Here is an excerpt from a letter she wrote to Charlotte Hawkins Brown with a request of Brown to speak with persons interested in helping Bethune fund her institution:

Dear Charlotte...This has been a most trying year for Florida, from an economic standpoint. Our students have been terribly handicapped because of a lack of funds with which to enter school, and with which to maintain them during the year. . .I received a telegram from Mary McDowell, asking that I come to Chicago to speak at the Women Voters' League Forum on the twelfth of November. I am accepting the invitation, because I think it is a wonderful opportunity to get over the program, the desires of our National Association, Bethune Cookman College and our people in general...I am asked to speak on "Race Relations"...Now, when I come there, [there is] one thing I want to have you do and that is make it possible for me to make some contacts with friends who might be interested in what we are doing here. I am sure that whatever can be done in this particular, will be done (Mary McLeod Bethune (October, 1927) as cited in McClusky & Smith, 1999, p. 94).

Corroborating with the themes from the conceptual framework, the women in the study expounded on resources and funding, and how they would go about obtaining them.

Donna

I think that all schools should have some type of programs specifically focused on grant writing. I realize that you are allotted so much money as a district, however, if we had specific groups and researchers that specialize in grant writing that will help our schools a lot more. Which in turn will improve our student potential.

Linda

More funding and resources are needed, especially in urban schools, where many of the students come from single parent homes. There are a lot of negative stigmatism in the news about a lack of resources in urban schools, but they aren't doing anything to assist the schools. The children see and hear this on a daily basis. I plan to obtain funding through

partnerships with businesses and grants. I will establish mentoring programs with community organizations like the Urban League, Big Brothers Programs, and sorority and fraternities. I will involve the media in the entire process, so it will give them a more positive outlook on what urban schools are doing well for our kids.

Tanya

As an administrator, it may seem difficult to change school and district-funding levels. The structure of school funding is set and may be impossible to effect at the administration level. Although, funds can be improved in other ways, I would strive to seek out new resources for funding. Funding opportunities can be sought out in the form of grants, business partnerships. I plan to utilize these resources.

Annette

To obtain resources and funding I plan to go through the government grant system. The government has a lot of money and I believe that it is owed to our people. Just because the blood our ancestors was shed for this country so there should be some reparation. A lot of people don't know how to get money for schools. I am interested in programs like Gear Up, and I would work with the State Board of Regents, and through private sources. As a principal you have the opportunity to get in touch with people that you normally wouldn't as a teacher-when you come in contact with people in powerful positions you should always be prepared to find out how they got the things that they got, and do what they did to get it-as long as it is legal. There are millions of opportunities out there for these kids and I believe I know how to find them.

Ellie

Within education, resources and funding are limited, yet needed in order to properly educate each child. Fortunately, through Title funding and other resources schools are able to better serve children. Once monies are allocated the principal is responsible for analyzing the budget and conducting a thorough assessment of what finances should go where.

#### Access to Public Information/Technology

This issue emerged in my conversations with the women. The use of technology in schools and access to public information is a problem that these women have dealt with in their own classrooms. They specifically identified the problem connected to equity, however, when asked specifically about how they

would change the access to technology as school leaders, they shared more specific goals.

Donna

I think that when money is appropriated through grants we can obtain funding for technology. I really think that by writing Dell and Microsoft we can get funding. Also, I have found that parents in the urban community are in politics and other influential careers. When you reach out to them, they have resources that they will provide. To them, their children's schools are important and they are willing to help. I think it is really about reaching out.

Tanya

Technology is an integral component of any successful school. As a resourceful administrator, I would endeavor to seek out funding opportunities for technology in the form of grants, business ventures, and etc. Reorganizing and restructuring current funds is also an option to be researched.

Annette

The first thing I would do is teach children that they have to go out and get information at any cost. Circumstances aren't supposed to control you, you control the circumstance. Again, government monies are out there, sometimes you have to raise your own money whether it is for library materials or technology integration. I will model after the Bible, one of the scriptures says you see your vision, and write down a plan, you make sure it is plain and simple and get it out to the people. Put the plan into action and work for it. If my plan is to improve technology integration that is how I would go about doing it.

### Personal Satisfaction

Personal satisfaction is an attribute that some leaders possess from within. In the words below, the women express why they are satisfied with themselves and their decisions to pursue administration. This is an important issue because as future leaders, the women believe that they have to gain something out of leading personally. To them, obtaining knowledge, imparting

knowledge, and caring about the status of education achieve personal satisfaction.

Donna

I began teaching as far back as I can remember. I would teach my dolls and even the trees in the backyard. I always had a classroom. I was excited when my mother gave me siblings because they made my class come to life. My father who is a minister saw that I had great potential in instructing so at the age of fifteen he assigned me to teach Sunday school. I was so excited. This is what sparked my interest in the field of education. I opened an early childhood learning center with my mother at the age of eighteen. Our classes ran from pre- kindergarten to first grade. We were enthused with the way we offered an accelerated program along with tender loving care. Our babies were reading on two levels above expectation. I began to feel very passionate about becoming a teacher. I attended junior college at Excel County College of North, State D. I received an Associate's in Early Childhood and Elementary Education. I then furthered my education at Christian State A of Tinseltown, State A. There I received my Bachelor's in Elementary Education. I began to teach for the State A School District as a fifth grade elementary teacher. I was excited about being in the classroom. As the years went by I finally started to see the politics behind the school door. I was offered to further my career in education by becoming a principal. I studied through a master's cohort and received my Master of Education in Administration/Supervision and Principalship. I was on my way to becoming a Principal in State A but I had to leave and return to the Northeast after a student of mine was killed, the student was my younger brother Daniel.

Linda

I attended an urban high school that is well established and historically has been known for producing the best and brightest African American students. I enjoyed being surrounded by people of color so I pursued my bachelor's degree at a historically black university in State A. I received my B.S. in elementary education and minor in P.E. I am embarking upon my eleventh year in the classroom and have taught all grades and all subjects. I have learned that it is best to have experience to be successful as an administrator; however I will take an administrative position the coming year.

Annette

I was the little black girl that got shipped to the white school. I was on the honor roll, out of 200 kids, I was 1 of 15 blacks. I am not trying to brag but I was also an athlete, and involved in fine arts. And I was still making good

grades. I want to see children, any child excel. According to the standards in our [American] culture they [African American children] are not supposed to be exceptional, rich, or smart, they are supposed to remain poor and be downtrodden. I like to help the underdog, and take kids that people think are nothing, encourage them, lift them up, and give them the tools that they need to succeed, and if necessary push them to. That is what America should be about. We are one of very few countries that you can come to with nothing and end up a millionaire. The Bible says it like this, 'you take the foolish things of the world and confound the wise.' That is where I get my satisfaction.

Ellie

My eight-year-old Christmas proved itself the best ever! Getting my peaches and cream bike was not a form of childlike entertainment; instead, it became my entrepreneurial asset. Despite the three-mile ride to Grandma's house to work, I looked forward to getting paid twenty dollars a month only to purchase more supplies for my candy business. At that time, candy was in great demand in my neighborhood and I was glad to provide customer satisfaction. Through the years, I developed a strong sense of independence and need to become self-sufficient in whatever I attempted. I know that's why I am the person and leader that I am today.

### Personal Vision

In Sacred dreams: Women in the superintendency (1999), several authors identified the importance of vision in the road to success for women in leadership. This book, edited by C. Cryss Bruner (1999), spoke about leadership as a challenging process that was inspired by a shared vision to encourage organizational and personal success.

When I spoke with these women about their vision, it became a strong point in the conversations. They related their vision to biblical principles and personal beliefs. Their visions developed after seeing challenges that students, and teachers face. By developing their personal vision for schools, the women plan to incorporate that vision when they become school leaders. Bethune saw vision as a pathway to success. In the quote below, she speaks about the importance of having vision.

Unless the people have vision, they perish. What can we see; and, having seen, are we willing to venture? Do we see our large opportunity for the race to produce? Do we see an intellectual interpretation of our religious thought unhampered by superstitious belief, or limited by too great a satisfaction? (Mary McLeod Bethune, Response, Twenty-first Spingarn Medalist, as cited in McClusky & Smith, 1999 p.113)

Donna

I am presently teaching Middle School in the East Urban School District. I am still aiming for an administrative position. I am also working on heading a Freedom School (Charter School) for the inner city community of North, State D. I have been placed as the overseer and director of the program. This program is developed to build the esteem and literacy of inner city school children. This program is a division of the Children's Defense Fund. I have chosen the field of education for the simple fact that it is my passion. I feel that I have the vision and the ability to make change in the lives of our children. I feel that I can reach parents in a sensible fashion to make them realize their role in making their children suitable citizens. I would like to fuse the community, family, and school back together to make our society stronger.

Linda

"I am an African American leader, I am a successful single mom, I have a vision for my life and I reach back to my community to develop a vision for others."

Tanya

After graduation from the university with my bachelor's degree in Special Education, I continued to receive my Master's degree in Educational Administration. I knew that I would pursue administration so it was only logical to continue in the program. While obtaining this degree, I worked as a Special Education teacher at two urban schools in the central region of the state. I started out in an elementary school than moved to the middle school level. I taught for three years before becoming an administrator. After obtaining my master's degree, I immediately began looking for administrative positions. Growing up and watching my mother, I always wanted to teach. Although, after being a teacher for three years, I begun to see myself in a different light. I wanted to greater impact the system of education. I loved teaching and still want to return to the classroom later, but I knew that I could positively impact education for children as a leader. Therefore, seeking out administrative positions became the major focus of my life. I had personal goals and a vision for myself. I had to accomplish them.

I see myself as an innovative leader that will guide schools into the new century successfully. As we face new challenges and new student populations, it is my endeavor to embrace these changes with understanding and motivation. I will assist schools in becoming dynamic schools where multiculturalism, and different learning styles will be understood and appreciated.

Annette

I was born at the state University Hospital I am the sixth child of seven children that were born to my parents. My dad was a country boy who finished school at the age of twenty. He was a very loving father and dedicated husband in spite of the fact that his father was an alcoholic and a woman beater. My mother was a city girl with the personality of a rose blooming in a flower garden. She was very popular among all who knew her. My mother graduated from high school in a country town in 1961. She was pregnant with my oldest "Big" brother by November. My father was working as a farm hand for about forty dollars a month. But because my mother was already pregnant, they got married two months later in January. My brother was born six months later. After that five girls and one more boy were born. My father always worked two or three jobs to make ends meet and my mother worked as a maid and a cook. My aunt's had suggested that we should apply for welfare but my mother believed that God would supply all our needs. She always said that no child of hers would ever be on welfare. She said that welfare was just another form of slavery to keep black people poor and in a position of servitude. She said that we could be whatever we wanted to be. My father's perspective on welfare was that he was going to be a better father than his father was. He said that no time would his family be living off the government. He said that he was working hard so that his children would not have to.

My mom and my dad were Christians that believed strongly in the ability of Jesus Christ to bless our family. I say all of this to show that because of what I went through as a child I can relate to my students. I know that most of them are on welfare or are living in poverty. My vision is to be an educator that cares and sees the needs of students, whether it is through after school programs, help with classwork, or just having a mentor, I am going to do it. Actually that is how I want my school run with poor minority kids in mind.

Ellie

Although I was initially denied admission into college the meeting I had with the admissions counselor was successful and five years later, I received my bachelor's and one and a half year later, I received my masters. As I reflect on living on the north side community, I'm reminded of comments made by my teachers, 'you students had better go to a junior

college first because you're not college-bound.' I'm reminded of attending schools where more emphasis was placed on behavioral situations rather than academic success. Low test scores and negative media press was not enough to discourage me from my innate destiny to be successful. On the other hand, it motivated me to become an educator. I know that because I was successful other students will be successful and that is what I envision.

There is a saying that 'without vision, the people will perish.' I am a true believer in the need for a vision. I pride myself in believing 'what could be' and I make the necessary steps to achieve any proposed vision. Teachers, students, and administrators, who believe in change and demonstrate the shared vision within the school, surround the most successful schools. Each constituent within a school and district should have a personal vision and must develop ways to accomplish the expected outcome.

### Personal Role Model

Webster defines a model as "a person considered as a standard of excellence to be imitated" (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 1996). The women in this study have identified role models since their childhood, and in some cases their careers. They have modeled after them and have kept a strong relationship with their role models. They have identified women who are leaders in education that have encouraged them to pursue higher demands. Sakre Edson (1988) contradicted this thought in her book, Pushing the limits: The female administrative aspirant, and writes, "With few women currently employed in public school management, female educators lack same-sex representatives upon which to pattern their career aspirations and goals" (Edson, 1988, p.116). This realization has changed over a decade and there is an increasing number of women in administration, however the negative issue for African American women, is that there are not a large number of them (Fenwick, 2000). The women share below how they have become personal role models and how their role models have helped mold them.

Donna

I want a person to see me as a strong, innovative, leader who thinks outside the box. I want a person to know I am someone who isn't afraid of paradigm shifts. I am a team player. I think all of these things make me a role model in my community.

Linda

My administrator was truly a blessing because she has motivated me and three others to go back to school. I believe that we're all content in our positions as teachers; however, I sensed there was more for my life and the status of urban schools. With my principals help I was molded in to becoming lifelong learner. She has the kind of personality that makes you enjoy working outside of your box. She has coached me into the person that I have become, a promising administrator. I have often been put in leadership roles throughout my teaching career. This opportunity gave me the leadership skills I needed and I managed the classroom as well. I have had four administrators during my career at an urban elementary school. The most recent administrator forced me to evaluate my career and reflect back on my goals. I believe that she was the one person that motivated me into going into administration.

Tanya

I attribute all of my success to my mother and father. They instilled many important morals and values in each of us. Religion or the faith in a higher being, education, and family were all stressed as necessary components in our lives. My strength is derived in part from my mother. Watching her successfully cope with the unexpected deaths of my father, my grandmother, and my sister taught me strength, endurance, and trustworthiness that better days were yet to come.

My grandmother, whom passed away in 1999, left within me the things that my mother and father also left, but also she left an importance of history. My grandmother was very knowledgeable about African American history and our family history; she never let us forget where we came from. I allow my sorrow to serve as motivation for me. I strive to be successful in their honor and for them.

Ellie

Some of my former teachers served as essential role models while I began to decide on my career path. Role models provide guidance and leadership, which supports an understanding of a particular occupation and/or mentorship. Once a level of success has been attained, we must serve as role-models to someone.

## Cultural Diversity

Incorporating culturally sensitive curriculum and practices in urban schools is very important for minority students (Cotton, 1991). By promoting a multicultural environment and preparing students to work in diverse surroundings, educators promote the self-esteem and cross-cultural understanding of students (Cotton, 1991). The women in this study have identified the importance of incorporating an environment where all cultures are appreciated and understood. There are several researchers that support incorporating a multicultural environment for minority students and the issues that these women mention are valid (Levine & Lezotte, 1990; Lomotey, 1989; Pine & Hilliard, 1990; Sizemore, Brossard & Harrigan, 1983; Valverde, 1988).

Valverde (1988) states:

Developing a multicultural climate is important because of the attitudinal impact it has on students. Principals need to realize that attending to the cultural aspect of human beings is not trivial but central to holding minority students in school and to promote learning. (p. 324)

Donna

Believe it or not a lot of the black kids are not used to being around white kids. When I would take my drill team group to white schools, they felt funny, and it's not their fault they just haven't had exposure. I want to see schools within the same district visit each other. I would suggest district day where the schools have the opportunity to visit one another. Because the media portrays such poor views about urban schools and minority students, parents that are not in that community are closed-minded about the kids that attend urban schools. This really needs to change. We need to appreciate our differences and grow together as a country.

Linda

I see an area of improvement needed in urban schools, among black children specifically. Black kids really don't know about their own culture. Until they learn more about themselves and their history they can't appreciate other cultures. They need to see successful role models, such

as doctors, lawyers, and be able to identify themselves with them instead of whites that they usually see in those professional positions.

Tanya

Urban schools should be places where multiculturalism is understood, appreciated, and recognized appropriately. They should be schools where all cultures can grow and learn together successfully. Urban schools need cultural diversity to be more indicative of real life situations, wherein all humans work together.

Annette

I talk to my students about other cultures. I think that kids ought to be able to look at each other through a blind man's eyes. Because a blind man's eyes are unable to see the differences in people, and he has to rely on his other senses. I will incorporate cultural diversity by taking them out of their own environment, and exposing them to other cultures and teaching them different ways of doing things. For example, my kids had never been to the opera. I took them and they were acting like it was a rock concert. I had to explain differently and now they are aware of that culture and act accordingly. Because if their culture is their whole world, and that is all they know, there is a greater chance of them developing ethnocentricity. In a book I read recently the writer describes ethnocentricity as one's inability to accept differences of other people. I want the students to love their culture and appreciate others. I think it is also important to train teachers about cultural diversity. Sometimes teachers feel like any time a student uses slang they should correct their English right then and there. If English is not a child's first language, you should correct their sentence structure and have them write correctly and speak correctly. But, if a child has a hold on the English language to correct their slang is slapping or discrediting their culture. We must be sensitive to students of all cultures and learn about them in order to respect them.

### Challenges/Problems

Sakre Edson (1988) identified the greatest challenges aspiring administrators face being affirmative action, racial discrimination, sexual discrimination, and litigation against these challenges (pp. 161-204). Each woman in this study, in her own way identifies challenges. Some of the women focused on personal challenges they have faced, while others focused on the challenges students face in schools. The overlap occurs when the personal

challenge and the school challenges that are dependent upon one another. Because the women are young and are working toward pursuing advanced degrees and careers the biggest challenge is their experience or lack of it. However, because schools have changed drastically, no longer must a female teacher remain in the classroom 20 years before proving to be a good administrator, these women are overcoming that challenge. They speak about personal goals and victories, as well as defeats they have faced as they strive to obtain an administrative position. Although some of the challenges mentioned in Edson's research are specific to minorities, women in pursuit of administration also face similar situations (Edson, 1988).

Donna

The challenges that I face at my school district, is this hidden rule. I call it the "respector of persons" rule. It is all about who you know, not what you know. I see that as a problem because the district that I work for only promotes well their known favorites. And since I am new I don't get the opportunity to move up. I always get that I am too young or not experienced. I know experience is important but what I see in the experienced people is a repetitive non-productive process. They are doing the same things they did 20 years ago, and it is not helping our kids. They need fresh new ideas and an energetic, young leader can bring that to a school.

Linda

Being a single mother of three I believed that it would be almost impossible going to school again and take care of my children. I know that if I had not listened to her [the mentor's] echoing voice saying each day that I could do it, I would not have tried to go back to school at all. This was a personal challenge I had to face and overcome, and I did.

Tanya

I began by sending out resumes to several school districts. I went on several interviews to obtain an administrative position, specifically three. I was beginning to think three strikes meant I was out of the interview game, but I did not give up. The interviewers all referred to my age and teaching experience as deterrents to being hired. Three consecutive

employers cited my young age and amount of teaching experience as reasons not to hire me. Although, just as I began to become discouraged, I went on a 4<sup>th</sup> interview and received a phone call the same night to be hired. Presently, I am the only African American in an administrative position in this school district. Additionally, I am one of a total of three African Americans that exist on the faculty of my school. The staff of over one hundred members is composed of only three African Americans. The sad thing about being in a minority on staff is that the student population is largely African American and continuously growing. Therefore, the faculty and staff do not equally represent the school population. Being in the position that I am in demands respect, in part. Although, at times it feels that because of the color of my skin some teachers look down or do not respect me in the same respect they would my Caucasian counterparts. I also strive in this environment to be somewhat perfect. I feel like all eyes are on me and that people are waiting to see me make a mistake or fail. Although, I know that I have to work twice as hard anywhere I go.

Consequently, I strive to always do things right and do the right things. The school used to be considered an all white school that affluent children attended. The school has changed drastically. There are more students of color, African American students. I have seen the African American students faced with challenges just because they weren't white. I still feel like I am in an urban school setting because of the changes in the student population. In the beginning of the school year, it felt awkward and weird to be at meetings where I was the only minority. Although, after awhile, I began to form several friendships and acquaintances. The leaders in the district have been extremely supportive and nice to me which has made a difference. Even when teachers try to go around dealing with me [working with her on necessary issues] because I am African American my principal takes a stand and does not allow prejudice. In addition to my role as an administrator, I also am a doctoral student. I want to strive toward the superintendency, therefore I felt it was necessary to get my doctorate. Again, in my doctoral program, I have noted I am one of only a few minority candidates, specifically African American women. My mother always stressed to complete everything to its fullest and among many other reasons, I feel like this degree will be the completion of my education cycle.

Schools are faced with a multitude of challenges. Although, the school of the millennium will view these challenges as opportunities, as a leader, I see one major challenge that pervades schools is the sudden influx of low socio-economic populations. I have experienced this situation in two different environments a school placed in a low socio-economic area and a school placed in a suburban area. I believe current middle class values and practices are being challenged and reviewed. Because times are changing we need to approach this challenge in a different way, we should embrace students from all backgrounds and learn how to make them feel important.

Annette

Sometimes things were rough, sometimes we would come home and there was not any electricity. But father would say well tonight we will be barbecuing and eating around the campfire. My parents made sure that we never realized we were poor. They always say that poverty was a generational curse that would be broken with us. My father was very resourceful, and he knew a lot about cars. So my father and his cousins would go buy old used cars and fix them up. They figured out that if on every payday if they bought a part in three or four months they would have a whole vehicle to drive. My mother would do the shopping two or three times a month. She would go to the fabric store and buy material and make our clothes. She would go into dress shops and look at the designer clothes and find a pattern that looked like it and make it. She made shirts, pants, and suits for my brothers and blouses, skirts and dresses for us girls. She even made our hair ribbons. When times really got hard my father got a janitorial job cleaning a seven story bank tower. We 'the children' were his cleaning crew. I was about ten or eleven years old and we continued to do this until I was about fourteen. My mother and father grew our own vegetables in the garden and this saved us a lot of money. My mother finished Nurses Aid School and my dad had a steady job at a bakery. My father always had a job, his motto was 'a man should always work to take care of his family and that responsible Negroes should always have a job.' My teenage years were very good. I excelled in all subjects particularly music. My mother realized my potential and worked an extra job so that I could have piano lessons. My parents would not tolerate bad grades or bad behavior. My parents were quick in correcting us in love. They taught us to respect everybody and be quick to forgive according to God's word. She said, "that ditch digging was fine but let someone else do that. Try to be the one behind the desk that decides where to dig the ditch." During these years, I made some decisions. My sister was sixteen years old and pregnant. My brother walked away from a college scholarship. My oldest sister had flunked out of college and was now married. These three incidents made my mother very unhappy, and father was very disappointed. I decided that I would never disappoint my parents like that. I thought that the best way for me to honor my parents would be to finish school and go to college and get my degree. My parents say that, "we should never be a statistic." The bible says that a foolish son brings shame to his father and grief to his mother. I definitely did not want to inflict any embarrassment, shame or disgrace on my parents. During these years, my mother made it a point to come to all of my musical endeavors. To make a long story short, I am now a college graduate and working on my master's degree in education administration. I am the first black female to graduate from college in my family. I have found Jesus Christ.

Another one of my biggest personal challenges was going to a predominately white college and being the only minority in class, classes for that matter. I would say over 90% of my classes I would be the only African American.

The challenge for being and African American school leader, I believe, is that you have personal and professional beliefs, and they can't always cross over in your work. It is very difficult to separate the two and in doing that you have to try not to compromise who you are in dealing with people, all people, but specifically those who are above you.

Ellie

Within education, there are many challenges and roadblocks. One challenge that I have is the ability to continuously be a leader at the age of twenty five with only three years of teaching experience. I feel competent and confident in my ability to articulate and initiate; yet there are those that find it hard to view me as credible due to my age, race and gender. I teach in an inner-city low income school and because of the stress level and the complexity of the job, I feel that there should be some additional pay.

As a single parent, my mom proved herself to be hard working, determined and resilient and continuously reminded my sisters and I 'nothing worth having in life comes easy. You must work hard in everything that you do!' I always fully understood her message because growing up without a father meant a double role that my mom had to play. Despite the times when food was scarce, showers were cold and lights were out, I always knew that if I just continued to have faith and determination, the circumstances would change.

'Can I get my food please?' This was a question heard so often as I worked in King Arthur's Steak House at the age of sixteen. While my classmates were enjoying the young high school life, I worked every weekend from nine o'clock at night until six o'clock the next morning. Through the long tedious hours of taking orders, washing dishes, and cleaning bathrooms, I gained some valuable life-long skills. Independence, communication skills and an ability to be quick on my feet are merely three characteristics that would shape and mold my personality as well as my destiny. The restaurant owner showed me the value of the dollar and petitioned me to save up my pay checks plus tips to get my first car. While my peers were focused on boyfriends and prom dresses, I set my sights on completing my first major goals, which were to buy my own car at the age of sixteen and finish high school in the years to come. After completing these goals, I was determined to get into college, despite my low ACT scores. Even though I received a letter of denial into college, I persuaded the Admissions' Director to meet with me in an attempt to get probationary admittance.

## Revitalization of Public Education

Revitalize, according to Webster's dictionary, means to regenerate, refresh, and renew something that is in existence (1999, 2<sup>nd</sup>.) Revolutionize, means to reform, change, and modernize an established existence (Webster, 1999). I titled this component of the themes "revitalization of public education" because based on what the participants suggested and what they see in schools, needs to be regenerated, refreshed, and renewed. These women have learned about several school reform movements and researchers, and because of their knowledge about these things they have an interest, as future leaders, in renewing and revitalizing what has been done. Glickman (1998) suggested several ways to revitalize public education in his book, Revolutionizing America's Schools. Glickman suggests, to move into practices of democracy and continue to revolutionize a school leader must: incorporate everyone and begin at the classroom level by establishing an open environment, with each teacher, student, and parent involved in the relationship; promote school-level leadership by making shared decisions and appointing leaders within the school to develop shared beliefs concerning the school; and integrating parent and community-level leadership (1998). Donna, Annette, and Ellie spoke specifically about how they would revitalize public education. The other women in the study mentioned ways they feel are necessary to promote change; these quotes are in other sections of the data.

Donna

I think to revitalize public education we need to allow for people in administration to serve a maximum number of years and then move on. I really wish that a district would think about running the system like the presidency. Presidents can't serve more than a certain number of years

then they move on, and new Ideas come into play with the purpose of making a better America. I believe the principalship should be the same way; we need to continually have new ideas. I don't mean we need new principals' every year, however we do need a maximum. The principal where I work has been at the school for 15 years and she has not made many improvements. It's time for her to move on, the school is stagnant.

Annette

We have to realize that the media plays a big part in what people think about public schools. The media doesn't always tell the truth. Their job is to get ratings, and that is at any cost. The perfect example is A Nation at Risk- no basis, no founding and over 80% was totally untrue but the media ran with it, I learned about this in a class, but common sense told me it wasn't true. They said more minorities were going to jail than were graduating and between 1980 and 1990 there were over a million high school graduates. In the next ten years there were 2.6 million-I don't see how this added up. I would start revitalization by incorporating positive media interaction between school and the press. Also, parents play a huge role in revitalization, we don't want to just stick a book in a kid's hand and expect everything to be okay. There has to be some way that we get parents involved. A lot of the students I work with don't even have the basic needs. As a school leader, I want to empower these people to make them better without giving them a hand out.

Ellie

"Each teacher within each classroom throughout the country must take ownership for properly educating our youth. If we all put forth our best effort, each child will be prepared to be a productive citizen."

### Equity

Janice Hale (1994) refers to Jonathan Kozol's definition of educational equity as she relates to urban schools. Kozol believed that when dealing with educational equity it is important to look at the weak skills of the students' parents, who were victims of segregated schools" (Hale, 1994 p. 122). Kozol stated that equity does not just mean equal funding, because equal funding is not equality when there are unequal needs (Kozol, 1991, p. 54). Additionally, Kozol

stated that standardized tests were not equal between races or districts; many urban students have to take on jobs after school, there is intergenerational poverty, and poor health care (Kozol, 1991). He points out that although these factors are present urban students are expected to perform the same as students in the suburbs (Hale, 1994). Hale (1994), believes that school inequality is so great because of the way schools are funded (1996). In this section, the women mention some of the same disparities, and they expound on them. The women were free to express any feelings they had about equity in schools and below is each account.

Donna

Things in schools are unfair and as much as we try to make changes, it seems things are still the same. However, I do think that people are in charge make the school building what it is. If a school is in the middle of an inner city neighborhood so what, it is up to the leader to make sure everything from the grounds to the textbooks are up to par. I have seen it work with a progressive leader in one of the worst neighborhoods in the city.

Linda

I think the reason urban schools are not considered equal to suburban schools is because the money we are given is not spent properly. Title I schools actually get more money than schools on the south side, however, the money is not used properly. We have to spend money on security instead of academics. For example, we need metal detectors and security guards, so we have to spend money on those type problems rather than academics. Also teachers teach on the north side to get training in classroom management, and then they leave to teach on the south side as soon as they can. If you have master teachers or teachers with ten years of experience or more teaching out south [the affluent community], they are more qualified than the first year teachers who are straight out of college and don't understand the school community or the culture.

Tanya

In some situations, urban schools have not been treated in the same equitable manner as other schools. Due to the low socio-economic populations of most urban schools, there is a feeling or concern of

beneficial versus non-beneficial. In other words, the school(s) thought to produce the best will be given the best, similar to a factory.

Annette

Equity to me means all things being equal. An example is the availability of information one group should not have more availability than the other group. When I say availability of information, I mean textbooks, supplies, teaching materials, everything that any school should have.

Ellie

Depending on the area in which the school is located and the student population, equity varies among certain schools. For example, urban schools do not receive the same opportunities or equity as suburban schools. I believe that teachers in urban schools work just as hard to teach their students, but with lack of resources, district support, and extra educational opportunities, things can't be equal.

### Service/Need

These women believe that by identifying the needs in their community schools, and acting upon those needs they are not all talk. They believe in action and that the only way to assist in school success is by serving their communities. They feel that as teachers they can serve the needs of their students, and as leaders in the community they can serve the needs of their communities. They aspire to work in urban communities to improve the conditions and opportunities brought to them. The quote below incorporates the feelings of the participants when speaking about service and the need to become active leaders.

Serving others is the action component of democracy. In essence, in democratic schools inquiry, discourse, equity, authenticity, and shared leadership focus on connecting individuals with a concern for the good of other individuals and for the common good. Without an action component, however, the ideals of democracy...can be 'all talk and no action.' Serving others connects our study, our talk, and our values and beliefs with our practice (O'Hair, McLaughlin, & Reitzug, 2000 p. 431).

Donna

I want to work with my own. I want to see my own achieve in society. I believe school is where it starts and I want to motivate them to work hard and be sufficient so that their dreams come true.

Linda

I believe I can relate to students in the urban community because I understand where the students are coming from. There has been a lack of commitment in urban schools. I am committed and I am also a product of the urban community and I believe that it is possible for the students to succeed with proper leadership.

Tanya

I feel by serving in my community as a leader I encourage students in the inner city to feel good about themselves. Urban students should feel as if their contributions to society are just as worthy as anyone. They should be provided with an education that understands, then fulfills their needs, and highlights their strengths.

Annette

I didn't choose my destiny God chose me to do this. Within my own spirit there is a need to be needed. That need has to be met and this [school leadership] is the avenue that I've been directed to do it in.

Ellie

Public education must receive more services from our community leaders, businesses, and congress. There is still a need for smaller class sizes and better teacher income in some schools. We need more parental support in order to fully address the concerns and needs of our kids.

### Democratic Leadership

A democratic leader is one who uses shared decisions to build upon child-centered ideals and practices collegiality among the staff (Glickman, 1998).

Democratic school communities incorporate significantly higher student achievement levels in lower socio-economic student populations (Lee & Smith, 1994). Schools that incorporate democratic leadership, possess a strong belief that innovative, non-conventional approaches to learning are more effective

(O'Hair, McLaughlin, & Reitzug, 2000). According to O'Hair, McLaughlin, & Reitzug (2000) "a democratic school demonstrates goal-oriented education, which is guided by a shared vision among students, teachers, administrators, and parents" (p 24). A non-democratic approach would often be considered conventional. Conventional schools are operated like traditional schools of centuries ago (Pullium & Van Patten, 1995). Conventional schools are usually centralized, hierarchical in structure, standardized, and a deterrent to school restructuring and effective change (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

The women share what democratic leadership means to them and how they plan to incorporate democratic ideals.

Donna

It is important to involve all stakeholders. If you look back in history the school and the church were very similar. Somewhere along the lines we lost that similarity. Churches have everyone involved. The school should be the same way. Usually when schools are really productive the entire community is involved not even just the parents, teachers, students, and others are involved too.

Linda

"It is important to involve all stakeholders because their input counts. By getting everyone involved I believe you will have a more successful school."

Tanya

Democratic leadership, in my opinion means getting everyone involved. It is important that all stakeholders be involved in schools. Every stakeholder has an important contribution to school and to it's students. A school requires the supportive assistance of students, parents, community members and leaders, and businesses.

Annette

I think democratic leadership has its place but not in every school. I feel like democratic leadership works only in a place where you have people that have mutual respect for one another. The ideas of inquiry, discourse, equity, authenticity, leadership, and service, all have a place, and are

excellent ideas but I think to have all six of the ideals working in the same place at the same time is very rare. I think we need to take what works and use it, and what doesn't work modify it or totally change it to fit the particular needs of the school, and to meet the needs of the students. Democratic leadership works in a place where you have respect, I believe inquiry, equity, leadership, and authenticity must be present.

Ellie

In order to be an effective leader and make provisions for and 'outstanding school' leadership must be shared among every staff member and parent. No longer can the principal micro-manage. There must be trust and commitment between the principal and each delegated teacher or staff member.

### Discipline

Discipline is not a new issue in schools (Cotton, 1991). Today's urban schools deal with discipline more than ever before. These women have different perspectives on how to deal with discipline and plan to make changes when they become leaders. Cotton (1991) states, "Effective inner-city schools serving African American young people are characterized by school and classroom environments that are orderly and routinized, but not rigid" (p.29). It is important for students to have rules and routines, however, flexibility is important as well. Discipline is a universal challenge, however, these women expound on how they plan to incorporate discipline strategies in the schools in which they will work.

Donna

I think that teacher preparation programs are focusing on how to teach English, math and reading, and these are very important. I believe they need to have more than one class in classroom management. I would suggest at least three. We do not have the same problems that we had years ago. We as educators' need some type of plan that will help us deal with children and communicate with them effectively

Administrators should be supportive also. If the administrator hires a teacher and the student argues with the teacher and the administrator sides with the student, it discredits everything the teacher was trying to establish. A lot of students now know the loopholes and they know how to get through the system. You rarely walk through the halls in urban

schools, and see learning taking place. One of the reasons why is because these teachers have not been trained in classroom management. I really believe discipline problems would be less existent if teachers were trained in this area with today's standards.

Linda

I believe we need to create a discipline plan that is consistent. There are some instances when someone gets kicked out of school for fighting and then someone else gets into a fight. Doesn't there need to be some consistency, a structured discipline plan?

I believe we need an elementary school for troubled kids where there are professional counselors on site to deal with abuse in homes or children with drug addictions that were born as crack babies. We need people that are better able to deal with the problems more effectively because we haven't been trained as teachers. This would alleviate a lot of the non-instructional disruptions that urban kids go through while at school, in turn, discipline problems would not be as prevalent.

Tanya

Discipline should be handled in such a way that facilitates both growth and learning. Discipline should be handled differently according to the individual student. It should be a tool used to help the student grow and learn from their choices—good and bad.

Annette

In the area of discipline, I believe we need to return to the one room schoolhouse principles—the teacher had almost full autonomy. She had the knowledge of the subject. What the teacher said is what happened. Teachers were seldom questioned about what they were doing except in extreme circumstances, where they abused their power. I believe in corporal punishment, that is not abuse. Since corporal punishment has been taken out of most of our schools, the juvenile crime rate is up 200 to 300%—I read this in an article in Newsweek. I also believe parents should be more accountable for their children's discipline. President Bush even stated in an address that there are certain things that teachers should teach along with basic subjects, but parents should be held accountable as well. The parents must be involved. Teachers are unable to teach because they have to deal with all the side issues that should have been taken care of at home. I would encourage parents in a parents group, and I wouldn't say 'this is about discipline.' But I do think that you get parents to work together, and they will automatically start talking. Inevitably they will exchange information. That is one of the best things about democratic leadership also, when you incorporate ideas, the parents share the power. In proverbs it says that 'a child that is left unattended will bring parents to

shame.' I truly feel that parents should be involved in making policies for school discipline.

### Summary

This chapter provides the reader with a background of the women and factors that influenced their desire to pursue administration. The research question posed by the researcher in Chapter 1 is answered in this Chapter. By outlining the personal perspectives of each participant's life and by detailing the motivational position of their life experiences, we find that the women share a desire to work in urban communities and have had role models that influenced this fact. This chapter also presents tabular reports of Donna, Linda, Tanya, Annette, and Ellie who are pursuing, or currently have, administrative positions in various school districts. Further, by summarizing social and personal environments in the lives of these women, we are able to understand how life decisions are so often shaped by circumstances to achieve established goals.

These women have a desire to make education better. Like Bethune, they have accomplished great measures as teachers and have utilized themselves as leaders. Their desire is not to found a school and make it a college as Bethune did, rather it is to use their vision and incorporate it in a school once they become administrators.

The three important concepts that have shaped and molded many other African American leaders, also shapes the visions of these women. By using the knowledge, they have attained and continue to pursue-head, understanding that the knowledge and skills they have are to be shared-heart, and preparing for opportunities to impart the knowledge into others-hand, these women are carrying out their visions.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Theory

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the theory around which this study is built. I will provide the reader with an overview of the importance of vision in educational leadership and leadership as an entity. Since the purpose of this study is, therefore, to understand the visions of African-American women teachers who seek administration early in their teaching careers, I will highlight the works of three theorists: Thomas Sergiovanni, Janice Hale, and Patricia Hill Collins and connect for the reader how their theories corroborate, question, or augment the themes that have been expressed throughout the study.

Thomas Sergiovanni, identified the importance of vision in leadership (1992). Like Sergiovanni, in Moral Leadership, I use the theory of the head, heart, and hand of leadership in a similar context as the concept relates to the African American women in my study. (See Chapter 3 for transcribed data). While Sergiovanni's head, heart, and hand concept was not original, it did corroborate with the head, heart, and hand concept from Mary McLeod Bethune (Bethune-Cookman College Archives, 1938). Additionally, I developed the theory of a vision for education from indications contributed by Sergiovanni (1992).

Like Janice Hale, in Unbank the Fire: Visions for the Education of African American Children (1994), I use the theory that by working in urban communities with African American children, the visions that motivate the women in this study to lead are significant to the culture of African Americans. Lastly, Patricia Hill Collins in Black Feminist Thought (2000), identifies a conceptual scope when researching or theorizing African American women's' expression or interpretation

of reality. By using four major distinctions that characterize the understanding of African American women, Hill Collins (2000), theorizes: concrete experiences as a criterion for meaning, the use of dialogue in assessing knowledge claims, and the ethic of caring and the ethic of personal accountability (pp. 208-219). I use this theory to connect the lived experience of these women through the vignettes presented in the previous chapter. Hill Collins (2000) suggests that sharing lived experiences and how they inform us is a form of knowledge building about the world. These ways of knowing are vital in analyzing the vignettes of the teachers. Additionally, they are helpful in the comparison of the theories presented in this chapter to the voices of these women.

#### The Importance of Visions in Educational Leadership

A recent study investigated the relationship between vision and leadership behaviors in Hong Kong principals (Chui, Sharpe & McCormick, 1996). The purpose of the study was to examine the importance of vision carried out by the leaders (principals) of each school. The findings in the study proved that a high vision expressed by the school leader yielded exceptional practices in school reform efforts (Chui, Sharpe & McCormick, 1996). The leaders who shared their visions with the teachers and students were more successful in improving the school environment. Leaders who had not expressed their vision for the school, were not successful in communication efforts, or improving teacher morale. Chui, Sharpe, and McCormick further explained that practices based on those schools that incorporated vision would provide opportunities for leaders with vision to start and maintain the best possible environment for school improvement (1996).

In a study conducted to assist businesses in developing a vision in leadership, researcher Tony Morden (1997) contended that the role of leadership was just as important to the organization, as the vision defined by the leader. He further defined vision as "an imagined or perceived but consistent pattern of communal possibilities to which others can be drawn, and whose values they wish to share" (Morden, 1997, p. 670). Morden suggested that the basic objective of a leader should be to blend strong visionary leadership with effective management into one integrated whole. By doing so the visionary leader can combine the strengths of both qualities to create a more effective organization.

Further, Senge (1990) explains that while it is important for leaders to incorporate a personal vision, a shared vision is vital for organizational success. Fullan (1993) substantiates this by explaining that the process of combining one's personal vision with a shared vision does not happen immediately. Fullan (1993) additionally notes that often organizational vision comes from one leader and is usually imposed on others involved. By incorporating sole visionary leadership, the leader is demanding compliance rather than encouraging commitment (Fullan, 1993; Senge, 1990). Senge (1990) further suggests that incorporating shared vision brings levels of enthusiasm, increased understanding, and open communication within an organization.

Moreover, the development of a shared vision allows everyone to feel like a part of a collective goal. While the participants in this study did not expound substantially on shared vision, the importance of incorporating it is easy to observe in their school environments. The questions asked of the participants were specifically regarding their personal vision so they answered accordingly.

The participants do not believe that their visions for education should be accepted and internalized by those with which they work, they are more interested in developing shared visions that will bring about the success of students. The speculation is that once these women become school leaders they will find that it is important to invite a shared vision in order to achieve the school and student success that they desire.

Thomas Sergiovanni, Moral Leadership

Table 4. Sergiovanni and Bethune-The head, heart and hand of leadership

Table 4. highlights the theory of the head, heart and hand of leadership as described by Thomas Sergiovanni (1992). The theory that Sergiovanni explains strongly corroborates the theory explained in Bethune's papers (McCluskey & Smith, 1999) as well as unpublished essays, interviews, and documents written by Mary McLeod Bethune. The theories strengthen the research conceptual framework because it compares two perspectives that are closely similar, and have a 40-50 year time span.

This table identifies definitions of head, heart, and hand. Sergiovanni explained his definitions in through the eyes of a modern school leader, Bethune explained her definitions over a lifetime and directed the meaning to African Americans specifically. In the quotations from Bethune cited below there is not a direct definition to head, heart, and hand. However, after reading numerous documents written by and about Bethune and Bethune-Cookman College, these definitions closely fit a summary of what she believed was important for leaders.

| THEORY                 | SERGIOVANNI                                                                                                                                                                                                      | BETHUNE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | CORROBORATE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | CONTRADICT                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Theory<br>I.1<br>HEAD  | "Mindscapes, or theories of practice, that leaders develop over time, and with their ability, in light of these theories, to reflect on situations they face" (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 7).                         | "I leave you the thirst for education-Knowledge is the prime need of the hour. More and more, Negroes are taking full advantage of hard-won opportunities for learning, and the educational level of the Negro population is at its highest point in history (1955). If we continue with this trend we will be able to rear increasing numbers of strong, purposeful men and women equipped with vision, mental clarity, health and education" (McCluskey & Smith, 1999, p. 60).                      | In both quotes the theories are corroborated. Bethune encourages the Negro to pursue education and develop in order to be a more purposeful leader. Sergiovanni identified the importance of leadership to develop over time.                                                              | Both theories are relevant for all races, however Bethune directed her theory to African Americans.                                                                                                           |
| Theory<br>I.2<br>HEART | "What a person believes, values, dreams about, and is committed to" (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 7).<br><br>"A person's interior world, which becomes the foundation of his or her reality" (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 7). | "I leave you faith-Faith is the first factor in a life devoted to service. Without faith, nothing is possible. The measure of our progress as a race is in precise relation to the depth of the faith in our people held by our leaders. Our greatest Negro figures have been imbued with faith. Our forefathers struggled for liberty in conditions far more onerous than those we now face, but they never lost the faith. Their perseverance paid rich dividends (McCluskey & Smith, 1999, p. 60). | Sergiovanni relates to the heart component in simple terms of dreams, beliefs and values. Bethune uses the word "faith" to encompass that entire meaning-faith in dreams, faith in beliefs, and faith in values. Both theories are consistent and relate to what is important to a person. |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Theory<br>I.3<br>HAND  | "Reflections on decisions and actions that affirm or reshape the heart and the head" (Sergiovanni, 1992 p. 7).                                                                                                   | "I leave you the responsibility to our young people-The world around us really belongs to youth for youth will take over its future management. Our children must never lose seal for building a better world. They must not be discouraged from aspiring toward greatness, for they are the leaders of tomorrow. . . We have powerful potential in our youth and we must have the courage to change old ideas and practices so that                                                                  | Both theories confirm that all three components are needed to be successful.                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Sergiovanni specifically identifies the hand as the way a person goes about making decisions. Bethune does not mention decisions, rather she encourages African Americans to make the decision to provide the |

|  |  |                                                                              |  |                                                        |
|--|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  | we may direct their power toward good ends (McCluskey & Smith, 1999, p. 61). |  | youth with education in order to have a better future. |
|--|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------------------------|

Janice Hale, Unbank the Fire: Visions for the Education of African American Children

Visions for the Educators of African American Children: Historical, Personal, and School

Janice Hale presents a history of her family and the visions they had for themselves. She uses several historical African Americans, ranging in history from W.E. B. Dubois to Reverend Jesse Jackson, and emphasizes how they established a vision for their people. The visions, as expressed by Hale are unbanked through perseverance, determination, and the victory of overcoming long, hard struggles. She introduces the reader to slavery from a visionary standpoint and creates a social context that the reader can understand. I have separated Hale's book into three sections that theorize the necessity of the use the theory that by working in urban communities with African American children, the visions that motivate the women in this study to lead, and are significant to the culture of African Americans. The three separate sections are divided into historical vision, personal vision, and school vision. The historical vision segment involves an enlightening journey Hale began when she researched the history of African American culture and detailed the motivation they had to move out of oppression and into triumph. This personal vision identifies the motivation from within that allows African Americans to establish goals for themselves based on

their personal beliefs and values. The last vision Hale portrayed in her work was a vision of schools for African American children.

The theories and quotes from Hale's work have inextricably substantiated the need to involve vision and leadership as African American educators. The points following will highlight the words Hale used to portray these visions. Her visions and the visions of the women in this study are consistent, even though Hale and the women in this study grew up in two different era's. The important point on which to focus is that the needs of African American children are still the same; in order to meet that need, African American children must have a cultural appreciation for themselves. Moreover, because the women in this study plan to work in schools where the student population consists of African Americans and other students of color, Hale's work corroborates the need for African American women as leaders in urban schools as a valid and purposeful existence.

#### Theory II.1-Historical Vision

Historically, African Americans have been sold a lie. According to Hale, the history of white immigrants is that they came to America with nothing, worked hard to make something of themselves for their family and achieved their goals (1994, p. 11). This history, so often told to African American students, implies that African Americans must not have worked hard to make themselves successful. Hale creates a view through a lens that is not often looked through. Because African Americans have historically been told that they have been unsuccessful, non-productive, unequally educated, and inadequately trained, they cannot be as successful as whites (Hale, 1994). This misconception has been a part of our culture for many years. However, once this misconception is eradicated, our

students will realize that they can succeed. But the only way to eradicate this misconception is through African American leaders who are motivated to do so. By capitalizing on this false realization, African American educators can possess a vision for their children and their schools that create and promote change.

### Theory II.2-Personal Vision

The women in this study are determined to carry out the goals and visions they have established for their lives. They believe that these goals and visions will positively affect those with whom they come in contact. They are educated and want to use their education to enhance the lives of African American children and students in urban schools. Hale (1994) proposes that African Americans possess a vision from within that is illuminated in their success. Dillard (1995) stated, "We have, as a new generation of black people, carried out the visions of our ancestors who overcame slavery, bigotry, and personal obstacles just because of who they were." The visions they had for us were numerous and at the time, did not seem reachable, however, with the occurrence of racial uplift, educational opportunities, and employment advances, we have accomplished such visions. Hale, quotes Marcus Garvey as he expressed the vision he had for Africans and their offspring.

All of us may not live to see the higher accomplishments of an African empire—so strong and powerful as to compel the respect of mankind—but we in our lifetime can so work and act as to make the dream a possibility within another generation. (Marcus Garvey, as cited in Hale, 1994 p. 169)

### Theory II.3-School Vision

Hale (1994) suggests that the education of African American children is not relative to that of white children due to the fact that white children are in an environment that compliments their culture. Her vision emphasized a need for a

school environment that compliments the culture of African Americans. Hale reviewed an empirical study given between African American college students at historically African American colleges and universities and African American college students at white universities. The study she reviewed revealed that although students at the African American universities did not have as many resources or funding as the students at white universities had, the students at African American colleges and universities were stimulated mentally, gained more intellectually, and were motivated by their peers and faculty (Hale, 1996 pp. 172-173).

While white immigrants were taking advantage of free public schools for their children after the Civil War, African Americans were struggling for basic literacy. It is safe to say that the education of African Americans has been inferior to that of whites since the beginning of their sojourn in America. Even today there is a disparity in expenditure on education between communities where a majority of African Americans reside and mostly white suburban school districts. Americans apparently believe that the quality of education a child is entitled to is determined by where his family can afford to live. A more equitable system would be to pool all of the money available for educating children and divide it equally among all children. (Hale, 1994 p. 17)

African American children need a sense of identity. The curriculum in urban schools should place a strong emphasis on identifying the cultures of the students within (Banks, 1997; Hale, 1994). In addition to developing curriculum, teachers and administrators in these schools must identify with the students. The women in this study will give students in the urban schools in which they plan to lead a sense of identity, potential, and leadership. Their personal vision will enhance the school vision that is vital for the education on African American children. They will provide students with empowerment by being examples. It is important for African American students to see examples of leaders in their day-to-day experiences.

Although sports stars and singers are sometimes good examples, students will have powerful change makers right in front of them.

Patricia Hill Collins, Black Feminist Thought

Table 5. Black Feminist Thought: A different approach

This table explains the theories presented by Patricia Hill Collins. In order to gain meaning from the lives of African Americans, Hill Collins suggests incorporating the depth from within those lives. Although incorporating feminist theory or a racial theory does not always grasp the complexity of African American women, Hill Collins and other theorist addressed issues about African American women who were not only being treated with disrespect by whites, but African American males as well. The movement of Black Feminist Thought arose in the late 1960's through the early 1980's, the epistemology of Black Feminist Thought occurred to encompass race, gender, and class.

| THEORY                                                                                              | CORROBORATION                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Theory III.1<br>Concrete experiences as a criterion for meaning (Hill-Collins, 1999, pp 208-219).   | Asking Donna, Linda, Tanya, Annette, and Ellie to share their life experiences provided me the opportunity to gain a meaningful representation of who each of them is as a woman and to understand them. |
| Theory III.2<br>The use of dialogue in assessing knowledge claims (Hill-Collins, 1999, pp 208-219). | Conversations with the women yielded open dialogue and allowed me to code the various beliefs and visions that each woman wanted to portray.                                                             |
| Theory III.3<br>The ethic of caring (Hill-Collins, 1999, pp 208-219).                               | Because I cared about the topic and it had personal meaning to me, the women were comfortable talking with me about their visions in educational leadership.                                             |

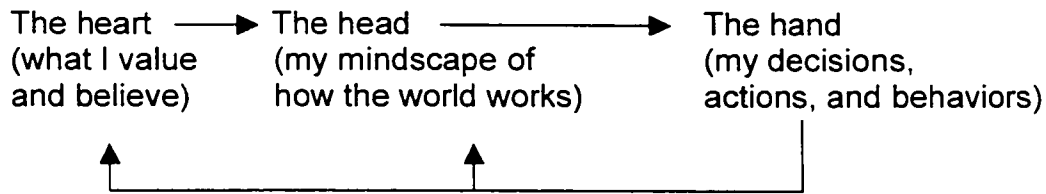
|                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Theory III.4<br>The ethic of personal accountability<br>(Hill-Collins, 1999, pp 208-219). | I could share personal stories, and relate<br>to the women because we shared<br>commonalities such as age, race, and<br>gender. |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Essentially, women of color have multiple identities outside of their gender. All their identities need to be understood and represented. This theory allowed me to view their lives as a theoretical lens to study African American women, for this study, and will allow me to theorize other women of color in other studies.

The themes that emerged and are presented throughout the dissertation and are linked to all three theories, Sergiovanni, Hale, and Hill Collins. The themes are as follows: Urban schooling: The Need to Give Back to the Community; Personal Background and Experiences; Leadership and Being a Role Model; Why I Choose to Pursue Administration, and How I can and will effectually make a difference in education. Below is an explanation of each theme, the themes are all tied to the head-heart-hand theory explained by Sergiovanni (1992) and Bethune. Each theme is separate but is linked to the idea of gaining knowledge-head; using the knowledge to improve issues with desire and vision-heart, and acting on that knowledge by doing something-hand.

### Sergiovanni's Model

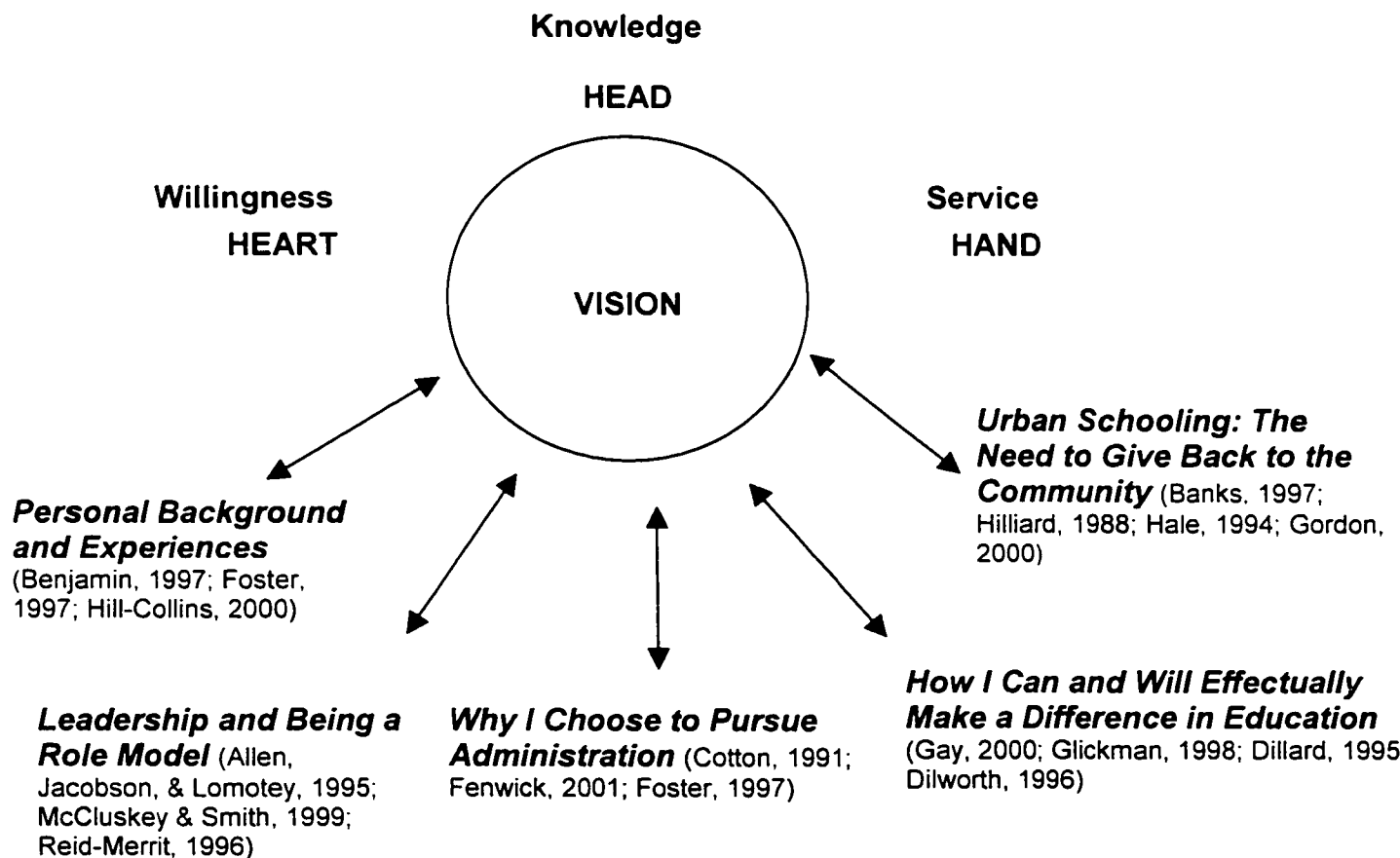
The head, heart, and hand of leadership



(Moral Leadership Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 8)

After comparing the Sergiovanni Model and Bethune's historical works, I created my own model for head, heart, and hand. This model involves the concept originated by Bethune and incorporates her ideals and is supported through additional research. It also combines some of the important components of themes presented throughout the research by Donna, Linda, Tanya, Annette, and Elle.

### Emerging Leadership Model



### Urban schooling: The Need to Give Back to the Community

The participants made it very clear that they desire to continue working in urban schools as leaders. This theme continued throughout the transcribed interviews time and again. Moreover, this theme corroborates the concept of the heart-the women's willingness to do something with what they have learned as well as the hand-their service to the community. The experiences that the women have learned from as teachers, and the inequities that students in urban schools are faced with encouraged them to change the situations in these schools. Because of their commitment to students of color these women choose to work in these surroundings. It is important to note that when given the choice of a higher salary to work in a suburban school, each of the women stated that it was more important for them to give back to the urban community. These women see this as a responsibility, a cultural commitment that they have made to improve the negative issues that face students of color. By working in urban schools the women are making a difference and that is what is important to them. Reitzug (1994) identified several inequitable issues that urban schools are often faced with. Unfortunately in urban schools practices such as discipline policies, communication procedures, and interaction are based on schools in predominately white cultures (Reitzug, 1994). The commitment that the women have expressed to work in urban schools will hopefully change these inequities once they become leaders.

### Personal Background and Experiences

It was important in portraying the vignettes about each woman that they expressed themselves freely. By doing so, the women were honest about their personal background. The experiences shared by the women ranged from life experiences, personal triumphs, religious background, and educational endeavors. By sharing triumphs, barriers, and challenges, the women could relay their vision. What inspired their vision for education often is bridged by what they have gone through as students and adults. This theme substantiates the head component, because the women have gained experience both personally and academically in order to make better decisions as leaders (McCluskey & Smith, 1999; Sergiovanni, 1992).

### Leadership and Being a Role Model

Ken Sirotnik (1995) defined leadership as, "the exercise of significant and responsible influence (p. 236)." The women in this study have exhibited leadership since they were children. They have an innate leadership ability that was enhanced in personal experiences and experiences as teachers. Leadership as defined by Sirotnik is an attainable practice that the participants are striving to demonstrate. The leadership that they speak about in the interviews is based on their personal experiences and characteristics. The women have also taken steps to arrive into leadership positions by furthering their education. As teachers, their leaders and colleagues saw the leadership qualities in them and encouraged them to make a difference by electing or placing them in leadership roles. Leadership and being a role model go hand in hand because each of the

women believe that they are making a difference to their students and to other young teachers. Because the women had role models who encouraged them, they feel it is important to give back by mentoring others. The women also believe in building relationships with older women who are established as leaders. This has encouraged the women and builds the bridge from woman to woman, leader to leader. The importance of being a leader and role model and having a role model has encompassed the hand component of service in our community.

### Why I Choose to Pursue Administration

These women recognized leadership within themselves. They recognized that as teachers they are successful with students. Each of the women teaches in an urban school. They have proven that they can assist and improve students' self-esteem, knowledge base, and standardized test scores as teachers. However, because the women wanted more for their schools than what teachers can do, they sought to improve schools on a higher level, as school leaders (principals). They also have had encouragement from family members, friends, colleagues, and mentors to pursue administration. The women have obtained educational preparation, personal satisfaction, and they are fulfilling their personal visions as they reach towards the goals of administration. One of the participants, Tanya, has begun her journey as an administrator, and the remaining four women are quickly in pursuit of that journey. They are excited about what education will become once they are placed in administrative roles. According to Apple and Beane (1995) "educators who are committed to the

democracy realize that sources of inequity in the school are likely to be found in the community as well (p. 11)." These women have made a choice to make schools in their communities better. They have not made a choice because of self-interest, rather to better the state of their people. Apple and Beane (1995) also state that, "democracy is not simply a theory of self-interest that gives people license to pursue their own goals at the expense of other (p. 10)." The choice to become an administrator is an important one. These women take their decisions very seriously and they have goals and personal visions, however, they believe that by linking their goals and visions to those with whom they work, the students will be more successful. Lastly, these women "take shared responsibility for student learning" (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995) and as future leaders they want to ensure students are served.

#### How I can and will effectually make a difference in education

This theme allowed the women to share their desire and personal vision for schools. They saw a need and put forth the desire to act upon it. Essential suggestions to improve the educational system ranged from school economics, to discipline. The women felt a need to incorporate their ideas for improving schools. According to Allen, Rogers, Hensley, Glanton, & Livingston (1999) "public schools have an obligation to meet the needs of all students-not just those from mainstream, politically connected families (p. 2). These women want to meet the needs of students in urban communities. They mentioned better quality teachers and suggested enhancing teacher education programs. Several of the women were concerned with school class sizes. They felt by decreasing

the number of students in the classroom, teachers were more capable of helping students one on one. The improvement of school facilities through resources and funding was an issue that did not go unnoticed. The women plan to seek grants and funding through private resources to begin instructional programs and school improvement plans. The quality of education in urban schools was an issue that the women were very concerned about. These issues, the women feel, stem from lack of preparation for pre-service teachers. They feel teachers are not prepared to deal with classroom management, urban school culture, and the communities in which schools are. The need for improving the quality of education also encompasses school discipline. When administrators and teachers work together with parents and students to develop a discipline plan that is consistent, discipline problems will decrease. The women shared all of these areas of effectually making a difference. Based on their suggestions and concerns, it seems as though their leadership is necessary for urban students. Additionally, the women mentioned communicating with urban students as a pivotal aspect in urban schools. Nieto (1996) noted the importance of implementing cultural pride in schools through the students language in policies and practices. Delpit (1995) substantiates this statement by speaking about the importance of students in urban schools learning the language of the dominant culture but embracing their language and culture's language with pride. Furthermore, it would not be unfair to speculate that the women would agree with Fullan regarding change and making a difference. Fullan (1993) stated that

change involves everyone and with collective ideals and attempts to reach a shared vision, the process is lengthy but success does occur.

### Summary

Throughout this chapter I have detailed the theories discussed by Thomas Sergiovanni, Linda Hale, and Patricia Hill Collins. I have compared these theorists' perceptions and definitions of vision in leadership to the historical writings from Mary McLeod Bethune. I have compared the head, heart, and hand of leadership and explained the contradictions, and corroboration between the meaning implied by Bethune in writings by McCluskey and Smith (1999). I have presented Sergiovanni's model of the head, heart, and hand of leadership and created a new model based on Sergiovanni's work and the historical work of Bethune. Furthermore, I have explained that this new model supports the findings of this study and is also supported by Hale, Hill-Collins, and others. The model encompasses the vision that the women in this study feel are necessary when aspiring a leadership position. Around vision, the five themes are presented. The themes are further supported by reference citations that outline components of each theme, the components can be found in Tables 1, 2, and 3. By doing so, I have presented evidence to substantiate the theory that women who emerge into leadership must possess a personal desire and vision for what they want to achieve.

The themes that emerged in the lives of Donna, Linda, Tanya, Annette, and Ellie were expounded upon in this chapter in order to show the linkage with the theories. Building on Patricia Hill Collins work, these women were allowed to

share their lives in uninhibited ways and share what it means to be a woman of color with a desire to create a better tomorrow for children of color.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Conclusions and Recommendations

#### Overview

In this chapter, I have provided theoretical linkages to African American women leaders with vision. Often researchers incorporate theory in the beginning stage of research and develop questions and hypothesis based on the theories. This section appears in the latter part of the work because it was important to wait until the themes from the findings emerged to see what theories materialized.

#### Review of the Study

By seeking to understand the experience lived through each woman's life and connecting themes and theoretical basis to past literature, the study proved to be consistent. While there is not much literature dealing with aspiring black women leaders, there is literature on the women that have made it. The most influential issue to the women that have made it in leadership was their desire and vision for where they wanted to be and where they wanted to take their organization. It is important to show the bridge that Donna, Linda, Tanya, Annette and Ellie share with other leaders who were determined to make their dreams and visions for where they see education come true.

The current literature provides the notion that African American women have an innate motivation to become what society says they could not (Benjamin, 1997; Reid-Merritt, 1996; Washington, 1995). In my conclusion, I have identified several women that are currently educational leaders. I have

examined the importance of their vision and I have added to the literature concerning vision in African American women.

#### Specific Research Question

The major question addressed at the beginning of this study is:

1. What visions motivate African-American female teachers to pursue administrative positions early in their teaching career, particularly, the principalship?

It was important to find by posing this question what it is that motivates five African American women to pursue educational leadership early in their teaching career. More specifically these women were given several questions to explain why they are interested in administration and what motivates them (see Appendix C for details).

#### Future African American leaders and their vision

While each participant had their individual view in many areas of education, some common themes developed. The participants each noted that teachers were a strong aspect in education and that without good teachers the system would fail. The participants also talked about the reasons they would like to pursue administration. The most prevalent reason pointed to giving back and seeking a way to restore a broken education system, especially for minorities in urban schools.

As stated earlier there is an uncanny relationship between what each of the participants stated in the 2000-2001 time period (of conducting the interviews) and the head-heart-hand concept stated by Bethune in the early

1900's. From each of the five leading statements I have formed connections with the head-heart-hand educational concept incorporated by Bethune.

In my findings the key element from each participant's educational experience and career goals stemmed from the vision they have for schools as educators. In addition to having substantial relationships with people of influence, these women established role models as a young people and used the role models as motivation to pursue their personal goals. This was one of the primary factors that influenced each woman to continue towards the administration track.

### Summary of the Findings

Each participant acknowledged the need for a role model and the encouragement from others affected their decision to go into administration. However it was because of their individual beliefs about urban public schools, that they choose to take that route. The research question examined what visions motivate these women to pursue administration early in their teaching career. All of the participants highlighted their interest in urban schools and communities and explained the desire to serve the children in this setting. Each participant appeared to be knowledgeable about the research behind school renewal and urban education, although they did not mention specific theorist or research in their interviews. They felt that by incorporating the principles, democratic principles, they learned and read about in graduate classes, their schools would be a success.

By implementing technology, the participants felt that "black" students would have a better chance of competing with students of affluent districts. Each

component of the effectual changes in Table 3 were linked to equity. Equitable practices were a challenge that each participant agreed needed to be addressed initially. While the women did not explain directly how they would implement technology they did mention that grants or outside sources of funding could possibly be ways to obtain equal access to its integration. The two participants who are planning to open charter schools have incorporated the need for technology and technology utilization in their plans.

Cultural diversity was a strong element that influenced the participants to pursue administration in an urban setting. Because each participant is African-American, they will apply to a particular district based on the ethnic background of the student population. Another factor in the decision to commit to working in urban areas is parental involvement. The participants' felt that by creating a relationship with the parents (community) and the school, the success rate for students would increase over time.

The participants often acknowledged several persons in their personal and professional lives that encouraged them to incorporate leadership inside and outside of the classroom. School superintendents, principals, and counselors each approached these women and encouraged them to pursue administration after the first year of teaching based on what they believed to be "good administration" material.

Additionally, the research question examined why each individual selected the principalship. This question is answered through what motivates these women and is further explained in the changes that these women

envisioned they would make as school principals. Each individual plans to make a difference in the district that they serve through working in an administrative position. They feel that by being leaders in these districts they will be more effective. This question was answered through the twelve components listed in Chapter 3, Table 3. However, their vision for what schools need to be was identified specifically through the participants mentioning the following: resources and funding, technology access, revitalization of public education, discipline, democratic leadership, and equitable practices. These were all critical concerns. The participants views on these concerns were not structured uniformly but many areas overlapped. All the participants touched on collaboration and the importance of sharing ideas among the faculty. One participant outlined the need for collaboration as a distinct part of leadership and used examples of networking as her strength as an administrator. All of the participants demonstrated the vision and goals they feel work to establish a great school.

### Recommendations

Through this research it is my desire to provide specific ideas about factors that motivate young, African American female teachers to pursue administration. Because of this aspiration, I recommend several ideas gathered from my interviews that are relevant to K-12 schools, educational administration programs, and teacher education programs. Based on the findings from this research study I recommend the following:

### Recommendation for K-12 Schools

While many of these recommendations are currently in place throughout a number of districts, by implementing the practices and effectively carrying them out, new principals with little administrative experience will achieve more success.

1. Districts should implement an aspiring principal program for teachers that have taught a minimum of two years and have been screened as school leaders. This type of leadership program will assist in the development of skills and knowledge needed to fulfill the job of a principal (National Center for Education Statistics, February, 1997). This would also motivate the aspiring leaders to stay in the school system.
2. Mentoring programs should be established between successful administrators and newly hired principals. By creating a mentoring program between principals, districts can establish effective communication amongst its leaders and create a relationship to continuously motivate the principals.
3. Professional development experiences should focus on specific leadership skills based on the type of school where the leader is employed. For example, teachers and leaders that work in urban schools would benefit greatly from Ruby Payne's training on students and poverty. Additionally, training for teachers and leaders concerning the needs of urban students will assist in bringing about student success.

## Recommendation for Educational Leadership/Education Administration Graduate Programs

To effectively build a bridge between aspiring teachers and aspiring leaders, educational leadership programs along with teacher education programs should collaborate and nurture the openness between the two career choices. "To create a harmony between the two, teachers should recognize the essential correspondence between teaching and administration" (Young & McLeod, 2001, p. 493). According to Murphy (1999), "reconnecting teaching and school administration" is one possibility to build that bridge.

1. Education administration programs should actively recruit African American female teachers. For example, implementing masters degree cohort programs in urban communities, selecting teachers within urban school districts, and providing scholarships and incentives for women and minorities who fit a selected academic criterion could help increase the deficit.
2. Educational leadership programs should establish a higher visibility in urban school initiatives and development of initiatives. For instance, professors from educational leadership programs could attend school board meetings, conduct research for the urban school districts and work with teachers and principals within urban schools to help promote programs for district wide success.
3. Educational leadership graduate programs that accept newly hired teachers should establish research activities focusing on leadership

practices in urban schools. Newly hired teachers could work collaboratively with a mentor or leader appointed from within the school district. The mentor relationship could provide the aspiring administrator with experiences to research the leadership position and the responsibilities and actions that one must take to be successful.

4. University-school-community partnerships within the urban community should be developed and minority graduate students should be given the opportunity to volunteer within them. Graduate students that work in urban school districts can assist in the development of university-school-community partnerships as class assignments. The partnerships would allow the graduate students to work with university professor to better the schools in which they work. Those graduate students that do not work in urban districts would have the choice to volunteer their time in the development of the partnership.
5. Curriculum focus should expound on cultural understanding and leadership in urban, rural, and suburban schools. For example, scholar James Banks (1994) explained four levels of cultural understanding through multicultural school reform. According to Banks (1994) the contributions approach involves the celebration of other cultures, the additive approach, enhancing the curriculum by incorporating other cultural perspectives, the transformational approach, restructuring the curriculum and school practices, lastly, the social action approach requires students to take action on social issues. By incorporating the

contributions approach, additive approach, transformational approach, and social action approach to further understand a variety of integrated cultures, an effective environment for leading and learning is fostered (O'Hair, McLaughlin, & Reitzug, 2000).

#### Recommendation for Teacher Education Programs

1. Teacher education programs should place students in urban schools to give aspiring teachers the understanding of culture and society at these schools. This would motivate those who desire to work in these areas to find a position and stay in it. A report written by Kenneth Howey (2000) suggested that by creating a partnership between urban school districts and colleges of education promotes teacher socialization and encourages collaboration between teachers in various school districts.
2. Teacher education programs should place students that have expressed a desire to work in urban school environments in those schools for practicum experiences (Gay, 2000; Hale, 1994). Howey (2000) suggests that the efforts of Project UNITE, Urban Network to Improve Teacher Education, provide opportunities to implement strategies to recruit more competent and diverse teachers.
3. Aggressive recruitment of minority teachers should be implemented in the program (Fenwick, 2000). Conducting recruitment fairs in high schools with high minority student populations can provide opportunities for students to think about a teaching career early. Additionally, providing

scholarships from minorities interested in teaching or loan repayment programs could also lead to interest of minority teachers.

4. Leadership programs within teacher education should be established for students who aspire to pursue leadership early. For example, Kappa Delta Pi National Honor Society encourages leadership amongst its members in the local chapters and teacher education programs. Other leadership opportunities can link teacher education students with educational administration students through collaborative research projects. The aspiring teacher and aspiring administrator could create a shared vision for a particular area within a school district.
5. Mentoring programs should be established between administrators and teacher education students. During practicum or student teaching experiences, the school administrator could act as or assign a mentor to the pre-service teacher.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

In further studies, it is my hope to examine what I have already gained as a qualitative researcher and build upon that by asking additional questions that will lead the research in the direction of the “why” behind the study. I also look to develop more of a pattern between the participants and the historical information gained from Bethune and other black educators who have improved education tremendously.

### Personal Future Research

This study was rewarding, but continues to be developed. For this study, my participants were limited to five women. In further studies, the incorporation of many women of various minority races will be included. I also wish to include minority male administrators, and seek to understand what issues encouraged them to pursue their leadership roles. By understanding what it is that encourages this type of career development, teacher education programs will know how to interest aspiring teachers. Graduate schools will gain an understanding of what teachers need to promote sound leadership. School educators will better understand why it is important for minorities to sometimes give up status just to be in a place where they are needed. This work will provide insight for minorities in pursuit of an administrative role in the area of education, especially women. I hope this will encourage readers, both men and women, to understand the importance of the educational administrator and not limit the title to the number of years served in the educational system. Leadership is developed and can formulate in a short amount of time, especially in today's schools. These women have all taught less than ten years. In their short time as teachers, they have used their natural leadership ability to prepare them for the leaders they want to become.

### Recommendations for Other Researchers

1. While this study sought participation of African American women seeking to pursue administration, the presence of the perceptions and voices from their co-teachers, administrators, students, and community leaders would

have yielded additional information. Future studies could replicate this study by gathering and including data from relevant sources such as these.

2. The results from this study were based on five African American women Donna, Linda, Tanya, Annette, and Ellie. It would be interesting to compare the visions that motivate women from other cultures to show a diversity of interest in further studies.
3. With the decrease in minority teachers, a future study might examine what visions motivate minority pre-service teachers to pursue teaching and study the longitudinal effects on their career decisions, as they could change from teaching to leading in a short time period.
4. Further studies could incorporate up to fifteen minority women and concentrate in-depth on the career preparation each woman took to obtain the desired leadership position and longitudinally follow their career paths.
5. Future studies could extensively examine the importance of mentoring and role models, as well as the importance of religion in developing minority female teachers' career decisions.

### Limitations

This study was limiting because of the state in which the research was conducted. I am sure that if I were in a more culturally diverse state that encourages leadership programs in urban communities I would have found several women to fit this area of research. Additionally, I limited myself within the school districts where the women taught. If I had interviewed the participant's

administrators, I would have been able to substantiate the value the participant's were to the districts in which they taught. Lastly, there were limits on the audience of researchers with whom I worked. Consequently, because most of my mentors and research supervisors were not minorities, they lacked appreciation for the subject and knew little about the culture of those being researched. Many can appreciate this research, however because the title and the body of research specifically deal with certain individuals of a specific race the intended audience is limited. As I continue with the research in a longitudinal study, I expect that I will increase my number of participants by exploring districts in states with a larger minority population.

### Summary

If the lack of women, specifically, African American women, in the field of educational administration is a valid concern of practitioners and scholars, efforts must be made in order to understand how to go about increasing this deficit (Edson, 1988; Fenwick, 2000; Fenwick, 2001; Young & McLeod, 2001). The findings of this study provide a well-developed understanding of why African American women are motivated to enter administration early in their teaching career and contribute to the knowledge in the field of education administration. Therefore, if programs are put in place within districts and universities to recruit and train these women in leadership practices, we anticipate with time, the lack will decrease. This research, additionally addresses an unexplored area within the field of education administration. It tells the experiences of five African American women, their career aspirations, their motivation to pursue the

aspirations, and what they plan to do once they reach the leadership positions they desire.

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## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
IRB Approval



# *The University of Oklahoma*

OFFICE OF RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION

October 16, 2001

Ms. Allyson R. Leggett  
2829 Dewey Avenue #106  
Norman OK 73072

Dear Ms. Leggett:

The Institutional Review Board-Norman Campus has reviewed your proposal, "Emerging Leadership Among African American Female Educators," under the University's expedited review procedures. The Board found that this research would not constitute a risk to participants beyond those of normal, everyday life, except in the area of privacy, which is adequately protected by the confidentiality procedures. Therefore, the Board has approved the use of human subjects in this research.

This approval is for a period of twelve months from this date, provided that the research procedures are not changed significantly from those described in your "Application for Approval of the Use of Humans Subjects" and attachments. Should you wish to deviate significantly from the described subject procedures, you must notify me and obtain prior approval from the Board for the changes.

At the end of the research, you must submit a short report describing your use of human subjects in the research and the results obtained. Should the research extend beyond 12 months, a progress report must be submitted with the request for re-approval, and a final report must be submitted at the end of the research.

Sincerely yours,

Susan Wyatt Sedwick, Ph.D.  
Administrative Officer  
Institutional Review Board-Norman Campus

SWS:lk  
FY02-35

Cc: Dr. E. Laurette Taylor, Chair, Institutional Review Board  
Dr. Courtney Vaughn, Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

**APPENDIX B**  
**Screening Instrument**

## Appendix B

### Screening Instrument

1. Are you interested in school administration?
  - a. Why?
  - b. How long have you been interested?
2. Do you have a degree other than a bachelor's?
3. How long have you been teaching?
4. What are the qualities of a good leader?
5. How soon do you see yourself in an administration position?
6. Have you prepared to take an administration exam?
7. Would you be interested in sharing your story for two interview sessions with me?

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

## Appendix C

### Interview Questionnaire

1. Why did you decide to become a teacher?
2. How do you feel about public education?
3. What was your educational experience growing up?
4. Who influenced your present career choice the most?
5. What is the strongest point that you feel you hold in the classroom?
6. What personal characteristics make you a leader?
7. When did you realize you would be an effective administrator?
  - a. What do you think makes an effective administrator?
8. What would you like to see change in public education?
9. As an administrator how will you change the negative view that public education has so often been given?
  - a. As a leader in your school (teacher) how do you change it?
10. What are the positive factors in education?
  - a. How do you think you can improve them as an administrator?
11. What is the most important factor influencing your desire to pursue administration?
12. What kind of leader do you want to be?
13. What steps have you taken to obtain a position in administration?
14. How have these steps influenced people with whom you work?
15. Tell me about the community where you grew up?

### Additional Questions

1. What was expected of you as a child?
2. Why do you think administration is something you should pursue?
3. Talk about administrators you've observed.
  - a. What did you like about certain administrators?
  - b. What did you think you would do differently?
  - c. What did you think were good leadership attributes?

## APPENDIX D

### Mary McLeod Bethune, Last Will and Testament

## Appendix D

### Mary McLeod Bethune, Last Will and Testament 1955

... "Sometimes I ask myself if I have any other legacy to leave. Truly, my worldly possessions are few. Yet, my experiences have been rich. From them, I have distilled principles and policies in which I believe firmly, for they represent the meaning of my life's work. They are the product of much sweat and sorrow. Perhaps in them there is something of value. So as my life draws to a close, I will pass them on to Negroes everywhere in the hope that an old woman's philosophy may give them inspiration. Here, then, is my legacy.

*I leave you love.* Love builds. It is positive and helpful. It is more beneficial than hate. Injuries quickly forgotten quickly pass away. Personally and racially, our enemies must be forgiven. Our aim must be to create a world of fellowship and justice where no man's skin, color or religion, is held against him. "Love thy neighbor" is a precept which could transform the world if it were universally practiced. It connotes brotherhood and, to me, brotherhood of man is the noblest concept in all human relations. Loving your neighbor means being interracial, interreligious and international.

*I leave you hope.* The Negro's growth will be great in the years to come. Yesterday, our ancestors endured the degradation of slavery, yet they retained their dignity. Today, we direct our economic and political strength toward winning a more abundant and secure life. Tomorrow, a new Negro, unhindered by race taboos and shackles, will benefit from more than 330 years of ceaseless striving and struggle. Theirs will be a better world. This I believe with all my heart.

*I leave you the challenge of developing confidence in one another.* As long as Negroes are hemmed into racial blocs by prejudice and pressure, it will be necessary for them to band together for economic betterment. Negro banks, insurance companies and other businesses are examples of successful, racial economic enterprises. These institutions were made possible by vision and mutual aid. Confidence was vital in getting them started and keeping them going. Negroes have got to demonstrate still more confidence in each other in business. This kind of confidence will aid the economic rise of the race by bringing together the pennies and dollars of our people and ploughing them into useful channels. Economic separatism cannot be tolerated in this enlightened age, and it is not practicable. We must spread out as far and as fast as we can, but we must also help each other as we go.

*I leave you a thirst for education.* Knowledge is the prime need of the hour. More and more, Negroes are taking full advantage of hard-won opportunities for learning, and the educational level of the Negro population is at its highest point in history. We are making greater use of the privileges inherent in living in a democracy. If we continue in this trend,

we will be able to rear increasing numbers of strong, purposeful men and women, equipped with vision, mental clarity, health and education.

*I leave you a respect for the uses of power.* We live in a world which respects power above all things. Power, intelligently directed, can lead to more freedom. Unwisely directed, it can be a dreadful, destructive force. During my lifetime I have seen the power of the Negro grow enormously: it has always been my first concern that this power should be placed on the side of human justice.

Now that barriers are crumbling everywhere, the Negro in America must be ever vigilant lest his forces be marshaled behind wrong causes and undemocratic movements. He must not lend his support to any group that seeks to subvert democracy. That is why we must select leaders who are wise, courageous, and of great moral stature and ability. We have great leaders among us today: Ralph Bunche, Channing Tobias, Mordecai Johnson, Walter White, and Mary Church Terrell. (The latter two are now deceased.) We have had other great men and women in the past: Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth. We must produce more qualified people like them, who will work not for themselves, but for others.

*I leave you faith.* Faith is the first factor in a life devoted to service. Without faith, nothing is possible. With it, nothing is impossible. Faith in God is the greatest power, but great, too, is faith in oneself. In 50 years the faith of the American Negro in himself has grown immensely and is still increasing. The measure of our progress as a race is in precise relation to the depth of the faith in our people held by our leaders. Frederick Douglass, genius though he was, was spurred by a deep conviction that his people would heed his counsel and follow him to freedom. Our greatest Negro figures have been imbued with faith. Our forefathers struggled for liberty in conditions far more onerous than those we now face, but they never lost the faith. Their perseverance paid rich dividends. We must never forget their sufferings and their sacrifices, for they were the foundations of the progress of our people.

*I leave you racial dignity.* I want Negroes to maintain their human dignity at all costs. We, as Negroes, must recognize that we are the custodians as well as the heirs of a great civilization. We have given something to the world as a race and for this we are proud and fully conscious of our place in the total picture of mankind's development. We must learn also to share and mix with all men. We must make an effort to be less race conscious and more conscious of individual and human values. I have never been sensitive about my complexion. My color has never destroyed my self respect nor has it ever caused me to conduct myself in such a manner as to merit the disrespect of any person. I have not let my color handicap me. Despite many crushing burdens and handicaps, I have risen from the cotton fields of South Carolina to found a college, administer it during its years of growth, become a public servant in the government of our country and a leader of women. I would not

exchange my color for all the wealth in the world, for had I been born white I might not have been able to do all that I have done or yet hope to do.

I leave you a desire to live harmoniously with your fellow men. The problem of color is world-wide. It is found in Africa and Asia, Europe and South America. I appeal to American Negroes—North, South, East and West—to recognize their common problems and unite to solve them.

I pray that we will learn to live harmoniously with the white race. So often, our difficulties have made us hyper-sensitive and truculent. I want to see my people conduct themselves naturally in all relationships—fully conscious of their manly responsibilities and deeply aware of their heritage. I want them to learn to understand whites and influence them for good, for it is advisable and sensible for us to do so. We are a minority of 15 million living side by side with a white majority. We must learn to deal with these people positively and on an individual basis.

*I leave you finally a responsibility to our young people.* The world around us really belongs to youth for youth will take over its future management. Our children must never lose their zeal for building a better world. They must not be discouraged from aspiring toward greatness, for they are to be the leaders of tomorrow. Nor must they forget that the masses of our people are still underprivileged, ill-housed, impoverished and victimized by discrimination. We have a powerful potential in our youth, and we must have the courage to change old ideas and practices so we may direct their power toward good ends.

Faith, courage, brotherhood, dignity, ambition, responsibility—these are needed today as ever before. We must cultivate them and use them as tools for our task of completing the establishment of equality for the Negro. We must sharpen these tools in the struggle that faces us and find new ways of using them. The Freedom Gates are half ajar. We must pry them fully open.

If I have a legacy to leave my people, it is my philosophy of living and serving. As I face tomorrow, I am content, for I think I have spent my life well. I pray now that my philosophy may be helpful to those who share my vision of a world of Peace, Progress, Brotherhood and Love” (Ebony, 1955, pp. 105-110).

## APPENDIX E

Table 6: Demographics

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Table 6: Demographics and Summary of Personal Background

Table 6.

Demographics-Summary of Personal Background

| Attributes                   | Donna                            | Linda                              | Tanya              | Annette                            | Ellie                              |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Cultural Exposure            | Suburban multicultural community | Urban historically black community | White Community    | Rural historically black community | Urban historically black community |
| Socioeconomic Status         | Upper middle class               | Middle class                       | Upper middle class | Lower middle class                 | Lower middle class                 |
| Marital Status               | Married                          | Single                             | Married            | Single                             | Married                            |
| Have Reared Children         | None                             | Three                              | None               | None                               | None                               |
| Family Upbringing/ Structure | Mother deceased                  | Both parents in home               | Father deceased    | Both parents in home               | Father absent                      |
| Role Model                   | Mother                           | College Professor                  | Mother             | Mother                             | Middle School Teacher              |
| Religious Values             | Non-denominational               | No religion mentioned              | Baptist            | Church of God in Christ            | Baptist                            |