

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL COUNSELOR SELF-EFFICACY AND THE  
RATE OF GRADUATION FOR MALES AT URBAN, PREDOMINANTLY AFRICAN  
AMERICAN, UNDERPERFORMING HIGH SCHOOLS

By

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To my Mother, for your love, sacrifices, and early morning singing

Thank you for sharing the love of God to me and for demonstrating a heart for service

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School  
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By

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Major: School Counseling and Guidance

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between school counselor self-efficacy and the rate of graduation for males in urban, predominantly African American high schools. Nationally, the underachievement of African American males within public schools has reached alarming heights where fewer than 50%, compared to 78% of White males, are estimated to have graduated from high school in 2008. Professional school counselors are highlighted as critical stakeholders who are held accountable for the academic success of students. However, there lacks research linking school counselor self-efficacy to student outcomes.

This study used a survey design to measure school counselor self-efficacy and school level variables. Graduation rates for males and related school level data were retrieved from the Florida Department of Education website. Sixty-four school counselors, representing 17 schools and three urban districts in Florida, participated in the study. The data was analyzed by hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) using Statistical Analysis System (SAS) programming software.

The HLM analyses took into account the variance that counselor level and school level variables contributed to the full regression model. A significant relationship was not detected between school counselor self-efficacy and the rate of high school graduation for males at urban, predominantly African American, underperforming school. However, having a higher sense of efficacy to engage African American male students was associated with having more years of counseling experience and being a male counselor. Having more years of counseling experience and self-reported training in the implementation of American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Standards were significantly associated with higher perceived efficacy to engage African American male students.

The results of the study lend support for the need to solicit more male role models from within urban communities into high needs schools, as well into the school counseling profession. As a result of this study, there is an early indication that the use of ASCA National Standards may be beneficial at all school counseling career levels. Adherence to ASCA National Standards may yield positive results in how confidently school counselors feel about working with African American males at high needs schools.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

With limited resources and barriers that are common to challenging school environments, educators that serve urban, underperforming high schools are charged with helping students complete high school. Although home-related factors such as parental involvement, parents' level of education, home literacy, socioeconomic status and family structure (Barton, 2003) account for some of the obstacles to high school achievement, attention is increasingly given to school-related factors that may have greater impact (Darling-Hammond & Friedlaender, 2008; Kennelly & Monrad, 2007a; Rodney, Crafter, Rodney & Mupier, 1999). Among school-related factors that affect student achievement are school climate (Hoy, Tarter & Bliss, 1990; Lee & Shute, 2010; Stewart, 2007; Metropolitan Center for Urban Education [MCUE], 2009; Davis & Jordan, 1994), degree of defined expectations of student (Barton, 2003), academic rigor, the quality of interactions between student and educators (Darling-Hammond & Friedlaender, 2008), teacher self-efficacy (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004) and student self-efficacy (Caraway, Tucker, Reinke & Hall, 2003; Walker & Greene, 2009). Further examination of the school-related factors of student achievement is useful when considering the large portion of underserved youth from impoverished communities who can often only rely on school resources to complete high school and access postsecondary education (McDonough, 2004; Wimberly & Noeth, 2004).

Crisis with male underachievement and drop out in public schools is well documented (Alliance for Excellent Education [AEE], 2008; Heckman & LaFontaine, 2010; National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2010). Although all students

may experience degrees of adjustment problems as they matriculate through high school and prepare for college, minority, urban males fare worse in rates of ninth grade completion (Akos & Galassi, 2004), educational attainment (Clark, Lee, Goodman & Yacco, 2008) and high school completion (NCES, 2009) when compared to their female and non-minority counterparts. A recent report about Black males and education estimates that 47% of Black males nationally and 37% in Florida graduated from high school in 2008, compared to 78% White males nationally and 57% in Florida (The Schott Foundation for Public Education [Schott], 2010).

The challenges of male underachievement at urban schools present school counselors with opportunities and challenges for addressing issues of access to resources, equity in services received, social justice and empowerment. However, there is an absence of research about how the self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes of professional school counselors impact student outcomes despite the established evidence about the influence of teacher self-efficacy beliefs on student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Bandura, 1977; Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy, Harris, Hines & Johnston, 2008; Sutton & Fall, 1995). The lack of evidence about the impact of school counselor self-efficacy is significant as the roles of the 21<sup>st</sup> century school counselor continue to shift and greater emphasis is being placed on how they impact student outcomes (American School Counselor Association [ASCA] National Model, 2005; The Education Trust [Ed Trust], 2009). An investigation into how school counselors' work impacts student outcomes is critical to their work with underserved student populations who rely heavily on school resources to prepare for college and life (McDonough, 2004).

## **Scope of the Problem**

### **Starting and Completing High School**

A critical issue in secondary education is helping students navigate efficiently during their transition into high school. The sense of urgency about the freshman transition is merited, as the completion of the first year is one of the strongest predictors of high school graduation (Black, 2004; Hertzog & Morgan, 1999; Kennelly & Monrad, 2007a; Neild, Stoner-Eby & Furstenburg, 2001; The Philadelphia Educational Longitudinal Study [PELS], 2006; Reyes, Gillock, Kobus & Sanchez, 2000). During the ninth grade year, students often struggle to adjust to the increased demands of adolescence, both within and out of school contexts (Crowder & South, 2003). Naturally occurring developmental issues may contribute to the failure of students to achieve academically and persist in high school (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010; Roderick, 2003). The freshman transition process is further complicated for students that come from urban, high poverty settings and attend schools with limited resources (Cooper & Liou, 2007; Kennelly & Monrad, 2007b).

The freshman transition process is particularly critical for the disproportionate number of urban, African American males that fail to complete high school within the four years of their freshman cohorts (Kennelly & Monrad, 2007b; Noguera, 2003; Roderick, 2003). African American males are among the largest group of students who repeat grade nine (Jimerson, Pletcher, Graydon, Schnurr, Nickerson & Kundert, 2006; Rodney et al., 1999). African American males who enter high school unprepared for the rigors and demands of the new setting tend to have poor attendance patterns; change schools frequently; experience difficulty with reading; engage in criminal activity; and are more likely to drop out of school (Bowman, 2005; Jimerson et al., 2006; Jimerson,

2001; National Association of School Psychologists [NASP], 2003) when compared to other racial/ethnic groups. Consequently, students who repeat the ninth grade or drop out before completing this first year decrease their chances of ever completing high school and lessen their opportunities for upward mobility in society (Jimerson, 2001; Leckrone & Griffith, 2006; NASP, 2003; Rodney et al., 1999).

### **Gaps in Education**

In addition to the developmental challenges of starting and finishing high school, there are gaps in achievement, dropout rates and high school completion among student gender, race and income levels (Akos & Galassi, 2004; Clark, Lee, Goodman & Yacco, 2008; NASP, 2003; NCES, 2009; Riordan, 1998). Racial and gender gaps in the rates of high school graduation and drop out are evident in a review of the latest national and state level data on public schools (NCES, 2010; Schott, 2010).

Overall, it is estimated that 74% ( $n = 2,965,286$ ) of the U.S. student population graduated on time in the class of 2008 (NCES, 2010). In 2008, 81% ( $n = 1,853,476$ ) of White students, compared to 61.5% ( $n = 415,111$ ) of Black students graduated on time. The Schott Foundation (2010) estimates that in 2008, 47% ( $n = 1,974,000$ ) of Black males, compared to 78% of White males graduated on time. A limitation of the Schott's report is that they do not include total enrollment for White students.

An estimated 4.1% ( $n = 613,379$ ) of all students dropped out in 2008 (NCES, 2010). Of the White students, 2.8% ( $n = 234,121$ ) dropped out compared to 6.7% ( $n = 159,407$ ) of Black students who dropped out of school. Males dropped out at a rate of 4.6% ( $n = 335,900$ ) and females at a rate of 3.5% ( $n = 248,415$ ).

Florida data reveals similar trends in graduation and dropout occurrences. Overall, 66.9% ( $n = 149,046$ ) of Florida public school students have graduated in 2008

(NCES, 2010). Slightly over 70% (n= 79,596) of White students, compared to 55.7% (30,239) of Black students graduated. It is estimated that 37% (n = 116,698) of Black males graduated in 2008, compared to 57% of White males (Schott, 2010).

Approximately 3.3% (n = 26,635) of all Florida students dropped out of school in 2008 (NCES, 2010). Of all White students, 2.1% (n = 8,249) dropped out, compared to 4.7% (n = 8,710) of Black students. Males in Florida public schools dropped out at a rate of 3.5% (n = 13,824) and females at a rate of 2.7% (n = 10,217) in 2008.

### **Role of the School Counselor**

Professional school counselors are trained to intervene on behalf of the academic, career and psychosocial needs of students using individual counseling, small group intervention, large group guidance, classroom guidance, advocacy, strategic assessment and collaboration (ASCA, 2005; Myrick, 2003). Furthermore, when working with diverse students and families that are situated in impoverished, urban settings, school counselors' roles include confronting issues of access and equity to resources, and ensuring that students receive culturally appropriate responses to their needs (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007; Bemak & Chung, 2005; Cooper & Liou, 2007; Ed Trust, 2009; Lee, 2001; White & Kelly, 2010).

Although there is a need for more outcome research about the effects of school counseling on student achievement, findings have shown that effective school counseling approaches may have positive influences on student outcomes (Lapan et al., 2003; Whiston & Quinby, 2009; Whiston & Sexton, 1998). School counselors can become leaders in the collaborative efforts that are needed to improve the educational outcomes of students who are at greatest risk of failure (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2007; Clark & Breman, 2009; White & Kelly, 2010). Effective school counseling

approaches in high-needs, underperforming, urban schools may positively impact the ways in which schools overcome the barriers to academic success for students who are most vulnerable (Lee, 2005; Bodenhor, Wolfe & Airen, 2010).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study employed Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977). Specifically, Bandura's conceptualization of self-efficacy theory was applied to the work of school counselors (Bodenhor & Skaggs, 2005). Also, self-efficacy theory was used to conceptualize how school counselors assessed their efficacy to engage students in school (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

The self-efficacy construct involves two types of expectancies, efficacy expectations (beliefs about whether relevant duties and tasks can be performed) and outcome expectancies (beliefs about the outcome of one's performance) (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Dellinger et al., 2008; Sutton & Fall, 1995; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Efficacy expectations are conceptualized as one's beliefs about their capabilities to perform specific tasks within specified domains. Outcome expectancies refer to the judgments that individuals hold about the results of their efforts. Thus, self-efficacy beliefs are one's assessment about how confidently they can perform and the outcomes of their performance within a specified context (Bandura, 1977).

Self-efficacy beliefs mediate the extent to which individuals exert effort, persist in difficult situations, overcome barriers and persevere in order to be successful in particular tasks (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Bandura, 1986; Pajares, 2002). Bandura (1995) further posits that self-efficacy beliefs are developed when individuals are exposed to a history of successes (mastery experiences), observing behaviors (vicarious experiences), social or verbal persuasion and tensions (emotional reactions).

When engaging these sources of efficacy, individuals begin to develop stronger or weaker self-efficacy beliefs with regards to specific tasks or domains.

Self-efficacy beliefs are an integral function of counselors' career performance and satisfaction (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006). Thus, self-efficacy theory is a good fit for examining how efficacious school counselors feel about their work and how it may relate to their helping students complete high school within the context of challenging school environments (Bandura, 1977). When considering the barriers and difficulties that are encountered at urban, underperforming high schools, a deeper investigation of school counselors' work through the lens of self-efficacy addresses how individuals exert efforts and persist when faced with challenges in the work place (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005; Sutton & Fall, 1995). Furthermore, the use of self-efficacy beliefs to examine how school counselors view their own performance and the outcomes of their work is useful when considering the impact that school counselors' self-efficacy may have on student achievement (Bodenhorn et al., 2010).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The freshman year of high school is a significant time of transition since students often experience many of the risk factors that are associated with dropping out (NASP, 2003; National Dropout Prevention Center [NDPC], 2007; PELS, 2006). Factors such as gender, race, socioeconomic status, repeating a grade or parental education, when considered individually, do not accurately predict which students will drop out of school (NDPC, 2007). Rather, a combination of risk factors predicts more accurately which students are likely to drop out of school (Farmer, et al., 2004; NASP, 2003; NDPC, 2007; Suh & Suh, 2007).

Urban, poor, minority youth that are held back a grade are more likely to have unequal access to resources and are most adversely impacted by such retention practices (Darling-Hammond, 1998). The risk factor of repeating a grade becomes more indicative of who will drop out since 70-80% of students who repeat the freshman year will not complete high school (Black, 2004; NASP, 2003). Furthermore, characteristics among students that are more likely to repeat a grade and be at highest risk to drop out are those who are male, African American or Hispanic, live in low-income or single-parent households and change schools frequently (NDPC, 2007; Neild Stoner-Eby & Furstenberg, 2001).

Urban, underperforming high schools experience significant disparities between the achievement of females and males (Balfanz & Legters, 2004; NCES, 2010; Riordan, 1998). This gender gap in achievement is well documented for African American adolescent males and females who come from impoverished communities (Catterall, 1998; Dynarski & Gleason, 2002; NDPC, 2007; Schott, 2009). The groups of males that drop out often report a sense of disconnection or detachment from peers and adults within the school community and a history of academic failure (NDPC, 2007).

Consequently, if underrepresented youth do not persist in high school, they are likely to experience the most adverse societal outcomes (NASP, 2003). The NASP found that adults who dropped out of high school were more likely to have lower “employment status ratings, be paid less per hour...be unemployed, living on public assistance, or [be] in prison” (p.3). Hence, African American males in urban, impoverished communities have layers of obstacles to overcome if they do not complete high school successfully.

## **Need for the Study**

Schools that are situated in urban, impoverished communities present the school counselor with opportunities to address the distinct challenges that urban youth encounter in their secondary schooling experiences (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007; Bodenhorst et al., 2010). Hence, this study contributed to research about the possible relationship between school counselors' perceived efficacy and the graduation rates of males at urban, predominantly African American high schools.

It is well established that teacher self-efficacy has a significant impact on student outcomes (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Goddard, 2001; Goddard, Hoy & Hoy, 2000; Tschannen-Moran and Barr, 2004). While there is an expectation that school counselors link the results of their practice to student outcomes, little attention has been devoted to learning about the relationship between school counselor self-efficacy beliefs about their general practice and student achievement (ASCA, 2005; Bodenhorst et al., 2010). Evidence to support the link between school counselor self-efficacy and student outcomes is unavailable.

Given the potential negative outcomes for African American males who do not complete high school, more attention needs to be directed to the impact that school counselors have on the graduation rates in high schools (Cooper & Liou, 2007). Early indications suggest that effective school counseling interventions positively impact student outcomes (Bemak et al., 2005; Lapan et al., 2003; Whiston & Quinby, 2009). Research about teacher efficacy holds promise for similar studies about the relationship between school counselor self-efficacy about their work and student outcomes (Bodenhorst et al., 2010).

The importance of school counselors' work on behalf of student achievement is recognized by most states' departments of education in issuing counselor certifications at an equivalent status of teachers (ASCA, 2010). However, there is little educational research examining how school counselors' self-efficacy affect student outcomes. The gap between practice and research is reflected by the existence of only three self-efficacy instruments developed for school counseling practice in more than thirty years of self-efficacy research (Bandura, 1977; Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy, Harris, Hines & Johnston, 2008; Sutton & Fall, 1995). If very little is known about the effects of school counselor self-efficacy for the general population of students in public education, then it is likely that there is a greater mystery about how the work of school counselors can impact the rates of high school completion for males at urban, underperforming, predominantly African American schools. Furthermore, greater investments are needed to increase African American males' high school graduation rates because of the potential adverse outcomes for these students and for society (NASP, 2003; NCES, 2009; NDPC, 2007).

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study was about school counselors' perceived self-efficacy within the context of urban schools. Also explored in this study was the role of urban school counselors in the rates of high school completion for African American male students. The purpose of the study was to examine if a relationship exists between school counselor self-efficacy and the rate of high school completion for African American males in urban, underperforming schools. In order to examine this relationship, the following questions about urban, predominantly African American, underperforming high schools were addressed.

## Research Questions

- **RQ1a:** What is the association between school counselors' self-efficacy beliefs about work and the counselor-level characteristics of gender, number of years of teaching, number of years of counseling, and training in ASCA National Standards?
- **RQ1b:** What is the association between school counselors' self-efficacy beliefs about work and the school-level characteristics of 2009 total student enrollment, Black student enrollment, enrollment students in the free-reduced lunch program, and the 2009 graduation rates for males?
- **RQ2a:** What is the association between school counselors' sense of efficacy to engage African American male students and the counselor-level characteristics of gender, number of years of teaching, number of years of counseling, and training in ASCA National Standards?
- **RQ2b:** What is the association between school counselors' sense of efficacy to engage African American male students and the school-level characteristics of 2009 total student enrollment, Black student enrollment, enrollment students in the free-reduced lunch program, and the 2009 graduation rates for males?
- **RQ3:** What is the relationship between school counselor self-efficacy beliefs about work and the 2009 graduation rates for males at their schools?
- **RQ4:** What is the relationship between school counselors' sense of efficacy to engage African American male students and the 2009 graduation rates for males at their schools?
- **RQ5a:** What is the relationship between school counselor self-efficacy beliefs about work and 2009 graduation rates for males and partnership affiliation?
- **RQ5b:** What is the relationship between school counselors' sense of efficacy to engage African American male students and 2009 graduation rates for males and partnership affiliation?

## Hypotheses

- **Ho1a:** There is no association between school counselors' self-efficacy beliefs about work and the counselor-level characteristics of gender, number of years of teaching, number of years of counseling, and training in ASCA National Standards.
- **Ho1b:** There is no association between school counselors' self-efficacy beliefs about work and the school-level characteristics of 2009 total student enrollment, Black student enrollment, enrollment students in the free-reduced lunch program, and the 2009 graduation rates for males.

- **Ho2a:** There is no association between school counselors' sense of efficacy to engage African American male students and the counselor-level characteristics of gender, number of years of teaching, number of years of counseling, and training in ASCA National Standards.
- **Ho2b:** There is no association between school counselors' sense of efficacy to engage African American male students and the school-level characteristics of 2009 total student enrollment, Black student enrollment, enrollment students in the free-reduced lunch program, and the 2009 graduation rates for males.
- **Ho3:** There is no relationship between school counselor self-efficacy beliefs about work and the 2009 graduation rates for males.
- **Ho4:** There is no relationship between school counselors' sense of efficacy to engage African American male students and the 2009 graduation rates for males.
- **Ho5a:** There is no relationship between school counselor self-efficacy beliefs about work and 2009 graduation rates for males and partnership affiliation.
- **Ho5b:** There is no relationship between school counselors' sense of efficacy to engage African American male students and 2009 graduation rates for males and partnership affiliation.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Achievement Gap* refers to the documented disparities in school performance and testing outcomes among gender, racial/ethnic and socioeconomic groups in educational attainment.

*African American* is used interchangeably with Black/Non-Hispanic (FLDOE) and refers to individuals that have origins in any of the nations of Africa, the Caribbean, and includes people who self-report their race as Black (US Census, 2000).

*ASCA National Model* is the American School Counseling Association's framework for comprehensive, data-driven school counseling delivery. The ASCA National Model addresses a comprehensive school counseling program's foundation, delivery, management, and accountability (ASCA, 2005). The framework is built upon the ASCA

National Standards and the themes of leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and systematic change (Herr & Erford, 2011).

*ASCA National Standards or The National Standards for School Counseling*

*Programs* are the standardized competencies for comprehensive, developmental school counseling programs. The three categories of standards are academic, career, and personal/social development (Herr & Erford, 2011).

*College Access* refers to the process of pursuing education beyond high school with adequate financial and human resources to enter and graduate successfully from a postsecondary institution (NCAN, 2010).

*Dropout* is the culminating act and the process that leads a student's decision to exit high school before earning high school credentials (NDPC, 2007).

*Efficacy expectations* refer to one's beliefs about whether duties and tasks can be performed (Bandura, 1977).

*Freshman Transition* is a process that students experience when changing from middle school to high school. For the purposes of this study, the freshman transition period spans from the start of and successful completion of grade nine.

*High-performing high-poverty* (HP2) or "turnaround" describes schools that enroll more than fifty percent of students from low-income households (as determined by eligibility for free or reduced lunch) and demonstrate high levels of student achievement.

*High school graduation* is the act of a student earning a high school diploma or equivalent credentials within four years of entry into the ninth grade. This term is used interchangeably with "high school completion".

*Outcome expectancy* refers to the judgments that individuals hold about the results of their performance within a specific context (Bandura, 1986).

*Professional School Counselor* is used interchangeably with *school counselor* and refers to a certified/licensed educator with a minimum of a master's degree in school counseling. School counselors address students' academic, personal/social and career development needs by designing, implementing, evaluating and enhancing a comprehensive school counseling program that promotes and enhances student success (ASCA, 2009).

*School counselor self-efficacy* refers to counselors' efficacy expectations about their professional competence (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005) and their outcome expectancy related to engaging students (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The five domains of school counselor self-efficacy beliefs about their work (Personal and Social Development, Leadership and Assessment, Career and Academic Development, Collaboration and Consultation, and Cultural Acceptance) are recognized as requisite competencies for professional school counselors and derived from the ASCA National Standards (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005).

*Self-efficacy* is conceptualized as one's beliefs about their capabilities to perform specific tasks within specified domains and their beliefs about the outcomes of their performance (Bandura, 1977).

*Stakeholder* refers to students, families (parents, caregivers), teachers, administrators, community members, school board staff, and any individual or entity that is invested in student achievement and success.

*Underperforming* refers to schools that perform below expected levels based on Florida state indicators due to complex risk factors such as poverty and limited community and school resources. Underperforming is used interchangeably with “low-performing”.

*Urban* is defined as the classification of cities that experience at least 1000 people per square miles (US Census, 2000). For the purposes of this study, schools that are situated within urban cities and have an average of 1,000 or more student enrollment will be considered urban schools.

### **Summary**

Urban, African American males who come from low-income backgrounds are apt to encounter challenges that are unique to their personal, social and economic classifications as they matriculate through public high schools. Thus, the crisis that ensues when these youth fail to complete high school has implications for their educational, personal and societal outcomes. Professional school counselors are key stakeholders in the success of marginalized youth, as they can serve as leaders and advocates in efforts to narrow the achievement gap in challenging school environments. However, educational research lags behind in discovering how school counselor self-efficacy may influence student outcomes. This study adds to the research about the role of school counselor self-efficacy in student achievement.

Chapter Two presents the review of related literature in social cognitive theory and the conceptualization of self-efficacy within professional school counseling. Also included is a delineation of the issues related to high school completion for African American males and the challenges of accessing resources for college. Chapter Two

concludes with an analysis of the previous research findings related to this current study and the implications for professional school counseling.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to examine if a relationship exists between school counselor self-efficacy beliefs and the rate of graduation for males at urban, underperforming high schools. Chapter Two begins with a discussion of social cognitive theory and a review of related literature about self-efficacy in teaching and professional school counseling. The chapter continues with a discussion about the issues related to high school completion for African American males, the implications for college access for this population, and concludes with the role of professional school counselors in narrowing the achievement gap.

#### **Social Cognitive Theory**

Social cognitive theory (SCT) developed out of Bandura's earlier work in social learning theory. Bandura challenged the popular stance, and his own theoretical perspective, in social learning theory that placed more weight on the influence of environmental and biological factors on behavior (Pajares, 2002). Instead, social cognitive theory was offered as a view of human functioning and learning in which self-beliefs have a central role in how people adapt and change.

A primary tenet of Bandura's (1986) SCT is the idea of human agency and the ability of people to exercise control over their thoughts and actions. An understanding of the social and collective nature of people's behavior was incorporated into Bandura's conceptualization of collective agency. This was later extended to collective efficacy, where shared beliefs are held to influence how groups work together to bring about organizational change (Bandura, 1995; Pajares, 2002).

Another tenet of SCT is the ability of individuals to learn vicariously and the subsequent adjustments of thoughts and attitudes that are made from observational learning (Pajares, 2002). Behaviors are developed from a process of observing, retaining memory of other's behavior, modeling behavior, and being motivated to change. Bandura (1986) asserted that people's ability to self-reflect is the strongest mediator of behavioral change and is what distinguishes people as humans.

According to SCT, behavior is a function of the close interaction of external stimulus, external reinforcement and cognitive meditational processes (Corsini & Wedding, 2000). Cognition has a central role in behavior and influences such processes as self-reflection, self-organization, and self-regulation (Bandura, 1977). Beliefs that people hold about their capabilities are known as self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1986). An individual's own interpretation of an experience leads to self-directed change (Corsini & Wedding, 2000). Self-efficacy beliefs mediate how individuals perform when equipped with requisite skills and knowledge (Bandura, 1995). Thus, self-efficacy beliefs can be more predictive of an individual's behavior than their actual capabilities (Pajares, 2002).

### **Self-Efficacy**

There has been "conceptual confusion" (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001, p.792) in defining self-efficacy and challenges in subsequent development of adequate measures of the construct (Dellinger et al., 2008). Bandura (1977, 1986) made a distinction between efficacy expectations and outcome expectancy, both constituting the construct of general self-efficacy. Efficacy expectations are one's personal assessment of competence to perform duties and task in specific contexts. Outcome expectancies are

one's judgments about the results or consequences of their performance within the specified contexts (Sutton & Fall, 1995). See Figure 2-1.

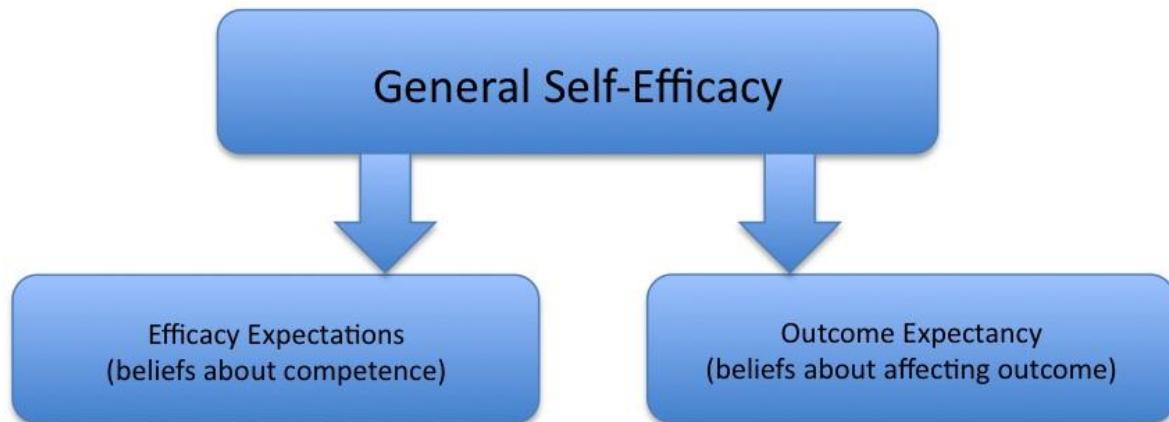


Figure 2-1. Bandura's (1986) conceptualization of self-efficacy

Many instruments purport to measure self-efficacy. However, these instruments have failed to capture both efficacy expectations and outcome expectancy as defined by Bandura (Delinger et al., 2008; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Furthermore, attempts to measure self-efficacy present challenges when trying to determine the level of specificity for the contexts and domains of self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

Bandura (1977, 1986, 1993, 1995) advanced an understanding of the role of self-efficacy in behavior. Self-efficacy beliefs are task or domain-specific judgments that individuals hold about their capabilities and the outcomes of their performance (Bandura, 1986). Such beliefs are among the strongest influences of a course of action that is taken for a given task or domain (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy is developed when individuals a) acquire the requisite skills for a task (mastery), b) observe others engage successfully in similar tasks (vicarious experiences), c) receive social or verbal persuasion that they will be successful in a given task, and d) have emotional reactions

(tensions) related to a task (Bandura, 1986, 1995). Hence, self-efficacy beliefs mediate task-related functions such as performance, the amount of effort that is exerted in the face of challenges, goal setting, and a personal sense of competence (Bandura, 1977; Pajares, 2002).

Empirical evidence supports the role that self-efficacy has in the schooling process and its relationship to: student mathematics performance (Pajares & Miller, 1994; Schunk, 1989); reading and writing tasks (Pajares & Valiante, 1997; Shell, Murphy & Bruning, 1989); interest in specific school subject areas (Long et al., 2007); sense of belonging (Walker & Greene, 2009); general high school engagement (Caraway et al., 2003); and teaching and teacher education (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Goddard, Hoy & Hoy, 2000; Pajares, 1996; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy & Hoy, 1998). Also, self-efficacy is linked to counseling-related outcomes such as: career decision-making (Krumboltz, 1979); career satisfaction and commitment (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006); school counselor multicultural competence (Holcomb-McCoy et al., 2008); and general school counseling practice (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005; Bodenhorn et al., 2010; Sutton & Fall, 1995).

## **Teacher Efficacy**

Efficacy within the context of teaching is conceptualized in many ways. Teacher efficacy, teacher self-efficacy and teacher's sense of self-efficacy are among the common labels that have been used to describe the beliefs that teachers hold about their professional competence, ability to engage students in learning, expectations, and the outcomes of their efforts within the context of their work environment (Ashton, 1984; Bandura, 1977; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The relationship of teacher efficacy and self-efficacy to educational outcomes has been demonstrated widely in

teaching and teacher education research (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Goddard, Hoy & Hoy, 2000; Pajares, 1996; Tschanen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy & Hoy, 1998).

Ashton and Webb (1986) conducted a multiphase study that furthered an understanding of the role of teacher self-efficacy on student achievement. As part of the overall project, two ethnographic studies were conducted with middle and high school teachers to learn about teachers' self-defined roles and attitudes. A key finding was the reported differences of beliefs about low-achieving students that were held by high self-efficacy and low self-efficacy teachers (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Teachers with high self-efficacy were more likely than low self-efficacious teachers to believe that low-achieving student were "reachable, teachable, and worthy of teacher attention and effort" (p.72). Teachers with low self-efficacy fostered more adverse classroom climates than their high self-efficacy counterparts and placed "classroom discipline at the center of their thinking and teaching practices" (p.74).

As mentioned previously, there has been confusion about defining and measuring adequately teacher self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Dellinger et al., 2008). In an effort to clarify the meaning of teacher self-efficacy and provide an instrument that aligns more with Bandura's (1986) definition of the construct, Tschanen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) developed the *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale* (TSES). The TSES measures teacher efficacy beliefs, with three subscales that capture teachers' beliefs about student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. Previous studies reported reliabilities for the entire measure that ranged from .92 to .95, and subscale reliabilities that ranged from .86 to .90 (Tschanen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007).

Collective teacher efficacy (CTE) is distinct from teacher self-efficacy (Bandura, 1995). The construct CTE is the group's "self-perception that teachers in a given school make an educational difference to their students" (Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004, p. 190). Given the collaborative nature of professional school counselors' work, research on collective teacher efficacy (CTE) has implications for exploring the impact of school counselors' work on student outcomes (Goddard et al., 2000; Goddard et al., 2000; McCoach & Colbert, 2010; Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004).

Goodard and his colleagues (2000) developed the Collective Teacher Efficacy Scale (CTES) as a measure of how overall school units perceive their contributions to student achievement. Factor analysis of the CTES provided evidence of the integral elements of Bandura's conceptualization of self-efficacy: task and competence (McCoach & Colbert, 2010). In other words, the CTES was proven reliable to measure to what degree teachers, as a collective unit, believed they are able (competent) to impact student achievement (task). Tschannen-Moran and Barr (2004) found significant positive relationships between collective teacher efficacy and tests of student achievement. However, Bandura (1993) asserts that collective teacher efficacy declines in the later grades, where increased academic demands may adversely impact teachers' instructional efficacy.

### **School Counselor Self-Efficacy**

School counselor self-efficacy is a recent construct development within self-efficacy research. The construct is an application of teacher self-efficacy within the context of school counselor roles (Bandura, 1977; Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005; Sutton & Fall, 1995). Thus, school counselor self-efficacy beliefs can be viewed as the counselor's personal assessment of competence to perform school counseling-related

duties and task within specific context of school counseling and guidance (Bandura, 1986; Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005).

Sutton and Fall (1995) set precedent by adapting a previously developed teacher self-efficacy scale to create the Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (CSS). The CSS was designed to determine the relationship of school counselor self-efficacy to various demographic variables, school counselor roles and school climate. School climate, specifically perceived support from colleagues and administrators, was found to be the strongest influence on school counselor self-efficacy (Sutton & Fall, 1995).

In a correlation analysis of 1,280 school counselors' survey responses, Baggerly and Osborn (2006) found that self-efficacy relates positively to school counselors' career satisfaction and commitment. School counselors who reported high self-efficacy for inappropriate duties, as defined by the ASCA National Model (2005), had higher career satisfaction and commitment than counselors who reported low self-efficacy for inappropriate duties. School counselors with high self-efficacy were more likely than those with low self-efficacy to persist in challenging situations to accomplish a task (Bandura, 1977; Sutton & Fall, 1995). As discussed previously, self-efficacy beliefs mediate the extent to which individuals exert effort, persist in difficult situations, overcome barriers and persevere to be successful in particular tasks (Bandura, 1977, 1995). Hence, Bandura's assertion about such persistence is supported by Baggerly and Osborn's (2006) findings about school counselors and self-efficacy.

The School Counselor Multicultural Self-Efficacy Scale (SCMES) measures the school counselor's own assessment of performing "tasks related to equity and diversity issues in schools" (Holcomb-McCoy et al., 2008). The items of the SCMES were

developed through a review of research, relevant literature and self-efficacy scale development guidelines. The SCMES fills a gap in previous self-efficacy research (Bandura, 1977; Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005; Sutton & Fall, 1995) because it addresses multicultural issues in school counseling. Holcomb-McCoy and her colleagues reported that the number of multicultural courses taken and ethnicity were significantly related to school counselor multicultural self-efficacy. Although multicultural competence is a part of the school counselor's work (ASCA, 2005), factor analysis suggests that school counselor multicultural self-efficacy is distinct from, and has no significant relationship to, general school counselor self-efficacy (Holcomb-McCoy et al., 2008).

Building upon the works of Bandura (1986, 1995) and Sutton and Fall (1995), Bodenhorn and Skaggs (2005) further developed an understanding of self-efficacy within the context of professional school counseling. The construct of school counselor self-efficacy is established as the school counselor's confidence to perform various school counseling tasks (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005; Bodenhorn et al., 2010). The items of the associated instrument, School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (SCSE), were developed using the ASCA National Standards for practice across all grade levels. The five domains of school counselor self-efficacy derive from the recommended duties of school counselors: Personal and Social Development, Leadership and Assessment, Career and Academic Development, Collaboration, and Cultural Acceptance (ASCA, 2005). The four variables that Bodenhorn and Skaggs found that relate positively to self-efficacy are: (a) gender (females compared to males), (b) teaching experience, (c) three or more years of school counseling practice, and (d) training in the ASCA National Standards.

Another significant finding is that school counselors with high self-efficacy about their general practice are more likely than their low self-efficacy counterparts to have awareness and acknowledgement of the achievement gap and equity issues within their schools (Bodenhorn et al., 2010). School counselors who reported higher levels of self-efficacy and used a systematic approach to school counseling in their practice perceived a narrowing of the achievement gap at their schools. The seminal research about school counselor self-efficacy has implications for the role of school counselors and their administrators in narrowing the achievement gap. Early research suggests that school administrators can affect school counselor self-efficacy by fostering positive school climates and demonstrating support for the work of the school counselor (Sutton & Fall, 1995).

Higher school counselor self-efficacy can lead to proactive school counselors that persist in situations where they are asked to perform non-school counseling related duties (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006). Furthermore, school counselors with high self-efficacy may be more conscious of achievement gap and equity issues within their schools and, subsequently, be responsive and active in helping to narrow the achievement gap within their schools (Bodenhorn et al., 2010; Holcomb-McCoy et al., 2008). Variables such as implementation of school counseling programs, quality of school counseling preparation, training in the ASCA National Standards (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005), and school climate (Sutton & Fall, 1995) affect school counselors' work and may have a positive influence on student outcomes (Bodenhorn et al., 2010).

In order to capture the school counselors' self-efficacy about their work (efficacy expectations) and engaging students in learning at their school (outcome expectancy),

this study used the conceptualizations of Bodenhorn and Skaggs (2005) and Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001). Distinctions were made among school counselor self-efficacy, school counselor self-efficacy beliefs, and having a sense of efficacy about the efforts that are made on behalf of students. Hence, both strands of Bandura's (1977, 1986) definition of self-efficacy, efficacy expectations and outcome expectancy, were incorporated into the definition of school counselor self-efficacy in this study. See Figure 2-2.

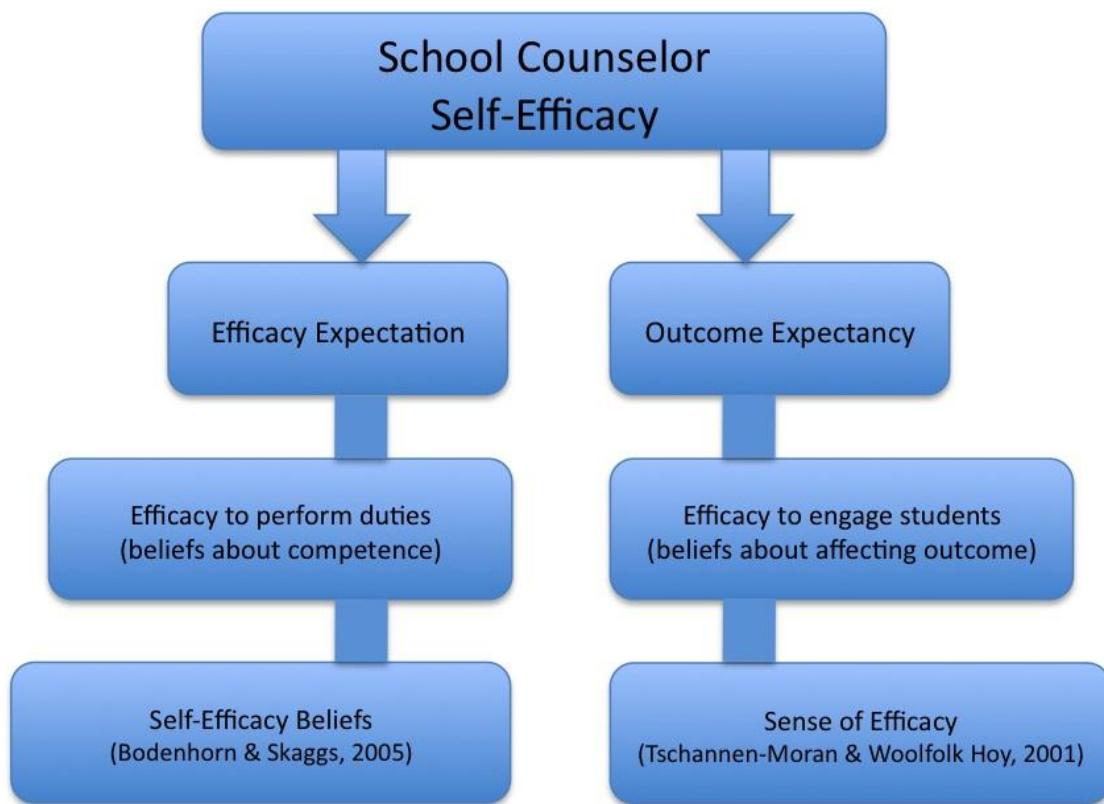


Figure 2-2. School counselor self-efficacy

The remainder of this chapter presents a discussion of the achievement and gender gap in education and the role that school counselors have in narrowing the achievement gap.

## **Challenges and Implications of High School Completion**

### **Significance of the Freshman Year**

The start of high school can be a positive experience for adolescents with the promise of increased opportunities and interpersonal growth. However, the freshman year proves to be a turbulent time for students and predictive of high school success and graduation for most students (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010; Roderick, 2003). As students begin high school, absenteeism, poor study skills, time management, organization, increased academic rigor and student self-efficacy development present numerous challenges related to the successful completion of high school (Neild et al., 2001; PELS, 2006; Reyes et al., 2000; Smith, Akos, Lim & Wiley, 2008).

During the ninth grade year, schools experience the highest enrollment of students as a result of the disproportionate number of students that are held back in grade nine (Wheelock & Miao, 2005). The academic failure rate increases significantly during the first year and was, at one point, found to be three to five times higher than in other grades (Southern Regional Educational Board [SREB], 2002). An estimated 40% of freshmen in cities with the highest dropout rates repeat grade nine (Kennelly & Monrad, 2007b). School attendance is typically poorest among 9<sup>th</sup> graders: 78% of grade nine students attend classes regularly compared to 92.5% in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 86.3% in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and 80.9% in 12<sup>th</sup> grade (Black, 2004; Neild et al., 2001). Consequently, adolescents who are not successful during the ninth grade year are at greatest risk of not completing high school (AEE, 2009; Black, 2004; NASP, 2003).

In addition to the personal and developmental variables related to transitioning (Roderick, 2003), socioeconomic, gender and race-specific factors may intensify the transition experiences of minority youth as they start high school (Akos & Galassi, 2004;

Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). The poorest outcomes and highest rates of dropout that follow ninth grade repetition occur in larger, urban settings (Balfanz & Legters, 2004; Kennelly & Monrad, 2007a). This is especially the case for ethnically diverse males that come from impoverished backgrounds and are more likely to be found in many low-resource, urban centers (Balfanz & Legters, 2004; NCES, 2010). Unfortunately, the minority males who do not transition into high school successfully have an increased chance of dropping out of school (Roderick, 2003), thereby limiting their postsecondary opportunities after high school (AEE, 2009).

### **Risk Factors for Dropping Out**

Dropping out, as conceptualized in this study, is not an isolated and individualized phenomenon. Rather, factors that are related to individual, family, school and community domains interact with each other to contribute to a student's decision to exit the school system before earning their high school diploma (NDPC, 2007; Suh & Suh, 2007). Hence, there are many risk factors associated with the culminating act of dropping out of school (Murdock, 1999; NDPC, 2007; PELS, 2006; Reyes et al, 2000).

The National Dropout Prevention Center (2007) summarized twenty-five years of dropout research to identify risk factors and exemplary programs that have demonstrated success with dropout prevention. Dropout factors emerged within four major categories: individual, family, school and community factors (Suh & Suh, 2007). Some indicators that increase the chances of dropping out of school include high number of absences, poor school behavior, being over-age for grade (retention), low academic achievement, low socioeconomic status, and having a sibling that has dropped out of school (NDPC, 2007; Neild et al., 2001).

Exemplary programs, as classified by NDPC, were successful in decreasing the rates of dropout because they employed “multiple strategies” (p.8) that targeted more than one domain of risk factors (NDPC, 2007). Hence, a multiple strategy approach to dropout prevention has implications for the use of the collaborative and systemic approaches that may be required to improve the rate of high school completion.

Dropout risk factors and indicators have also been identified as early as the middle school years (Murdock, 1999; PELS, 2006). In a longitudinal study that began in 1996 by the Philadelphia Education Fund and John Hopkins University (PELS, 2006), researchers were able to identify students who were “off track” for graduation as early as the sixth grade. The PELS researchers found four significant risk factors, the “Big Four”, that predicted drop out among middle school students living in urban, high poverty neighborhoods: poor school attendance, poor history of behavior, failing math assessment, and literacy assessments (Balfanz & Herzog, 2006). The PELS researchers recommended that educators and administrators use preventive measures for all students and reorganize school resources to meet the distinct needs of students during the early transitional process.

In general, students that demonstrate a low commitment to school, engagement with high-risk peer groups and low educational expectations have an increased likelihood of dropping out of high school (NDPC, 2007). More indicators for students that are at risk for dropping out include an early disengagement with school, failure to keep pace at high school, poor relationship with teachers, parents’ with low formal education, and a sense of alienation with the school community (Caraway, Tucker, Reinke & Hall, 2003; Murdock, 1999). Among the many indicators that are associated

with dropping out, having poor grades, low socioeconomic status and behavioral problems are believed to be among the strongest factors that impact dropout rates (Reyes et al., 2000; Suh & Suh, 2007).

### **Consequences of Dropping Out**

Students who do not complete the freshman transition successfully are more likely to experience negative outcomes such as drug and alcohol use, depression, juvenile crime and ultimately drop out before earning their high school diploma (NDPC, 2007). Some of the societal and economics consequences of dropping out include: earning about \$260,000 less over a lifetime than a high school graduate (Rouse, 2005); \$319 billion in lost wages for the US economy by dropouts in the class of 2008; and about \$17 billion in cost for uninsured individuals who dropped out of high school in the class of 2006 (AEE, 2009). Students who drop out of school have fewer job opportunities and are more likely to depend on government-subsidized assistance than their graduating counterparts (Dynarski & Gleason, 2002).

The latest report of educational attainment of the US correctional population estimates that 41.3% of the incarcerated population, compared to 18.4% of the general population, did not complete high school (Harlow, 2003). High school dropouts are estimated to be at least eight times more likely to be incarcerated than high school completers (Bridgeland et al., 2006). In addition to having fewer job opportunities and lower lifetime earnings, African American males that do not graduate from high school are more likely to engage in criminal activity and spend time in jail or prison than Hispanic or White males (Dynarski & Gleason, 2002; NASP, 2003).

## Achievement Gaps at Urban Schools

### National Data

The outcomes of dropout and grade retention are more adverse for minority males that live in economically impoverished urban centers with limited resources (NCES, 2009). Although there are discrepancies between state and national calculations of high school graduation and dropout rates, gaps persist between genders and within race/ethnicities in the rates of students that are held back at least one grade (FLDOE, 2009; NASP, 2003; NCES, 2006, 2010). The NASP's (2003) latest report on grade retention estimates that 30% to 50% of students will have repeated a grade by the time they enter the ninth grade. The NCES's (2006) most recent reports on grade retention estimates that 13% of boys are likely to have "ever been retained" compared to 6% of girls. Black students, at 16%, are twice more likely than White students to be retained (NCES, 2006). It is further estimated that at the secondary education level, 21% of students that drop out have been retained at least once compared to only 12% of students who do not drop out (NCES, 2006).

In regard to persistence in high school, fewer than 75% of students in American public schools graduate within the expected four years' time, if at all (Balfanz & Legters, 2004; NCES, 2010). Compared to the national estimated dropout rate of 8.7% for all students in 2007, males dropped out a rate of 9.8%, compared to the 7.7% of females that dropped in 2007. Whites comprised 5.3% and African Americans 8.4% of those who did not persist in high school.

While 90.6% of females are reported to have graduated in 2007, only 87.4% of males in the same report completed high school (NCES, 2009). African Americans completed high school at a rate of 88.8% compared to Whites that completed at a rate

of 93.5% (NCES, 2009). Among the US high school completers estimated in 2007, 94.6% of the White females and 92.4% of White males completed school, compared to 88.7% of Black females and 89.0% of Black males (NCES, 2009). Although there was a slight increase of Black males that graduated, compared to Black females in 2007, Black females historically complete high school at a higher rate than Black males (NASP, 2003; NCES, 2009).

### **State Data**

The state of Florida experiences wider gender and racial/ethnic gaps in high school graduation rates when compared nationally. The estimates that Florida report for NCLB accountability requirements exclude students who receive special diplomas because of certain disabilities, standard high school certificates, special high school certificates, and adult education (GED) diplomas (Florida Department of Education [FLDOE], 2010). Florida reported that 167,644 students enrolled in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade for the 2008 school year. It is estimated that 72.8% ( $n = 122,044$ ) of these students graduated with standard high school diplomas. White students graduated at a rate of 81.4%, compared to 58.7% of Black students. Females graduated at a rate of 76.8%, compared to 68.7% of males. African Americans graduated at a rate of 58.7%, compared to White students at 81.4%.

The lower rates of graduation in Florida remain even when gaps are accounted for among several calculations and reporting sources as cited in Alliance for Excellent Education [AEE] (2009). The AEE (2009) cited three independent sources of Florida graduation in 2007 as 68% (State Reported No Child Left Behind), 64% (United States Department of Education) and 58% (Education Week). Moreover, schools that yielded the worst rates of high school completion in Florida, as found in other parts of the United

States, are usually in urban areas, experience higher rates of poverty, and enroll predominantly minority populations (Balfanz & Legters, 2004; FLDOE, 2010; NCES, 2010).

### **Barriers to African American Male Achievement**

In a longitudinal study of high school students in a metropolitan urban context, Roderick (2003) explores why African American males in urban settings tend to have more problems during their transition into high school. Roderick offers possible explanations that may account for the challenges that African American males experience as they enter urban high schools. She suggests that “differences in external supports and skills, disproportionate effects of school environments, and coping resources and strategies” contribute to the barriers of African American male achievement (p.543).

When compared to males of other ethnic groups, African American males that live in urban, high-poverty communities are more likely to enter high schools with the least prerequisite skills (Roderick, 2003). Also, this group of young males is least likely to have the external supports that are required for the increased demands of the new high school context. Roderick’s assertion is supported by national research that finds that African American males from impoverished communities are among the most underperforming groups academically as they enter high school (NASP, 2003; NCES, 2006).

### **Schooling Practices**

Aspects of the high school environment place African American males at a greater risk of academic failure. Common high school practices such as tracking (grouping students by ability without later assessment to advance academically), increased

reliance on punitive discipline, the increased use of suspensions and similar negative behavioral reinforcements disproportionately marginalize and alienate African American males in large, urban settings (Roderick, 2003; Rodney et al., 1999). African American males are among the highest number of students that are suspended and retained, in proportion to their total enrollment in schools (Jimerson et al, 2006; NASP, 2003; NCES, 2006). African American males are also the least likely, compared to other groups of ethnic males, to be enrolled or recommended for honors, Advanced Placement (AP) or rigorous course selections that would better prepare them for college (Ohrt, Lambie & Ileva, 2009). Furthermore, the challenges that African American males encounter in the new school setting is compounded by their concentrated enrollment in schools that may not have equal access to higher-quality curriculum (Balfanz & Legters, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Friedlaender, 2008; NCES, 2010).

An explanation is offered that relates to the effects of previous negative experiences with schools. The males that enter high school, already unprepared for the rigors and demands of the new environment, will tend to have poorer attendance patterns; change schools more frequently; experience more difficulty with reading; and are more likely to drop out of school (Jimerson, 2001; Jimerson et al., 2006; NASP, 2003). Given the prior negative experiences that have been documented and reported by African American males throughout their schooling, Roderick (2003) asserts that they may enter high school without the adequate coping resources that are required to persist in the face of increased challenges at the high school level.

### **Beliefs about Accountability**

Another barrier to minority male achievement may be the beliefs that are held by stakeholders about accountability for student outcomes and responsibility for the

persistence of the achievement gap among African American adolescents (Davis & Jordan, 1994; Lynn et al., 2010). Davis and Jordan (1994) found that high school teachers who reported lower levels of perceived accountability for student outcomes correlated significantly with lower student performance for Black males. Similarly, Lynn and his colleagues (2010) found that a majority of educators that were sampled at a predominantly African American, low-performing high school did not perceive themselves as responsible for the academic success of students. Rather, they blamed the minority achievement gap on students, families and their communities. In contrast, a small group of teachers at the same school who demonstrated more success with the male students assumed responsibility for student outcomes and attributed multiple factors to the achievement gap between males and females at the school.

The psychosocial characteristics of those who educate African American male students may have implications for the outcomes of this group of students (Davis & Jordan, 1994; Lynn et al., 2010). The findings of Davis and Jordan (1994) and Lynn et al. (2010) suggest that psychosocial factors such as beliefs, perceived accountability for outcomes, and expectations of success and failure are one of the keys to improving the outcomes of African American males in urban contexts. Their findings about the possible impact of perceived accountability for student outcomes support the need for more evidence-based research about how the beliefs and attitudes of educators impact the achievement gap.

### **Success Factors for Males at Urban Schools**

Research about the educational status and outlook of African American adolescent males often is presented in terms of their failure compared to other racial and gender groups. Understandably, the educational data is overwhelming relative to

the number of dismal reports about African American males' outcomes in public schools. The reliance of such data, albeit useful for developing interventions for reform and improvement, belies the resilience and efforts that the higher achieving subgroup of African American males make to persist in the face of exceptional odds against them within the public education system (Schott, 2010). In this subsection, research is reviewed that reaches beyond the common stories of failure about African American males and the stakeholders that serve them and highlights some correlates of academic success for such students.

Some of the individual correlates that influence the academic achievement of African American youth include attitude, student effort, behavior, association with peers (Nebbitt et al., 2009; Stewart, 2007), and future orientation (Adelabu, 2007). However, there is a high variance of individual characteristics that may account for achievement. Thus, there tends to be more consistent findings about the school-related factors that influence the educational outcomes of urban males (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010; Neild et al., 2001; Noguera, 2003; Reyes et al., 2001).

High performing-high poverty (HP2) schools are exemplars for their demonstrable success at the school level in educating culturally diverse students that come from impoverished backgrounds (The Center for Public Education [CPE], 2006; McGee, 2004). Having many of the "at-risk" indicators for failure, HP2 schools find ways to overcome the barriers to learning through the use of stakeholder resources and best practices (CPE, 2006; Kannapel & Clements, 2005). The telling outcomes of HP2 schools are not only that they meet their state's accountability standards, but also often

exceed their state's standards and that of their high-income counterparts to experience school-wide success.

A series of independent investigations of HP2 schools in several states yielded common practices and beliefs that may account for their success (CPE, 2006; Barth, et al, 1999; Kannapel & Clements, 2005). Some of the themes that emerged from the studies of HP2 schools have implications for this study. Theme analysis from the study of HP2 schools reveal that stakeholders tend to share the belief that all youth can learn; differentiated instruction and ongoing assessment took place within the school and classroom; a strong, consistent and collaborative leadership included teachers in the decision-making process; and intentional family involvement were instrumental to school-wide success (CPE, 2006; Ed Trust, 2009; Kannapel & Clements, 2005).

In *The New York City High Schools Contributing the Most to the Achievement of Black and Latino Males*, a technical report by Metropolitan Center for Urban Education [MCUE] (2009), researchers reported findings from a survey of 213 urban high schools to determine common characteristics of schools that were successful in graduating high numbers of Black and Latino males. The schools that demonstrated the most success had four characteristics in common, as measured by the number of Black and Latino males that graduated on time: a) high attendance rates, b) high ratings of school climate and academic expectations, c) low percentages of English language learning (ELL) students, and d) a large number of students that entered high school with proficiency in grade eight math (MCUE, 2009). Among the four factors that were common to the highest rated schools, two have implications for the current study: successful schools

had high attendance rates and higher reports of positive school climate and high academic expectations (MCUE, 2009).

Attendance and academic expectations were found to correlate to student's academic achievement. Schools that placed a heavy emphasis on academic achievement as part of their school climate tended to demonstrate higher student achievement (Hoy, Tarter & Bliss, 1990; Lee & Shute, 2010). Furthermore, schools may experience better rates of attendance if students were engaged and invested in their own learning (Stewart, 2007).

Although the findings of MCUE have implications for the schools and population in question, a major limitation relates to the type of schools that were examined. The characteristics that emerged for schools that were highly successful in graduating Black males were mostly of schools that implemented a screening or audition requirement for enrollment. Therefore, it is with caution that the findings are generalized to African American males that have minimal options for schooling outside of high-poverty schools without selective admissions policies.

In summary, it is critical that schools foster a sense of shared responsibility for learning for urban youth (Davis & Jordan, 1994). Other key correlates for urban youth include facilitating positive school climates and holding high expectations and beliefs in the educability of all students (MCUE, 2009; Stewart, 2007). Such schools attest to the power of stakeholders' beliefs and the concerted efforts that are necessary to ensure success for urban males.

### **Implications for Accessing Resources for College**

Barriers for low-income families that try to access resources for college include the limited resources that are available for college counseling at low-income urban high

schools (College Board, 2008a). Students that come from low-income families, with parents or caregivers who may not have completed high school or pursued college education, will not have the benefit of their parents' experience in navigating the college-going process. Therefore, students from such families rely heavily on schools to prepare for college (Wimberly & Noeth, 2004). However, it was found that when families from low-income communities attempted to prepare their children for college, they often were met with "structural and motivational barriers" when seeking even the most basic information about college from high school representatives (McDonough, 2004). In this sense, the public school system can be found inadequate in preparing low-income, first-generation students for college (Martinez & Klopott, 2003) even though the high school is a critical source of information for underserved students to access resources for college.

### **National Stakeholders**

Stakeholders that are situated at the national level have a distinct role in heralding the status of marginalized, urban youth. National stakeholders have been successful at using evidence-based data to raise awareness and advocate for the access to college resources by marginalized students in public education (ASCA, 2010; College Board, 2010; Ed Trust, 2009; No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002; Wimberly, 2002). Such professional organizations are discovering and supporting the ways in which education stakeholders position themselves to remove the barriers to high school success and college access for historically underrepresented students.

The enactment of NCLB (2002) marked the government's emphasis on greater accountability for student outcomes. The mandates of NCLB insisted that states assume greater accountability for the educational outcomes of students that historically

have been failed by the public school system (Darling-Hammond & Friedlaender, 2008; Herr & Erford, 2011; NCLB, 2002). Other national stakeholders have followed suit by investing more effort and resources to narrowing the achievement gaps in education and improving outcomes for underserved students at public schools (College Board, 2010; The Education Trust [Ed Trust], 2009; Wimberly, 2002).

The College Board, founded in 1900, began as a resource to help students with the transition to higher education. Although the mission remains the same, College Board has since been intentional about targeting the issues of college access and success for the most vulnerable and diverse student groups in the United States. In a recent effort to raise awareness of the educational challenges that minority males encounter, the College Board (2010), through their Advocacy and Policy Center, produced *The Educational Crisis Facing Young Men of Color*. The report is a result of expert feedback and recommendations that were offered by 60 “scholars, practitioners and activists” of color, throughout four days of seminars on the issues of educational disparities among females and males of color.

The report presented “shared concerns” from the participants about their experiences as males within the educational system, the data about educational attainment of males, and recommendations for moving forward based on best practices. In summary, the four recommendations for improving the educational status of minority males are (College Board, 2010):

- a need for federal and private collaboration to create a national policy to help improve the educational results of young minority males
- a need for increased funding and research support on issues impacting the education of minority males

- a need for more effective collaboration between K-12 through higher education to prepare minority males to access and succeed in college
- a need to replicate and fund exemplar programs that demonstrate success in educating young men of color.

The recommendations offered by the experts are reflective of the efforts already initiated by the government (NCLB, 2002), professional school counselors (ASCA, 2005), and invested advocates (College Board, 2010; Ed Trust, 2009) to raise awareness of the disparities in education and take action towards securing access to postsecondary education for all students.

### **School Counseling and College Access**

The American School Counselor Association represents professional school counselors as key stakeholders and critical educators within the school community (ASCA, 2005). Efforts to maintain accountability and quality in the practice of school counseling resulted in the development of ASCA National Standards (Herr & Erford, 2011) and ASCA National Model (2005). The ASCA National Standards differ from the National Model in that the standards delineate the outcomes of appropriately delivered school counseling programs (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005). The scope of ASCA National Model the means by which school counseling programs are delivered (individual counseling, small group and large group counseling, classroom guidance, consultation, coordination and administration of guidance services) (ASCA, 2005).

The ASCA National Model was developed upon the framework of advocacy, leadership, collaboration and systemic change. The model deals explicitly with the achievement gap and charges school counselors to be intentional in their efforts to narrow the gap for marginalized students. School counselors are strongly encouraged to use student data and evidence-based practices in order to meet the needs of

students in their academic, career, personal and social development (ASCA, 2005; Stone & Dahir, 2011). Hence, the ASCA National Model and National Standards are important frameworks for school counselors as they help youth from historically underserved groups prepare for postsecondary education.

Another strategy that has implications for improving the outcomes of college-bound, marginalized students is to improve the quality of the preparation of school counselors (Ed Trust, 2009). The Education Trust helped found the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (TSCI) in 1997 to prepare school counselor graduate students to “close achievement gaps of low-income students of color by improving counseling services in public schools” (Ed Trust, 2009). Later in 2003, The Education Trust established the National Center for Transforming School Counseling with a similar mission to empower school counselors to become and remain active agents of change within their schools on behalf of “students for whom schools have been the least successful” (Ed Trust, 2009). Thus, The Education Trust has been a forerunner in seeking ways to transform the school counseling profession through graduate student training. The Education Trust’s work has helped to train and raise awareness about the critical role of school counselors in narrowing the achievement gap and ensure student achievement for historically marginalized groups in public education.

### **Role of School Counselor**

Professional school counselors, like teachers, are accountable for the academic success of students (ASCA, 2005). National recognition and support for the role that school counseling has in narrowing the achievement gap is evidenced by federal funds that were appropriated for counseling-related services such as “dropout prevention, career counseling, drug and alcohol counseling” (Herr & Erford, 2011, p. 28; NCLB,

2002). Moreover, school counselors have access to evidence-based resources to assist them in making data-driven decisions to enhance student learning (ASCA, 2005; College Board, 2008b; Myrick, 2003; Stone & Dahir, 2011).

School counselors can foster the high academic expectations, school climate and caring relationships that are found to correlate to the achievement of students that are at greatest risk of dropping out of high school (Bemak & Chung, 2005; CPE, 2006; Lynn et al., 2010; MCUE, 2009). As part of the career development services provided in a structured counseling program (ASCA, 2005), high school counselors serve as one of the primary liaisons between student and access to college. Thus, the school counselor's role as a bridge for college access is critical for African American male students and their families as they try to access resources for college.

High school counselors help students navigate the college-going process by coordinating and organizing the college-related events that take place at the high school level. School counselors also administer and analyze the relevant assessments and inventories that help students explore their career and postsecondary options. The school counselor's influence on students' decision-making process may be especially critical for many first-generation students that rely on school personnel to inform them and their families on the options and resources that are available after high school (King, 1996; Wimberly & Noeth, 2004).

### **School Counselors in Urban Settings**

Urban schools, more than rural and suburban contexts, experience higher incidences of problems related to cultural diversity, social justice, equity, overcrowding classrooms, access to resources, drugs and violence, and poverty (Crowder & South, 2003). School counseling in the urban context requires a different approach due to

challenges that are distinct to inner-city schools (Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Lee, 2005). Thus, the roles of school counselors as leaders and advocates are crucial in the context of urban, high-poverty schools (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2005; Bemak & Chung, 2005; Ed Trust, 2009; Lee, 2005).

Urban school counselors serve at schools where there are often fewer counselors available than the recommended counselor-to-student ratio of 1:250 (ASCA, 2010). Some urban schools experience ratios as high as, or more than, 1:1,000 (College Board, 2008a). Urban, public school counselors spend about a quarter of their time in college counseling, compared to their private school counterparts who spend twice as much of their time in college counseling with their students (College Board, 2008a). The delivery of school counseling services that are responsive to the needs of high poverty urban students should confront such issues in their efforts to help decrease the educational disparities that are common in urban settings (Bemak & Chung, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Lee, 2001).

### **School Counseling and High School Graduation**

There are indications that effective school counseling practices may positively impact high school graduation, among other student outcomes (Lapan, Gysbers & Petroski, 2003; Militello, Carey, Dimmitt, Lee, V., & Schweid, 2009; Stone & Dahir, 2011; Whiston & Quinby, 2009). However, no empirical studies exist that link school counselor self-efficacy to high school graduation rates. One related study was found with a primary purpose to determine the impact of school counseling program implementation to high school graduation rates (Hoffman, 2008).

Hoffman (2008) investigated the relationship between school counseling program implementation and high school graduation rates. Hoffman distinguished the degree of

program implementation as either responsive services that met the “immediate social and emotional needs of students” or a “total degree” (p.68) of implementation that was more integrative of the full range of counselor services available. In other words, responsive services refer to providing school counseling interventions from a non-comprehensive program approach. Total degree refers to providing services as part of a comprehensive program. It was reported that high school graduation rates decreased with the implementation of responsive services only program, compared to a long-term comprehensive approach, at the junior and high school levels. This finding is supported by research that finds that responsive services have greater impact on student outcomes at the elementary school level than at the secondary level (Whiston & Quinby, 2009).

Hoffman’s (2008) findings suggest that there is a need for more holistic integration of comprehensive school guidance programs (ASCA, 2005) rather than the reactive model of counseling that is often reported. Depending on the quality of school counselors’ training in implementing school counseling programs (ASCA, 2005), they can be an invaluable resource within the school. School counselors that have adequate continuing education and quality training in the use of ASCA National Standards can be well prepared to collaborate with and educate students, parents, teachers, and administrators about how to foster the ideal school environment for success (Ed Trust, 2009).

### **Summary**

This review of literature presented the challenges that African American males encounter as they enter urban high schools and implicates the role that school counselors have in narrowing the achievement gap. African American males tend to

fare worse in the personal, economic and societal consequences if they do not complete high school successfully. Research supports that professional school counselors can be change agents within the school community (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007) because they are able to influence many of the school-related factors that positively affect student outcomes and, subsequently, the rate of high school graduation and college access for low-income students (ASCA, 2005; Myrick, 2003).

Although school counselors are expected to link the results of their work to student outcomes, no empirical studies were found that examined the role that school counselor self-efficacy has in student achievement. Hence, the purpose of this study is to determine if school counselor self-efficacy relate to student outcomes, specifically the rate of high school graduation of males in urban, high poverty high schools. Pioneering researchers of school counselor self-efficacy have relied on teacher self-efficacy literature to direct their inquiries about the possible relationships of school counselor self-efficacy to student outcomes (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005; McCoach & Colbert, 2010; Sutton & Fall, 1995). Given the well-documented challenges that are encountered at urban, underperforming high schools (Crowder & South, 2003; Darling & Friedlaender, 2008; NCES, 2010), self-efficacy is offered as a framework from which to discuss how school counselors function to overcome difficulties and accomplish their task-specific goals in such school settings.

Chapter Three delineates the methodological design and procedures that were used for the study. Details are provided about the setting, participants, access to the participants and schools, and the operational definition of variables for the research study. The reliability and validity will be described for the School Counselor Self-

Efficacy Scale. The chapter concludes with the procedures that were used for data collection and data analysis.

## CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

This study was about school counselors' perceived self-efficacy within the context of urban schools. Also explored in this study was the role of urban school counselors in the rates of high school completion for African American male students. The purpose of this study was to examine how school counselor self-efficacy relates to the rate of graduation for males at urban, underperforming, predominantly African American schools. This chapter details the methodology and statistical procedures used for the study.

### **Setting**

The setting for this study was seventeen underperforming, predominantly African American schools located in three urban districts in Florida: Jacksonville, Miami, and Orlando. Urban refers to the classification of large cities that have at least 1,000 people per square miles (US Census, 2000). The schools sampled for this study had a mean enrollment of 1,777, ranging from 953 to 2,823 students, for the last two reported years of 2009 and 2008 (FLDOE, 2010). Underperforming schools were limited to those receiving "D" or "F" grades, on state-mandated yearly progress indicators, for at least two consecutive years.

The schools were defined as predominantly African American if they enrolled a majority of African American population (denoted as "Black" by state reporting) when compared among the largest racial/ethnic groups reported for each school. In other words, African American students comprised the majority group of enrollment, even when they were less than 50% of the total population. For example, three of the schools had slightly less than 50% of African American students, but Hispanic and

White student percentages were less than African American enrollment. The African American enrollment of the sample schools ranged from 48% to 98.5%. The mean ratio of females to males was 1:1. The school membership for 2008 – 2009 and 2007 – 2008 are presented in Table 3-1 and Table 3-2, respectively.

### **Participants**

The population for this study was professional school counselors employed at the sample schools. There were  $n = 76$  school counselors eligible to participate in the study. The resultant sampling of school counselors was  $n = 64$  (84.21%) counselors, whose responses were analyzed for this study. The number of school counselors at each school ranged from two to seven. The mean number of school counselors per schools is four. The mean counselor to student ratio is 1:364 (see Table 3-3).

### **Access to Participants**

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the University of Florida's Institutional Review Board (UFIRB). Permission to gain access to the schools and conduct the research was obtained from the three districts' research governing departments. The participants were invited to participate in the study through email and phone calls. Informed consent was obtained in person, by the researcher, at each school's site. The efficacy questionnaires (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) were administered at the school sites by the researcher.

### **Operational Definition of Variables**

#### **School Counselor-Level Variables**

School Counselor Self-Efficacy Beliefs (SCE) (efficacy expectations) refer to the school counselor's assessment about their capabilities to achieve expected outcomes in their general practice (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005). Five domains of school counselor

self-efficacy beliefs are personal and social development, leadership and assessment, career and academic development, collaboration and consultation, and cultural acceptance. The School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale measured this variable.

Sense of Efficacy about Engaging African American Male Students (EAME) (outcome expectancy) was measured by the Efficacy in Student Engagement (ESE) subscale of Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The ESE subscale measured the school counselors' beliefs about the outcomes of their efforts to engage students. The ESE was adapted to determine school counselors' beliefs about engaging students in general and African American male students at their schools.

Gender is the participants' self-identification as female or male.

Years of Teaching refers to the time that participants practiced as professional classroom instructors, apart from professional school counseling. This variable was self-reported.

Years of Counseling refers to the time that participants practiced as professional school counselors. This variable was self-reported.

ASCA refers to if the respondents received training in implementing the ASCA National Standards. This variable was self-reported.

### **School-Level Variables**

Student enrollment for the 2008-2009 academic year is the total number of students that attended each school as reported to FLDOE.

Black (African American) student enrollment is the percentage of Black students that attended each school as reported to FLDOE.

Percentage of students on free-reduced lunch program (FRLP) refers to the students who participated in the federal free and reduced lunch program (FRLP) due to their household status of “economically disadvantaged”. The FRLP indicator was significant to this study as it relates to a significant population of low-income students that are enrolled in the sampled schools. The national average of students that are eligible for FRLP at public schools is estimated at 40.37% ( $n = 19,900,000$ ) compared to Florida’s average of 45.58% ( $n = 1,200,000$ ) (FLDOE, 2010). The FRLP is included in the schools’ profiles (see Tables 3-1 and 3-2).

Graduation Rates refers to the percentage of male students at each school that earned a standard diploma or GED within four years of entry into ninth grade. Due to the discrepancies of national and state reports of graduation rates (AEE, 2009; FLDOE, 2010; Heckman & LaFontaine, 2010; NCES, 2010), this study used the graduation rates from the NCLB-SPARS (FLDOE, 2009). The graduation rates that were calculated for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) included students who received standard high school diplomas and State of Florida diploma through a GED program within four years of entry into ninth grade (FLDOE, 2010). See Tables 3-4 and 3-5.

Participation in university partnership refers to those schools that are affiliated with a special program, University of Florida (UF) Alliance. The UF Alliance is a university-school partnership that aims to increase the number of students from underrepresented backgrounds that access higher education. The program partners with high schools in three major urban districts in Florida in initiatives such as grade nine transition into high school, parental engagement, student leadership development, mentoring, and professional development for teachers and administrators. Also, students from the

partnering high schools that are admitted to the University of Florida are eligible for a limited number of scholarships that support first generation students to college.

### **Instrumentation**

The instrumentation for this study was two surveys and demographic data sheet. The surveys were the School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (SCSE) (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005), the Efficacy in Student Engagement (ESE) subscale of the Teachers' Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale (TES) (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001), an adapted version of the ESE for African American male students (EAME), and the researcher developed demographic data sheet (Appendix B). The latest versions of the SCSE and ESE were obtained from the instruments' authors for this study (see Appendix A).

The SCSE was developed and validated as a "unidimensional measure of school counselor self-efficacy to perform various school counseling tasks" (Bodenhorn et al., 2010). The 43 Likert-type items of the SCSE were created using the ASCA National Standards for practice. In three studies, Bodenhorn and her colleagues reported reliability coefficients of .95, .96, and .97 for the scale scores, respectively (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005; Bodenhorn et al., 2010).

The five domains of the SCSE, which relate to school counselors' work and training, are *Personal and Social Development*, *Leadership and Assessment*, *Career and Academic Development*, *Collaboration*, and *Cultural Acceptance* (ASCA, 2005). The subscales had demonstrated reliabilities of .91 (personal and social development), .90 (leadership and assessment), .85 (career and academic development), .87 (collaboration and consultation), and .72 (cultural acceptance) (2005).

The SCSE was measured for construct validity and compared to general counseling self-efficacy (Counseling Self-Estimate Inventory), social desirability (The Social Desirability Scale), anxiety (State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, and general self-confidence (The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale) (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005). The SCSE correlated strongest to the counseling self-efficacy construct at .41, and less significantly to social desirability, anxiety, and general self-confidence with coefficient alphas of .30, -.42, -.32, .16, respectively. Respondents were prompted to indicate their confidence in their ability to perform such tasks as “Establish rapport with a student for individual counseling”, “Implement a program which enables all students to make informed career decisions”, “Speak in front of large groups such as faculty or parent meetings”, and “Consult with external community agencies which provide support services for our students”.

The TES was designed to assess teachers’ beliefs about their personal competence and analysis of tasks related to the teaching contexts (Tschanen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The ESE subscale measures to what degree do educators believe they can engage students while considering their abilities, resources and opportunity to engage students within their current work environment. Sample items include “How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?” and “How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?”

In order to measure the counselors’ sense of efficacy to engage African American male students, the ESE was adapted to become Efficacy to Engage African American Male Students (EAME). For each of the items, the terms “students” or “children” were

replaced with “African American males”. Sample items for the EAME include “How much can you do to motivate African American males who show low interest in school work?” and “How much can you assist families in helping their African American males do well in school?”

The demographic data sheet is a 4-item questionnaire. Participants were asked to provide their (a) gender, (b) number of years of teaching experience, (c) number of years of school counseling practice, and (d) if they received training in implementing the ASCA National Standards. The demographic data sheet follows the SCSE, ESE, and EAME items

### **Data Collection**

Data for the schools’ profiles and graduation rates were retrieved from existing archives from the School Grades and *NCLB School Public Accountability Reports* (SPARS) on the FLDOE website (see Tables 3-4 and 3-5). Based on the criteria for classifying schools as urban, underperforming, and predominantly African American, 18 schools from four urban districts were eligible to participate in this study. However, one school was excluded because it was the only school in its district to meet the criteria and therefore had a greater chance of being identified in this study. It was deemed ethical to exclude the district and school from this study due to concerns about anonymity and confidentiality of potential participants (Creswell, 2008).

The schools within the three remaining districts met the criteria and were invited to participate in the study. In order to protect the privacy of the participants in this study, each school was randomly assigned an alphanumeric identifier (e.g. S1, S2, S3, etc...). The alphanumeric identifier allowed the researcher to conduct the statistical analyses without disclosing the identity of any school.

## **Data Analysis**

Data was analyzed at two levels within the school system: school counselor level (efficacy and demographic data) and school level (profile data and graduation rates) (see Table 3-6). Given the nested structure of school counselors within the school system, hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) was conducted to examine the research questions as it takes into account the variance that is contributed from different levels of data within organizational structures (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). Counselor characteristics are considered level 1 data and school characteristics are level 2 data.

A descriptive analysis was conducted, using SAS programming, to report the mean differences of self-efficacy by counselor-level and school-level characteristics, respectively. A hierarchical linear regression model (HLM) was developed to analyze the associations between counselors' self-efficacy (about their work and engaging African American males) and both levels of data (counselor and school). A t-test was run to compare the mean differences of graduation rates for males between partner and non-partner high schools within the study.

Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) is an approach that is becoming increasingly popular in education research, as most data collected within education belong to some hierarchical structure (Lapan, Gysbers & Sun, 1997; Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002; Singer, 1998). Hierarchical linear modeling accounts for the outcomes of groups as a function of both group and individual characteristics (Arnold, 1992). Traditional linear model analyses do not take into account the variance from multilevel data that occurs in naturally hierarchical systems (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). In contrast to such single-level models as Pearson and Spearman correlations, HLM provides more rigorous examination of individual effects as they operate within larger social structures

(Paterson & Goldstein, 1991). The use of traditional single-level models for truly hierarchical data may result in conceptual and technical dilemmas such as:

- a demonstration of unreliability in statistical estimates,
- diminished ability to detect effects at the various levels within an organization, and
- incorrect standard errors due to the clustering of levels (p.391).

Thus, HLM is more appropriate for nested research designs than simple linear regression models and correlations (Sampson, Raudenbush & Earls, 1997).

Hierarchical linear modeling is often used with large sample sizes. It is suggested that studies have at least 25 higher-level units and 100 participants for more accurate estimates (Paterson & Goldstein, 1991, p.391). The researcher ran an unconditional model, one-way ANOVA with random effects to determine what proportion of total variance was due to between school variance. Despite the resultant sample being smaller than is recommended for HLM, enough total variance between schools existed to warrant the use of HLM for this study (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002).

Using the reported variance parameter estimates, an intraclass correlation coefficient was calculated to determine what proportion of total variance, or cluster effect, was due to between school variance in order to proceed with HLM analyses for this sample size (Singer, 1998). The intraclass correlation coefficients for SCE and EAME scores were calculated using the formula,

$$\rho = \tau_{oo}/(\tau_{oo} + \sigma^2),$$

where  $\tau_{oo}$  is the between-school variance and  $\sigma^2$  is the within-school variance.

A general guideline for intraclass correlation for K-12 research is a range of .05 to .15, with the average for low socioeconomic status schools being .19 (Hedges & Hedberg, 2007). Thus, the resultant intraclass correlation for SCE and EAME are higher than the

acceptable range. The intraclass correlation for SCE was .299, indicating that 29.9% of the total variance was due to between school variance in SCE scores. Similarly, 18.6% of the total variance was due to between school variance in EAME scores (see Table 3-7).

### **Summary**

This chapter included a description of the setting, participants, how access to participants was obtained, operational definitions of the variables, and instrumentation. Also included were the details of data collection and how the data was analyzed. Chapter Four will include the results of the data analyses.

Table 3-1. 2008 – 2009 School membership by category

School	Grade	Enrollment	% Female	% Male	% White	% Black	% FRLP
S1	F	1341	57.9	42.1	5.2	91.2	57.9
S2	F	1217	47.5	52.5	1.4	53.6	79.3
S3	D	2007	48.1	51.9	36.9	49.7	39.0
S4	D	2057	48.8	51.2	3.0	85.0	52.0
S5	F	2217	47.0	53.0	40.2	51.8	28.9
S6	F	1131	49.8	50.2	4.7	92.9	53.8
S7	D	1036	55.3	44.7	0.9	95.5	64.7
S8	D	2090	53.4	46.6	0.4	88.0	67.5
S9	D	1788	45.6	54.4	0.6	81.0	64.8
S10	F	1042	45.4	54.6	0.2	90.7	73.5
S11	D	1725	49.8	50.2	0.6	94.4	59.3
S12	F	2096	55.3	44.7	0.1	94.0	73.4
S13	D	1593	48.0	52.0	28.8	54.4	46.2
S14	D	2677	47.6	52.4	1.6	81.9	50.2
S15	D	2171	48.4	51.6	10.4	48.3	56.7
S16	D	1769	46.9	53.1	35.2	50.7	37.4
S17	F	1077	52.2	47.8	0.6	98.5	61.5

Source: *Florida School Indicators Report* by Florida Department of Education, 2009. Retrieved October 26, 2010, from <http://www.fl doe.org/eias/eiaspubs/0809fsir.asp>

Table 3-2. 2007 – 2008 School membership by category

School	Grade	Enrollment	% Female	% Male	% White	% Black	% FRLP
S1	F	1611	57.7	42.3	7.3	88.9	46.9
S2	D	1349	48.0	52.0	1.2	54.2	74.7
S3	F	2190	50.9	49.1	38.9	49.3	30.9
S4	D	1983	49.3	50.7	3.3	84.0	55.0
S5	D	2401	48.4	51.6	42.7	50.4	23.2
S6	D	953	51.1	48.9	4.8	93.3	44.0
S7	D	1065	54.9	45.1	0.8	96.1	56.9
S8	F	2469	53.1	46.9	0.6	88.3	59.5
S9	F	2086	46.1	53.9	0.6	80.7	71.6
S10	F	1150	47.7	52.3	0.2	89.4	68.7
S11	F	1852	50.6	49.4	0.6	94.2	59.2
S12	D	2442	54.9	45.1	0.1	93.7	60.6
S13	F	1870	48.1	51.9	30.5	53.7	35.0
S14	F	2823	46.2	53.8	1.3	81.4	44.4
S15	D	2074	48.1	51.9	10.2	49.6	31.5
S16	D	1848	47.8	52.2	38.5	49.6	31.5
S17	F	1249	52.9	47.1	0.6	98.3	48.7

Source: *Florida School Indicators Report* by Florida Department of Education, 2009. Retrieved October 26, 2010, from <http://www.fl doe.org/eias/eiaspubs/0708fsir.asp>

Table 3-3. School Counselor to Student Ratios

School	Counselors	Students	Counselor : Student
S1	3	1160	1 : 387
S2	2	1054	1 : 527
S3	4	1850	1 : 463
S4	6	1957	1 : 326
S5	5	2034	1 : 407
S6	4	1003	1 : 251
S7	3	1090	1 : 363
S8	5	1844	1 : 369
S9	4	1660	1 : 415
S10	5	918	1 : 184
S11	5	1582	1 : 316
S12	6	1792	1 : 299
S13	4	1684	1 : 421
S14	7	2766	1 : 395
S15	5	1955	1 : 391
S16	4	1698	1 : 425
S17	4	994	1 : 249
Total	76	27041	
			Mean ratio 1 : 364

Table 3-4. 2008 – 2009 Graduation rates

School	All Students	White	Black	Low Income	Female	Male
S1	59.7	65.4	58.4	59.2	69.3	45.8
S2	52.3	nr	56.4	54.9	56.7	48.1
S3	53.3	53.2	50.7	44.4	61.1	45.6
S4	72.3	84.6	72.3	72.5	74.2	70.2
S5	74.5	69.2	78.9	64	76.5	72.6
S6	56.6	30	57.7	56.3	61.6	50.9
S7	72	25	72.9	67.2	76.6	66
S8	58.6	20	60.1	58.5	63.7	52.1
S9	61.2	75	65.8	61.5	63.5	59
S10	48.4	50	52.9	51.8	52.9	44.9
S11	58.3	nr	58.6	61.3	60.1	56.5
S12	65.5	nr	66.6	64.2	71.9	56.1
S13	58.2	57.9	57.5	53.4	65.8	50.5
S14	62.1	54.5	62.5	64.6	60.3	63.7
S15	69.1	75.8	68.5	67.5	69.6	68.5
S16	69.5	75.3	67.2	61	77.2	61.8
S17	54.9	nr	55.1	52.7	58.4	51.4
Florida	76.2	83.8	63.3	65.1	80	72.3

Source: *School District and State Public Accountability Report*, by Florida Department of Education, 2010.

Retrieved October 26, 2010, from <http://doeweb-prd.doe.state.fl.us/eds/nclbspar/year0910/main0910.cfm>

Note: "nr" denotes that data was not reported to FLDOE

Table 3-5. 2007 – 2008 Graduation rates

School	All Students	White	Black	Low Income	Female	Male
S1	56.2	71.9	54.2	47.4	60.2	49.5
S2	48.4	nr	50.3	49.5	49.7	46.3
S3	58.1	60.9	54.8	42.5	63.5	50.7
S4	62.7	52.9	62.7	61.3	65.6	59.5
S5	70.1	67.7	72.1	56.7	74.4	64.4
S6	51.1	88.9	48.4	48.3	57.5	45.7
S7	61.1	100	59.9	65.9	69.6	48.8
S8	54	nr	56.4	51.7	57.4	49.5
S9	54.1	nr	56.2	53.8	57	51
S10	38.4	nr	38.9	41.2	39.2	36.5
S11	61.1	nr	61.6	58.8	65.6	56.2
S12	59.6	nr	61.2	58.8	63.9	54.2
S13	58.8	64.5	56.7	53.7	66.1	51.5
S14	50.8	26.3	49.8	50	54.7	47
S15	61.7	81.5	56.7	59	60.1	63.2
S16	63.3	70.3	58	56.5	65.2	61.7
S17	56.3	33.3	56.4	51.9	62.5	49.6
Florida	72.8	81.4	58.7	61.1	76.8	68.7

Source: *School District and State Public Accountability Report*, by Florida Department of Education, 2010.  
 Retrieved October 26, 2010, from <http://doeweb-prd.doe.state.fl.us/eds/nclbspar/year0809/main0809.cfm>  
 Note: "nr" denotes that data was not reported to FLDOE

Table 3-6. Counselor and School Level Data

Counselor and School Level Data	
Counselor Level	Description
SCE	School counselor self-efficacy beliefs
EAME	Efficacy to engage African American male students
Gender	Participant gender (1 = female, 2 = male)
Years teaching	Number of years employed as instructional teacher
Years counseling	Number of years employed as professional school counselors
ASCA	Received training in the implementation of ASCA National Standards (1 = yes, 2 = no)
School Level	
09 Total enrollment	Number of students enrolled at each school
Black enrollment	Percentage of African American/Black student enrolled at each school
09 Graduation rate	Percentage of male students that graduated in four years for 2008-2009 at each school
FRLP	Percentage of students at each school that enroll and participate in the free-reduced lunch program
Partner	Status of school's affiliation with university-school partnership program (0 = no, 1 = yes)

Table 3-7. Results from One-Way Random Effects Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Model

		Intraclass		
		Estimate	SE	P-value
	Average EAME score ( $\gamma_{00}$ )	184.44	3.4423	<.0001
Total SCE	School-level variance ( $\tau_{00}$ )	120.44	70.0401	0.0428
Score	Counselor-level variance ( $\sigma^2$ )	282.80	57.6365	<.0001
	Average EAME score ( $\gamma_{00}$ )	27.1646	0.9111	<.0001
Total EAME	School-level variance ( $\tau_{00}$ )	6.3383	4.6885	0.0882
Score	Counselor-level variance ( $\sigma^2$ )	27.6917	5.5553	<.0001

## CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to investigate how school counselor self-efficacy is associated with the rate of high school completion for males at urban, predominantly African American, underperforming schools. Participants from sampled schools completed a survey instrument that measured their self-efficacy about work (SCE), their efficacy about engaging African American male students (EAME), and demographic information. Seventeen sampled schools in three urban areas in Florida were invited to participate in the study. Of the total number of counselors eligible to participate,  $n = 64$  completed and returned the survey. The resulting response rate of 84% is higher than the acceptable rate of 50%, or better, for rigorous, peer-reviewed research (Creswell, 2008). Given that school counselors operate within a naturally hierarchical structure (school system) and school level data was used for this study (school graduation rate), hierarchical linear regression analysis (HLM) was conducted to examine the relevant research questions. This chapter includes the data analyses and results.

### **Reliability**

The School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005) is a 43-item, Likert type measure of school counselor self-efficacy about general school counseling practice. The items on the SCE prompt participants to rate their confidence to perform specific tasks on a scale of 1 (not confident) to 5 (highly confident). The Cronbach's alpha for the SCE was computed at .960, demonstrating sufficient reliability.

The EAME is a 4-item, adapted, Likert-type measure of counselors' efficacy to engage African American male students at their schools (Tschanen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001). The items prompted the counselors to indicate their opinions about

engaging African American male students on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 9 (a great deal).

The Cronbach's alpha for the EAME was computed at .960, indicating adequate reliability.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

#### **Counselor-Level Descriptive Information**

The participants completed a questionnaire that allowed them to provide their gender, number of years of teaching, number of years of counseling, and if they had ever received training on the implementation of the ASCA National Standards. Of the 64 respondents, 80% ( $n = 51$ ) were females and 20% ( $n = 13$ ) were males. The average years of teaching was 6.40 years ( $SD = 8.01$ ), with a range of no teaching experience to 30 years of work as a teacher. One participant did not provide the number of years of teaching. The average years of counseling was 10.29 years ( $SD = 7.51$ ), with some counselors being in their first year of practice (0 years) to veteran counselors of 35 years. One respondent did not provide the number of years of counseling. Forty-four (70%) participants reported that they received training in the implementation of ASCA National Standards and 19 participants (30%) reported that they had never received training on the ASCA standards. One participant did not provide a response to the ASCA item (see Table 4-1).

The average SCE score was 183.28 ( $SD = 20.10$ ), with a range of 111 to 212. The higher SCE scores indicate greater self-efficacy about performing school counseling-related tasks. The average EAME score was 27.06 ( $SD = 5.85$ ), with a range of 12 to 36. The higher EAME scores indicate a greater sense of efficacy in engaging African American males at their schools (see Table 4-2).

## **School-Level Descriptive Information**

The average number of students enrolled at the sampled schools for the 2008 – 2009 year was 1707.88 ( $SD = 480.84$ ), with a range of 1036 to 2677. Overall, the schools have an enrollment that is comprised of about 50% male students. The average enrollment of White students is 10.20% ( $SD = 14.47$ ) and the Black student enrollment is an average of 76.31% ( $SD = 18.90$ ). The average percentage of students that are eligible for FRLP is 57.16% ( $SD = 13.73$ ). The mean graduation rate for males at the schools is 58.68 ( $SD = 8.85$ ) (see Table 4-3). The average counselor to student ratio is 1:364, which is higher than the 1:250 recommended ratio (ASCA, 2010). See Table 4-3.

Five of the sampled schools (29%) participate in the University of Florida Alliance partnership program. The purpose of the partnership to increase the number of students from underrepresented backgrounds that access higher education. The program partners with high schools in three urban districts in Florida in initiatives such as grade nine transition into high school, parental engagement, student leadership development, mentoring, and professional development for teachers and administrators. Also, students from the partnering high schools that are admitted to the University of Florida are eligible for a limited number of scholarships that support first generation students to college.

## **Data Analyses**

Two HLM models for SCE and EAME scores were developed, using SAS PROC MIXED programming, to examine the research questions (see Table 4-4). Technically, three steps are integral to using PROC MIXED in order to fit HLM models with two-level data (Singer, 1998). The first step is to fit an unconditional means model, or what is

considered a one-way random effects ANOVA model, across the schools. The next step is to examine the effects of level 1 outcomes (EAME and SCE scores) as a function of both counselor (level 1) and school (level 2) predictors. The third step is to combine the two types of predictors that resulted from steps one and two into a final multilevel model.

The resultant unconditional means models for SCE and EAME scores are as follows:

$$SCE_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + u_{0j} + r_{ij}$$

$$EAME_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + u_{0j} + r_{ij},$$

where

$\gamma_{00}$  = school means

$u_{0j}$  = variation intercepts between schools, and

$r_{ij}$ , = variation within the school.

The resultant final HLM models for SCE and EAME, incorporating the unconditional models, are as follows:

$$SCE_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(\text{Years of teaching}) + \gamma_{02}(\text{Years of counseling}) + \gamma_{03}(\text{Gender}) + \gamma_{04}(\text{ASCA}) + \gamma_{05}(\text{Total students enrolled}) + \gamma_{06}(\% \text{ of Black students enrolled}) + \gamma_{07}(\text{FRLP}) + \gamma_{08}(2009 \text{ graduation rate for males}) + \gamma_{09}(\text{ASCA} \times \text{Years of counseling}) + u_{0j} + r_{ij}$$

and

$$EAME_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(\text{Years of teaching}) + \gamma_{02}(\text{Years of counseling}) + \gamma_{03}(\text{Gender}) + \gamma_{04}(\text{ASCA}) + \gamma_{05}(\text{Total students enrolled}) + \gamma_{06}(\% \text{ of Black students enrolled}) + \gamma_{07}(\text{FRLP}) + \gamma_{08}(2009 \text{ graduation rate for males}) + \gamma_{09}(\text{ASCA} \times \text{Years of counseling}) + u_{0j} + r_{ij},$$

Thus, school counselors' self-efficacy about their work and about engaging African American male students are analyzed as a function of both counselor-level and school-level predictors.

### **Hypothesis One**

The first sub-hypothesis tested was:

Ho1a: There is no association between school counselors' self-efficacy beliefs about work and the counselor-level characteristics of gender, number of years of teaching, number of years of counseling, and training in ASCA National Standards.

Results from HLM analysis showed that, at the alpha level  $p = 0.05$ , there were no statistically significant associations between school counselors' self-efficacy beliefs about work and any of the tested counselor-level characteristics (see Table 4-4). Based on the reported values, number of years of teaching ( $t = -0.49, p = 0.63$ ), number of years of counseling ( $t = -0.19, p = 0.85$ ), gender ( $t = -1.14, p = 0.29$ ), and training in the implementation of ASCA National Standards ( $t = 0.72, p = 0.49$ ) have no statistically significant association with school counselors' self-efficacy beliefs about work. Thus, the first null sub-hypothesis one was not rejected.

The second part of hypothesis one was:

Ho1b: There is no association between school counselors' self-efficacy beliefs about work and the school-level characteristics of 2009 total student enrollment, Black student enrollment, enrollment of students in the free-reduced lunch program, and the 2009 graduation rates for males.

At the alpha level  $p = 0.05$ , results indicated that there were no statistically significant associations between school counselor self-efficacy beliefs about work and

the total number of students enrolled ( $t = -0.54, p = 0.60$ ), percentage of Black students enrolled ( $t = -0.12, p = 0.91$ ), percentage of students enrolled in the free-reduced lunch program ( $t = 1.70, p = 0.11$ ), and the 2009 graduation rates for males ( $t = -0.26, p = 0.80$ ). The null hypothesis that there is no association between school counselors' self-efficacy beliefs about work and the school-level characteristics was not rejected. See Table 4 – 4.

## **Hypothesis Two**

The first part of hypothesis two was:

Ho2a: There is no association between school counselors' sense of efficacy to engage African American male students and the counselor-level characteristics of gender, number of years of teaching, number of years of counseling, and training in ASCA National Standards.

Results from the analysis showed that, at the alpha level  $p = 0.05$ , the number of years that a school counselor spent working as a counselor was significantly associated with their sense of efficacy to engage African American male students ( $t = -3.32, p = 0.002$ ). Gender, specifically being a male counselor, was significantly associated with the sense of efficacy to engage African American male students ( $t = -3.63, p = 0.0067$ ). Also, a significant interaction was found between the number of years of counseling and having received training in the implementation of ASCA National Standards ( $t = 3.07, p = 0.0039$ ). The main effects of years of teaching ( $t = -0.98, p = 0.33$ ) and ASCA training ( $t = -0.13, p = 0.90$ ) were not significantly associated with counselors' sense of efficacy to engage African American male students. Given that three of the five counselor-level characteristics were significant, the null sub-hypothesis was rejected. See Table 4-5

The second part of hypothesis two was:

Ho2b: There is no association between school counselors' sense of efficacy to engage African American male students and the school-level characteristics of 2009 total student enrollment, Black student enrollment, enrollment of students in the free-reduced lunch program, and the 2009 graduation rates for males.

At the alpha level  $p = 0.50$ , there were no statistically significant associations between counselors' sense of efficacy to engage African American male students and the total number of students enrolled ( $t = -0.60, p = 0.56$ ), percentage of Black students enrolled ( $t = -0.30, p = 0.77$ ), percentage of students enrolled in the free-reduced lunch program ( $t = 0.17, p = 0.87$ ), and the 2009 graduation rates for males ( $t = -0.83, p = 0.42$ ). The null sub-hypothesis was not rejected. See Table 4 – 5.

### **Hypothesis Three**

The third hypothesis tested was:

Ho3: There is no relationship between school counselor self-efficacy beliefs about work and the 2009 graduation rates for males.

At the alpha level  $p = 0.50$ , the standard error of 0.53 yielded an observed t-statistics of -0.26 ( $p = 0.80$ ). This result indicates that the null hypothesis was not rejected as there was no significant relationship between counselors' self-efficacy about their general practice and the rate of high school completion for males (see Table 4 - 4).

### **Hypothesis Four**

The fourth hypothesis tested was:

Ho4: There is no relationship between school counselors' sense of efficacy to engage African American male students and the 2009 graduation rates for males.

Results from the analysis showed that, at the alpha level  $p = 0.05$ , a standard error of 0.11 yielded an observed t-statistics of -0.83 ( $p = 0.42$ ), which indicates that there is

no statistically significant relationship between counselors' sense of efficacy to engage African American male students and the rate of high school completion for males (see Table 4-5). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

### **Hypothesis Five**

The fifth hypothesis tested the relationships between school counselor self-efficacy (about work and engaging African American male students) and the graduation rates for males and partnership affiliation. Simple statistics were run to compare the mean differences of partner and non-partner schools in their rates of graduation for males in 2009. The resultant statistics are displayed in Table 4 – 6. For the mean differences, the pooled 95% interval was reported. Although schools affiliated with the university partnership had a slightly higher rate of graduation for males at 58.12% ( $SD = 9.24$ ), compared to non-partner school rates of 56.1% ( $SD = 9.34$ ), the group t-test indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups ( $t = -0.41, p = 0.69$ ) (see Table 4 – 7).

The first part of hypothesis five was:

$H_05a$ : There is no relationship between school counselor self-efficacy beliefs about work and 2009 graduation rates for males and partnership affiliation.

The resultant HLM analysis showing the fixed effects of school counselor self-efficacy about work by graduation rates and partnership affiliation is displayed in Table 4 - 8. At the alpha level  $p = .05$ , there were no statistically significant relationship between school counselor self-efficacy and 2009 graduation rates for male ( $t = -2.01, p = 0.06$ ) and partnership affiliation ( $t = 0.64, p = 0.53$ ). Thus, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

The second part of hypothesis five was:

Ho5b: There is no relationship between school counselors' sense of efficacy to engage African American male students and 2009 graduation rates for males and partnership affiliation.

The resultant HLM analysis showing the fixed effects of counselors' sense of efficacy to engage African American male students by graduation rates and partnership affiliation is displayed in Table 4 - 9. At the alpha level  $p = .05$ , there were no statistically significant relationship between counselors' sense of efficacy to engage African American male students and 2009 graduation rates for male ( $t = -1.05$ ,  $p = 0.31$ ) and partnership affiliation ( $t = 0.72$ ,  $p = 0.48$ ). The null hypothesis was not rejected because statistically significant relationships did not exist.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, the results of descriptive and HLM analyses were presented for data at the counselor and school levels. The analyses were conducted to take into account the variance that each level of data contributes to the full regression model. Thus, more conservative estimates of effects resulted than would be found in single level analyses (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002).

There were no significant associations found between school counselor self-efficacy (about work and about engaging African American male students) and the rate of high school graduation for males at urban, predominantly African American, underperforming schools in 2009. However, having a higher sense of efficacy to engage African American male students was associated with having more years of counseling experience and being a male counselor. Having more years of counseling experience and receiving training in the implementation of ASCA National Standards were significantly associated with higher sense of efficacy to engage African American

male students. Also, no significant relationship was among school counselors' self-efficacy (about work and engaging African American male students) and their affiliation with a university partnership program that targets first generation students.

Table 4-1. Counselor demographic information

Variable	n (%)	Mean (SD)	Range
Gender			
Female	51 (80)		
Male	13 (20)		
Years as teacher*		6.40 (8.01)	0 - 30
Years as counselor*		10.29 (7.51)	0 - 35
ASCA training*			
Yes	44 (70)		
No	19 (30)		

\*missing data for 1 participant

Table 4-2. School Counselor Self-Efficacy (SCE) and Efficacy to Engage African American Male Students (EAME) descriptive statistics

Variable	n (%)	Mean (SD)	Range
SCE	64 (100)	183.28 (20.10)	111 - 212
EAME	64 (100)	27.06 (5.85)	12 - 36

Table 4-3. School-level descriptive statistics

Variable	Mean (SD)	Range
2008-2009 student enrollment	1812.67 (480.84)	1036 – 2677
% Black student enrollment	76.31 (18.90)	48.3 – 98.5
% Free-reduced lunch program	57.16 (13.73)	28.9 – 85.0
Graduation rate for males	58.68 (8.85)	44.9 – 72.6
Counselor to student ratio	1 : 364 (1 : 71)	1 : 184 – 1 : 527

Table 4-4. Results of fixed effects for SCE in Hierarchical Linear Model (HLM)

Effect	Estimate	SE	DF	t Value	Pr >  t
Intercept	186.78	7.80	12	23.93	<.0001
Years teaching	-0.179	0.369	39	-0.49	0.6303
Years counseling	-0.1546	0.8127	39	-0.19	0.8502
Gender	-7.2649	6.3751	8	-1.14	0.2874
ASCA	4.3564	6.0469	8	0.72	0.4918
Years counseling*ASCA	0.9079	0.9053	39	1	0.3221
2009 Total Enrolled	-0.0048	0.008965	12	-0.54	0.6002
2009 Black Enrolled	-0.0241	0.1996	12	-0.12	0.9059
2009 Male Graduation Rate	-0.1414	0.5343	12	-0.26	0.7958
2009 FRLP	0.5329	0.3131	12	1.7	0.1145

Note: \* Significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$  level

Table 4-5. Results of fixed effects for EAME in HLM

Effect	Estimate	SE	DF	t Value	Pr >  t
Intercept	32.0434	1.9821	12	16.17	<.0001
Years teaching	-0.09834	0.1003	39	-0.98	0.333
Years counseling	-0.7174	0.2163	39	-3.32	0.002*
Gender	-6.115	1.6866	8	-3.63	0.0067*
ASCA	-0.1972	1.5719	8	-0.13	0.9033
Years counseling*ASCA	0.7323	0.2389	39	3.07	0.0039*
2009 Total Enrolled	-0.0012	0.002	12	-0.6	0.5579
2009 Black Enrolled	-0.01309	0.0440	12	-0.3	0.7713
2009 Male Graduation Rate	-0.09546	0.1146	12	-0.83	0.421
2009 FRLP	0.01181	0.0682	12	0.17	0.8654

Note: \* Significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$  level

Table 4-6. Simple statistics for 2009 male graduation rates by partnership affiliation

Partner Status	Method	Mean	95% CL Mean	SD	95% CL Std Dev
No		56.1	50.163	62.037	9.344
Yes		58.12	46.646	69.594	9.241
Diff (1-2)	Pooled	-2.02	-13.496	9.456	

Note: Pooled 95% interval assumes equal variances between partner and non-partnership school.

Table 4-7. Group t test for 2009 male graduation rates by partnership affiliation

Method	Variances	DF	t Value	Pr >  t
Pooled	Equal	15	-0.41	0.6895

Table 4-8. Results of fixed effects for SCE by graduation rates and partnership affiliation in HLM

Effect	Estimate	SE	DF	t Value	Pr >  t
Intercept	180.89	5.75	14	31.45	<.0001
2009 Male graduation rate	-0.73	0.37	14	-2.01	0.06
Partnership affiliation	4.47	6.94	14	0.64	0.53

Table 4-9. Results of fixed effects for EAME by graduation rates and partnership affiliation in HLM

Effect	Estimate	SE	DF	t Value	Pr >  t
Intercept	26.10	1.62	14	16.13	<.0001
2009 Male graduation rate	-0.11	0.10	14	-1.05	0.31
Partnership affiliation	1.42	1.96	14	0.72	0.48

## CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between school counselor self-efficacy and high school completion for males at urban, predominantly African American, underperforming schools. School counselor self-efficacy was conceptualized as both the efficacy to perform school counseling-related tasks (efficacy expectations) and the efficacy to engage African American male students (outcome expectancy) at their schools. Included in this chapter are the discussion of the findings, limitations, implications, and recommendations for future research.

A survey design was used for this study. Participants' were administered the School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (SCE) (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005), an adapted version of the subscale of the Teacher Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001), the Efficacy to Engage African American Male Students (EAME), and a researcher developed demographic questionnaire. School demographic data was retrieved from the Florida Department of Education website. Sixty-four professional school counselors, from 17 sampled schools, throughout three large school districts in Florida participated in the study. In order to capture the significant, interdependent effects that may be occurring among counselor-level and school-level variables, a hierarchical linear model was used to analyze the data.

### **Discussion**

The resultant participant demographic data that was presented in Chapter Four is consistent with the findings of previous studies on school counselor self-efficacy (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005; Bodenhorn et al., 2010). In this study, it was found that the majority of school counselors tended to be female, had fewer years of experience as

teachers than as school counselors, had an average of 10 years' experience as school counselors, and about three-quarter of the sampled counselors reported that they received training in the implementation of ASCA National Standards. Also, the mean counselor caseload of 1:364 reported in this study is consistent with national findings that urban school counselors often have higher than the recommended caseload of 1:250 (ASCA, 2010).

In previous studies on school counselor self-efficacy (SCE), the majority of the respondents tended to be Caucasian females. Although participants' ethnicity was not collected for this study, the majority of respondents were observed to be of African or African Caribbean descent. Participants reported moderately high school counselor self-efficacy about their work. The mean SCE scores found in this study were consistent with previous studies that aggregated mean scores by setting (urban, suburban, rural) and by school levels (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005). Thus, the resultant descriptive data suggests that counselors that serve in urban, predominantly African American, underperforming high schools may share the fundamental characteristics of counselors that serve in higher performing or "average" schools throughout the country.

The counselors reported feeling moderate levels of efficacy to engage African American male students (EAME) at their schools. However, comparisons to previous findings cannot be made about the resultant data for EAME scores as no previous studies were found that used the sub-scale with a school counselor population. However, findings related to demographic data and school counselor self-efficacy seem to suggest that there may not be much difference between the levels of perceived efficacy for counselors at schools that receive poorer marks of performance and

counselors at more nationally representative schools. This suggests that school counselors at various types of schools may have similar levels of confidence to do their jobs, but may face limitations in the resources available to realize more positive changes within their work environment.

The first hypothesis addressed the association between school counselor self-efficacy about work and a) counselor-level characteristics and b) school-level characteristics. Again, school counselor self-efficacy beliefs about work were treated, within this study, as one strand of self-efficacy: efficacy expectations. For both parts of hypothesis one, no significant associations were found when using HLM analysis. Thus, the findings suggest that although school counselors may report a high level of confidence about their work, there are no observable effects on this type of confidence by the tested counselor variables of teaching experience, years of school counseling practice, gender and self-reported training in ASCA National Standards. This finding is contrary to previous studies, which tended to find a positive correlation between higher self-efficacy about work and more teaching experience, more years of school counseling practice, gender and training in ASCA National Standards (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005).

The sources of self-efficacy are held to be a) mastery of relevant skills, b) vicarious experiences or modeling, c) social persuasions, and d) emotional reactions related to a task (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1995). Although two sources of self-efficacy were tested implicitly in this study, work experience in teaching and counseling (mastery) and training in ASCA National Standards (modeling), there was no statistically significant correlation between school counselor self-efficacy about work and the tested

counselor variables. The lack of correlation between school counselor self-efficacy about work and the tested counselor variables may be due to the small sample size or the differences that exist between the sampled groups of previous studies. Perhaps the sources of confidence about school counseling practice, within the context of urban, underperforming schools, are beyond the four determinants of self-efficacy are held by Bandura. Sources of self-efficacy for urban counselors may be impacted more by the external and institutional factors that are known to adversely impact urban schools such as overcrowded schools, poverty, drug and violence within the school's surrounding community (Crowder & South, 2003; Lee, 2005), and higher than average counselor to student ratios (College Board, 2008a).

The second hypothesis addressed the association between counselors' sense of efficacy to engage African American male students and a) counselor-level characteristics and b) school-level characteristics. Interestingly, three effects among counselor-level variables were observed to significantly associate with the sense of efficacy to engage African American male students. Male counselors were significantly associated with a sense of efficacy to engage African American male students. The few male counselors that commit to working under the conditions of the sampled schools reported feeling more confident about engaging the young men at their schools. This finding suggests that the male counselors may have some awareness that, as school leaders and male role models, they may impact marginalized, adolescent males differently than the female stakeholders within a young man's life (College Board, 2010).

Teachers' sense of efficacy is thought to be strongest in the novice years for teachers (Bandura, 1986; Ross, 1998), when they are less conscious of the

complexities and challenges that are inherent in education. Contrary to teachers, school counselor self-efficacy has been shown to be highest after approximately three years for school counselors (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005) as they build upon their training and professional competencies. In this study, the number of years of counseling for counselors who did not report receiving training in ASCA National standards was negatively associated with their sense of efficacy to engage African American male students. The more veteran counselors who did not indicate receiving training in the implementation of ASCA National Standards tended to report feeling less efficacy in their ability to interact with African American male students in ways that support the young males' academic success.

Consistent with previous findings related to counselor self-efficacy and counselors who report that they have trained with the ASCA standards (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005), veteran school counselors in the current study who reported receiving training in the standards were positively associated with feeling a sense of efficacy to engage African American male students. Given how self-efficacy is thought to develop throughout an educators' career, it is not surprising that veteran counselors who reported that they received ASCA standards training also report that they feel more confident about engaging students than their counterparts who may not have received the training. Furthermore, the findings of this study suggest that training in the implementation of ASCA National Standards may positively impact how confidently veteran counselors feel about engaging African American male students within the context of urban, underperforming high schools.

The third and fourth hypotheses addressed the relationships between self-efficacy beliefs and the 2009 high school graduation rates for males. There were no statistically significant relationships found between either of the types of efficacy (about work and to engage African American male students) and the 2009 rate of graduation for males. Of practical significance is that more of an effect was observed with the sense of efficacy to engage African American male students (outcome expectancy) than their self-efficacy about work (efficacy expectations), related to the rate of graduation for males (see Tables 4 – 4, 4 – 5, Chapter 4).

The last two hypotheses addressed the effects of the schools' affiliation with a university partnership program. Although there was little variation in graduation rates between the partner and non-partner schools, the partnership schools experienced slightly higher rates of graduation for males (see Table 4 – 6). There may be advantages with the services and collaboration that university partnerships provide that can account for the slightly higher rates of graduation for males at the partner schools. This finding holds practical significance related to how university partnerships with urban schools can be a resource for improving school counselor self-efficacy and high school graduation rates.

Significant relationships between school counselor self-efficacy beliefs and the rate of graduation for male students were not found. However, it is important to note that multiple factors are attributed to student outcomes in education. Factors at levels such as student, classroom, school, family, and community contribute to student, counselor, and school outcomes. Missing from this study were data such as the demographic makeup of the counselors, the rigor of curriculum for each school, the

various pathways to high school completion, the degree of parental/caregiver engagement, the degree and quality of other stakeholder partnerships, the quality of training received with ASCA National Standards, and school climate assessment.

### **Limitations**

While the resultant descriptive data about school counselor characteristics is consistent with previous studies on school counselor self-efficacy, there are limitations related to the generalizability of the findings. Data on the age and ethnic backgrounds of the participants were not measured in this study, limiting the ability to generalize the findings to the entire population of school counselors. Additionally, self-reported data may be influenced by social desirability bias, with participants responding in ways that may or may not reflect their true attitudes (Ferrari, Bristow & Cowman, 2005).

The sample size for this study was limited due to structural restraints and posed threats to power and the estimates that were yielded by HLM analyses. The number of urban, predominantly African American, underperforming schools, within the four urban districts was only 18 and one district was removed from the group due to ethical considerations of anonymity. In order to address the limitation related to the small sample size, an intraclass correlation coefficient was calculated to determine the amount of variance that existed between schools for the SCE and EAME outcomes (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). It was determined that enough variance existed between the schools to warrant the use of HLM. The resultant intraclass correlation coefficient for each of the SCE and EAME outcomes were more than is generally recommended for this type of study (Hedges & Hedberg, 2007).

### **Implications for Theory**

A theoretical implication was raised in this study when more of an effect was observed for counselors' efficacy to engage African American male students (outcome expectancy) than was seen with their efficacy about their work (efficacy expectations), in relation to the 2009 graduation rates for males. Based on this study, outcome expectancy may have more predictive power than believed previously. Counselors in low performing high schools may feel more capable about the outcomes of their relationship building and student engagement with African American males than they do about the outcomes of the official duties that are expected of them as professional school counselors. Further investigations would be needed to test this theoretical line of inquiry.

### **Implications for Practice**

Male underachievement across all races and income levels continues to be a problem in public schools (Clark, Lee, Goodman & Yacco, 2008). Part of the challenge has been that there is a dearth of role models in schools, as school counseling and teaching are female-dominated professions. Thus, the findings related to the positive association between male counselors and their sense of efficacy to engage African American male students have practical implications for school counseling. Although it is necessary to have school counselors who are competent and confident about their work and the outcomes of their work, more professional development is needed to help build counselors' sense of efficacy to engage students that they may be least comfortable engaging. This study is an early indication that school counselors may need to tap into the resources that are available through the male role models and change agents within their schools' communities (Clark et al., 2008; Lee, 2001). However, male and female

school counselors need to focus on the relationship-building and cultural skills that have been shown to positively impact the outcomes of adolescent African American males that come to school from high-risk backgrounds (Lee, 2005; Lynn et al., 2010).

The overall high level of efficacy that the counselors reported has implications for the ways in which school counselor self-efficacy is developed within the context of urban, underperforming schools. Within this context, their self-efficacy may not be as a result of their experience as teachers, years of school counseling practice, gender, or training in ASCA National Standards as indicated in previous studies (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005). School counselors that serve in high needs communities may find themselves taking on extra roles that are not necessarily recognized by national professional organizations and standards. More can be learned from counselors that persist in high needs schools as they demonstrate high levels of school counselor self-efficacy despite the disproportionate challenges that are encountered in high risk settings.

An implication for practice is the relationship that was found among counselors' sense of efficacy to engage African American male students, the number of years of counseling and training in the implementation of ASCA National Standards. Veteran counselors were found to have lower efficacy to engage students, while veteran counselors who reported receiving training in the ASCA National Standards were positively associated with the sense of efficacy to engage African American male students. This study lends support for the use of professional development in the implementation of ASCA National Standards at every stage of a school counselor's career. Current students are more likely to be familiar with the standards and may enter

their new profession with a higher sense of efficacy to engage students (Bandura, 1986) through the implementation of ASCA standards. However, there may still be benefits to receiving continuing education and updates on the utilization of ASCA standards in mid-career and end-of-career school counseling practice, as veteran counselors were observed to not have a high sense of efficacy regarding the engagement of a population of students that are in critical need of school counseling services.

Another implication for practice is related to the difference observed when controlling for graduation rates for males and the university partnership status of the schools. Graduation rates for partnership schools were slightly higher than non-partner schools, which may suggest that underperforming high schools benefit from the services and collaboration that is afforded by higher education institutions. Further investigations into the degree and quality of partnerships that occur between the university and schools would yield more useful data than can be gathered with simple group mean statistics.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This study was exploratory in nature as no previous studies were found that investigated the relationship between school counselor self-efficacy and school level outcomes. Further studies are needed that examine the impact that the work of school counselors may have on high-stakes indicators of achievement. This would be particularly useful in light of the crisis of male underachievement that is experienced in urban, predominantly African American, underperforming high schools (NCES, 2010). Future studies are recommended that investigate female achievement at urban schools in comparison to what is happening with the males within the same setting.

The high level of school counselor self-efficacy found among the sampled schools begs for further investigations about the sources of self-efficacy despite the challenging situations that are often reported at urban schools (Lee, 2005). In other words, are there patterns of personal characteristics among urban school counselors that keep them committed despite adverse circumstances that are associated with underperforming high schools? Hierarchical linear modeling is argued to be a step in preparation for deeper qualitative inquiries due to the ability of HLM analyses to detect the contribution of variance from multiple levels of data (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002; Singer, 1998). However, further qualitative studies are needed to yield richer information about the sources of school counselor self-efficacy in urban, underperforming schools. Moreover, the use of qualitative methods to elicit feedback from male counselors about their practices with African American male students may provide insight into sources of student and school counselor self-efficacy at urban schools.

For the purposes of this study, two different scales were used in order to measure school counselors' self-efficacy about their work and their sense of efficacy to engage African American male students. However, the school counselor self-efficacy scale was a global measure of perceived efficacy while the sense of efficacy to engage African American male students was more specific and narrow in its measurement. The use of scales from two different contexts (school counseling and traditional teaching) and levels of specificity posed threats to measures of construct validity. Although, the scales each demonstrated high reliability, it is recommended that an instrument be developed for school counselors that can capture adequately both parts of Bandura's

definition of self-efficacy within the context of school counseling. Also, such an instrument could better capture the collaborative nature of school counseling work (McCoach & Colbert, 2010).

Further research is needed with larger sample sizes in order to improve the effect size and power. It is recommended that ethnic background and career stage variables be added in future studies with counselors who serve in higher performing schools. Exploring the impact, if any, of counselors' ethnic backgrounds and career stages may be useful if examining group mean differences among counselors.

### **Conclusion**

The documented underachievement of males in urban centers has prompted stakeholders to find ways to improve the educational experiences of male students and increase their rate of high school completion (AEE, 2008; Schott, 2010). School counselors are critical stakeholders in urban, underperforming schools as the families and students from such schools rely heavily on school resources to prepare for life beyond high school (McDonough, 2004). Furthermore, school counselors are expected to link the results of their work to student success and school improvement (ASCA, 2005).

This study is the first known attempt to demonstrate that school counselor self-efficacy may be linked to student and school outcomes at urban, underperforming high schools. Although the study's sample size may have limited the degree of interactions that were detected for school variables tested, significant effects were found for the relationship between counselor's perceived efficacy to engage African American male students and gender, years of teaching, and training in the implementation of ASCA National Standards.

The dearth of male educators and school counselors may very well be leaving its mark on urban schools where as few as 50% of males are crossing the finish line out of high school within four years of entry. Male counselors were positively associated with a sense of efficacy to engage African American male students. This significant finding supports the need to solicit more male role models from within the surrounding communities into high needs schools, as well into the school counseling profession. Although further investigations are needed to determine to what degree does school counselors' perceived self-efficacy equate to positive student outcomes, male counselors with demonstrable, higher levels of efficacy should be encouraged to share their best practices in engaging African American male students at urban schools.

An early indication from this study is that training in the implementation of ASCA National Standards may positively impact veteran counselor's sense of efficacy to engage African American male students. Previous studies have shown that counselors' experience with ASCA training improved school counselor self-efficacy and the perception of achievement gap and equity issues (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005; Bodenhor et al., 2010). However, this study differed in that significant effects were observed for veteran counselors who reported receiving training in the ASCA National Standards. Veteran counselors that did not report receiving training in ASCA standards were negatively associated with the sense of efficacy to engage African American male students.

This study presented practical implications for the use of ASCA National Standards in order to improve how counselors engage with African American males and possibly affect the rate of high school graduation for this group of males within

underperforming school contexts. The American School Counselor Association developed standards that are appropriate for counselors at all career levels and varied school settings. Adherence to ASCA National Standards and continuing education that includes training in the implementation of the standards may yield positive results in working with African American males at high needs school and eventually realize increased educational gains for this population of adolescents.

APPENDIX A  
PERMISSION FOR INSTRUMENTS

From: "Bodenhorn, Nancy" [nanboden@exchange.vt.edu](mailto:nanboden@exchange.vt.edu)  
To: 'Sophie Maxis' [smaxis@coe.ufl.edu](mailto:smaxis@coe.ufl.edu)  
Date: Sat Mar 20 11:04:22 EDT 2010  
Subject: RE: SCSE Scale

Hi Sophie, I am excited about the prospect of people using the SCSE scale for research, and certainly give permission for you to use the scale. I have attached a version of the scale for your use.

You mentioned in your phone message that you had some additional questions. It might be easiest if you can send the questions by email. I will not be in my office on Monday, and am busy on Tuesday morning. I could probably talk on the phone on Tuesday afternoon, if that will work for you, call me on my cell phone number.

Say hi to Mary Ann for me!

Nancy Bodenhor  
Associate Professor  
Counselor Education  
Virginia Tech

-----Original Message-----

From: Sophie Maxis [<mailto:smaxis@coe.ufl.edu>]  
Sent: Friday, March 19, 2010 2:42 PM  
To: Bodenhor, Nancy  
Subject: SCSE Scale

Dear Dr. Bodenhor,

My name is Sophie Maxis and I am a doctoral candidate in counselor education at University of Florida. I currently work with a university-school partnership that serves urban, high-poverty, low-performing high schools.

I'm interested in possibly using your SCSE instrument for my dissertation within the context of these types of schools. My interest in the SCSE scale was further peaked upon reading your recent article in PSC about the achievement gap and equity.

I would like your permission to use the instrument and have left a voice message regarding this on your office line.

Thank you,  
Sophie Maxis

--



School of Education  
Post Office Box 8795  
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Fax: (757) 221-2988

Megan Tschannen-Moran, Ph.D.  
Wakefield Distinguished Associate Professor  
[mxtsch@wm.edu](mailto:mxtsch@wm.edu)  
(757) 221-2187

November 2011

Sophie Maxis  
University of Florida  
Gainesville, FL 32611

Dear Sophie:

You have permission to use the Efficacy in Student Engagement subscale of the Teachers Sense of Efficacy Scale that I developed with Dr. Anita Woolfolk Hoy for your dissertation research. Please use the following citation when referencing the scale:

Tschannen-Moran, M & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17, 783-805.

Although the name of the measure has been changed since that article was published, the contents of the scale remain the same.

You may download a copy of the instrument and directions for administration from my website at <http://mxtsch.people.wm.edu>. I would like to receive a brief summary of your results when you are finished.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "megan tschannen-moran".

Megan Tschannen-Moran

## APPENDIX B

### SCHOOL COUNSELOR SELF-EFFICACY SCALE

Below is a list of activities representing many school counselor responsibilities. Indicate your confidence in your current ability to perform each activity by circling the appropriate answer next to each item according to the scale defined below. Please answer each item based on one current school, and based on how you feel now, not on your anticipated (or previous) ability or school(s). Remember, this is not a test and there are no right answers.

Use the following scale:

- 1 = not confident,
- 2 = slightly confident,
- 3 = moderately confident,
- 4 = generally confident,
- 5 = highly confident.

Please circle the number that best represents your response for each item.

1. Advocate for integration of student academic, career, and personal development into the mission of my school.	1    2    3    4    5
2. Recognize situations that impact (both negatively and positively) student learning and achievement.	1    2    3    4    5
3. Analyze data to identify patterns of achievement and behavior that contribute to school success	1    2    3    4    5
4. Advocate for myself as a professional school counselor and articulate the purposes and goals of school counseling.	1    2    3    4    5
5. Develop measurable outcomes for a school counseling program which would demonstrate accountability.	1    2    3    4    5
6. Consult and collaborate with teachers, staff, administrators and parents to promote student success.	1    2    3    4    5
7. Establish rapport with a student for individual counseling.	1    2    3    4    5
8. Function successfully as a small group leader.	1    2    3    4    5
9. Effectively deliver suitable parts of the school counseling program through large group meetings such as in classrooms.	1    2    3    4    5
10. Conduct interventions with parents, guardians and families in order to resolve problems that impact students' effectiveness and success.	1    2    3    4    5
11. Teach students how to apply time and task management skills.	1    2    3    4    5
12. Foster understanding of the relationship between learning and work.	1    2    3    4    5
13. Offer appropriate explanations to students, parents and teachers of how learning styles affect school performance.	1    2    3    4    5
14. Deliver age-appropriate programs through which students acquire the skills needed to investigate the world of work.	1    2    3    4    5
15. Implement a program which enables all students to make informed career decisions.	1    2    3    4    5
16. Teach students to apply problem-solving skills toward their academic, personal and career success.	1    2    3    4    5
17. Evaluate commercially prepared material designed for school counseling to establish their relevance to my school population.	1    2    3    4    5

1 = not confident  
 2 = slightly confident  
 3 = moderately confident  
 4 = generally confident  
 5 = highly confident

18. Model and teach conflict resolution skills.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Ensure a safe environment for all students in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Change situations in which an individual or group treats others in a disrespectful or harassing manner.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Teach students to use effective communication skills with peers, faculty, employers, family, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Follow ethical and legal obligations designed for school counselors.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Guide students in techniques to cope with peer pressure.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Adjust my communication style appropriately to the age and developmental levels of various students.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Incorporate students' developmental stages in establishing and conducting the school counseling program.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I can find some way of connecting and communicating with any student in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Teach, develop and/or support students' coping mechanisms for dealing with crises in their lives – e.g., peer suicide, parent's death, abuse, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
28. Counsel effectively with students and families from different social/economic statuses.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Understand the viewpoints and experiences of students and parents who are from a different cultural background than myself.	1	2	3	4	5
30. Help teachers improve their effectiveness with students.	1	2	3	4	5
31. Discuss issues of sexuality and sexual orientation in an age appropriate manner with students.	1	2	3	4	5
32. Speak in front of large groups such as faculty or parent meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Use technology designed to support student successes and progress through the educational process.	1	2	3	4	5
34. Communicate in writing with staff, parents, and the external community.	1	2	3	4	5
35. Help students identify and attain attitudes, behaviors, and skills which lead to successful learning.	1	2	3	4	5
36. Select and implement applicable strategies to assess school-wide issues.	1	2	3	4	5
37. Promote the use of counseling and guidance activities by the total school community to enhance a positive school climate.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Develop school improvement plans based on interpreting school-wide assessment results.	1	2	3	4	5
39. Identify aptitude, achievement, interest, values, and personality appraisal resources appropriate for specified situations and populations.	1	2	3	4	5
40. Implement a preventive approach to student problems.	1	2	3	4	5
41. Lead school-wide initiatives which focus on ensuring a positive learning environment.	1	2	3	4	5
42. Consult with external community agencies which provide support services for our students.	1	2	3	4	5
43. Provide resources and guidance to school population in times of crisis.	1	2	3	4	5

## APPENDIX C

### EFFICACY IN STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

This part of the survey is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create challenges for school counselors. Consider the combination of your current ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your present position.

#### **How much can you do?**

	Not at all	Very Little	Some Degree	Quite A Bit	A Great Deal				
<b>Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below as you work with the general student body at your school.</b>									
1. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3. How much can you do to help your students value learning?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4. How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below as you work with African American/Black males at your school.</b>									
5. How much can you do to motivate African American/Black males who show low interest in school work?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
6. How much can you do to get African American/Black males to believe they can do well in school work?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
7. How much can you do to help African American/Black males value learning?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8. How much can you assist families in helping their African American/Black males do well in school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

#### **Demographic Data**

1. Gender  
– Female – Male
2. Number of years employed as a teacher: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Number of years employed as a school counselor: \_\_\_\_\_
4. I have received training in implementing the ASCA National Standards.  
– Yes                  – No

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Sophie Maxis was born in Miami, Florida and is the fifth of seven children. She was raised by her mother and grew up throughout south and central Florida. She graduated from Sarasota High School and attended Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama. She earned a Bachelor of Science in mathematics education at Oakwood College. She returned to Florida to complete her Specialist in Education and Master of Education in school counseling and guidance at the University of Florida (UF).

Upon completing her masters in school counseling, Sophie taught secondary mathematics in Kent and London, England. Sophie returned to UF to pursue her doctoral studies. During this time, she has been engaged in work and research that supports the ways in which first-generation, college-bound, students access resources for college. Currently, Sophie is a professional school counselor in Gainesville, Florida.