

## **ABSTRACT**

**DISSERTATION:** Examining the Persistence of High Achieving African American Males on the High Achievement Track in High School

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**DEGREE:** Doctor of Education

**COLLEGE:** Teachers

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**PAGES:** 142

This study examined and investigated non-cognitive factors that led to increased persistence of high achieving African American males in high school. After interviewing students, teachers, and parents, the results of the data analysis suggested that African American males persisted due to strong social support systems, effective and relational instructional practices in the classroom, and high parental expectations. Social experiences seemed to play a role in helping African American males persist. Strong and supportive friendship networks shaped how the participants navigated both social and academic tasks. The nominated teachers displayed overt care and concern for their students, though how they demonstrated that care did differ depending on the teacher. Ultimately, the teachers used student centered pedagogy to effectively engage the students. Parents positively affected student mindsets by enacting high expectations balanced with a flexible approach to outcomes.