

Pushout Factors Faced By Low Income Urban School Districts

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Throughout history, the United States Education system has been constantly and relentlessly critiqued through a social, political and economic lens. For the most part however, previous research has excluded pertinent information about those who are marginalized due to the controversy of institutionalized systems of oppression. This literature review analyzes research across various journals and studies in the education sphere. Overall, it works to identify the key pushout/pull out factors facing low income urban school districts in the United States. Push out/pull out factors typically fall into two main categories: social background and academic background/related behaviors. As a result of this research, it is evident that exclusion of information elicits massive ramifications emotionally and economically on not only the student but his or her family, and the nation.

Previous inquiries into the factors impacting high school dropouts in general, are largely inaccurate and misleading as to the plight of low-income urban districts. In 1983 the report *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, created massive public backlash due to it's lack of credible data and over-exaggerations surrounding illiteracy rates, teaching inconsistencies and dropout research. This trend of inaccurate information is even evident in more recent research. According to the U.S Census Bureau, due to the negative connotations with the term "dropout", 14 or more states did not report or used substandard definitions and means of data collection. The fact that defining and providing accurate information about this issue is so controversial and arduous indicates how deeply ingrained it is within our society.

Often times, high school institutions ignore the fact that students especially those in low-income urban areas, face challenging environments outside of school. The myriad of issues faced by students includes pregnancy, drug abuse, illness or disability, low self-esteem, and a dysfunctional home life (NDPC; 2011, Blount 2012). Within these issues is the evidence of the underlying functioning systems of intersectionality and oppression. In a patriarchal sense, female students may be more expected to drop out to care for family, whereas male students may be under more pressure to drop out to pursue employment. However the most prominent form of discrimination faced by dropouts is related to racial oppression. African-american male students are most likely to be pushed out of school by disciplinary problems. Furthermore, black, latino and immigrant students are often forced to assimilate and render their cultural identity invisible. In opposition, these students form a culture that counteracts the dominant white institutionalism. Consequently, students who do not adhere to this norm are labeled as "acting white". This sense of social ostracization enforces the concept in which students feel they have no social mobility unless they use unconventional means by dropping out of the education system.

The accumulated pressure to drop out is most prevalent when students have reached the ninth grade. A study done on drop-outs within Baltimore City schools concluded that the majority of dropouts are overage by the time they enter ninth grade, show patterns of chronic absenteeism going years back and have failed more courses than their graduate counterparts. In

addition half of the student drop-outs had been suspended at least three years prior to dropping out. Furthermore, students who are more intrinsically motivated and autonomous during the ninth grade are more likely to continue on to graduate. All of which, indicate how students have become disengaged and detached from their learning environment.

Despite the negative outlook surrounding this area of research, there are still new advances made to tackle this issue. Researcher and advocate Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw has created pivotal research focusing on the pushout factors faced by black girls. Her research indicates that black girls receive more severe sentences in the juvenile justice system than any other group of girls and they are the fastest growing population in the system. Despite this there is very little research highlighting the pushout factors faced by girls of color (Crenshaw 2015). Therefore, Crenshaw's research in conjunction with other sources, emphasizes the urgent necessity for research on marginalized youth. Only by bringing this issue to the foreground and focusing on student's social and academic needs, can this issue be addressed.

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