

FINAL REPORT

RACE AND EDUCATION ITHACA HIGH SCHOOL

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By
PROFESSORS DON BARR AND JAMES TURNER
CORNELL UNIVERSITY

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BACKGROUND

Professors Turner and Barr were asked in January 1998 by Ithaca High School principal, Ms. Susan Strauss to work with the high school on developing short and long range action strategies to improve the academic achievement of African American and Latino/Latina students.

The first step in the effort was to ask high school faculty and professional staff to fill out a questionnaire (see appendix 1) so there would be some basic information about how the faculty and staff viewed the problem(s). The questionnaire was filled out on January 14, 1998 at the high school faculty meeting. Faculty and staff who were not present at the meeting were sent a questionnaire to fill out. A total number of returned questionnaires was 98. The data from this survey were analyzed and written up in a report that was presented to the faculty in April 1998. (see Appendix 2)

In Spring 1998, there were several meetings between the administrative team and professors Turner and Barr to discuss the data and to decide what the next step should be. It was decided that because some of the data collected in the first survey were ambiguous that a second survey would be written and handed out near the end of June (see Appendix 3). This survey was introduced with a memo from Professors Turner and Barr explaining the process of educational change. (see Appendix 4) Eighteen were returned and the data were analyzed and written up (see Appendix 5).

During the summer of 1998, Professors Turner and Barr held two meetings with Parents of African American and Latino children to discuss the data from the surveys. In addition, two meetings were held with the high school administrative team to analyze the data and plan the next steps. The final report includes the data collected, an analysis of the data and recommendations for what short and long range strategies should be followed to transform the problem of low achievement and lack of academic success for African American and Latino/Latina students.

PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE ON WHICH THIS REPORT IS BASED

1. Education change efforts have a long history of not being successful. In order for any fundamental change in a school to be successful a critical mass of the faculty, administrators, staff, parents, and students must accept the importance and seriousness of the problem and feel included in the decision making and change process. Everyone must feel that they have been informed and given an opportunity to voice their interests, questions, and concerns during the decision making process.

2. The primary leadership of the change process must come from within the school. Initially the leadership must come from the high school administrative team. It is important for leadership roles to expand to other people as the process unfolds. However, no change process takes place in a vacuum so the endorsement and support of central administration and the school board is critical. The high school administration should also be responsible for keeping central administrators and board members informed about progress. In addition, effort should be made to keep community members, outside the immediate school community, informed about the project and its progress. Keeping a large constituency informed and involved is an important strategy toward building a supportive and active community.

3. A diversity of perspectives must be discussed and debated in an open, safe, and constructive environment. At the same time, participants must represent a diversity of races, social classes, genders, sexual orientations, and religions. There will be strong differences of opinion and these different voices must be heard with respect.

4. A specific timeline for each step in the change process must be made public and adhered to for the sake of accountability. Systems of accountability are particularly important when it comes to implementing a plan designed to transform racism in educational institutions.

5. A recognition by all that this change will only be accomplished through patience, perseverance, and courage over a long period of time. Problems associated with race and education are deeply rooted in the very structure of schooling and the ideology of the United States. Getting to these roots takes time.

SUMMARY OF THE DATA FROM SURVEY ONE (SEE APPENDIX 2)

1. There is no consensus among the faculty, staff and administrators that the low achievement scores, graduation rates, and drop out rates by African American and Latino/Latina students is a serious problem that needs immediate and long term attention.
2. The survey data show that when respondents were asked to identify the possible reasons for the problem, a large majority focused on issues external to the school. Eighty three (83) of the 129 responses said the problem was due to factors outside the school environment. Examples of what respondents identified as the problem were the cycle of poverty, single parents, self fulfilling prophecy, lack of support at home, low self esteem of students, hopelessness in the students, lack of student motivation, poor attendance, the students don't believe education will make a difference, few role models. and it is too late at the high school to level the playing field.
3. In Part B of question 5 a question asked respondents, "What changes needed to be made at Ithaca High School to transform the racially stratified performance and to create an environment where all students can and will succeed." Twenty four (24) of the 82 responses focused on changes in disciplinary and communication practices among the staff and African American and Latino parents and students. Eleven (11) listed recruiting more diverse faculty, eleven (11) suggested the need to start working on this problem earlier in the students school life, and ten (10) proposed more parent/community support.

There were a total of twenty six (26) responses to the question focusing on the internal structure of the school. The two ideas with the most responses were; eliminate tracking (7) and increasing the use of different teaching approaches with more relevant instruction (7).

4. The two questions relating to what multicultural goals respondents had for the 1997-98 year, and examples of what they had tried in order to reach the goals showed two patterns. One was that about 1/3 of the respondents (32 out of 98) had no multicultural goals for the year. This figure is important for two reasons. First, high school administrators are not requiring the teaching staff to write multicultural goals and second when they are written there appears to be little if any dialogue about whether goals were met.

The results from question one, as well as some of the other responses throughout the surveys, illustrate an historical pattern in the area of transforming racism in the US History shows over and over how phrases like "we the people," "justice is blind," "freedom for all," and "well intended" have been and continue to be only phrases with no genuine commitment to make them real for all people. In other words the dominant group has consistently for over a hundred years talked the talk with out walking the talk.

5. Question two asked respondents to give two concrete examples of how they tried to reach their multicultural goals. The data showed two patterns: one that 65 out of 108 examples were located in the classroom and 49 of these 65 were examples that included restructuring courses to include different cultural perspectives (see a more complete list in Appendix 2, question 2). Nineteen (19) answers were left blank which is the second largest number of responses to this question.

6. Question 3 asked staff to describe two or three things that impede their ability to implement and maintain a multicultural focus. Fifty four (54) of the 115 identified a problem outside their own domain. Some examples were, poorly prepared students, unsupportive home life, lack of work ethic, low student motivation, resistance to raise level of work, poor attendance, time schedule, too many students and not enough staff, lack of resources, and problems not evenly treated. These responses place the blame for lack of or limited progress on "the others." This again focuses the problem and the responsibility for making changes on someone other than themselves.

7. Question 4 asked respondents to describe situations where they would be uncomfortable with, or threatened if it happened to them, in their role at Ithaca High School. Responses were highly skewed. Seventy five of the 100 responses showed a high level of discomfort and fear about disciplining African American and Latino/Latina students. There were also several people who expressed anxiety about being called a racist or being charged that their expectations for African American and Latino/Latina students are too low. Overall the responses to this question describe a school environment where teachers, staff, and administrators are hesitant when interacting with students of color and even worse, so uncomfortable and afraid that they avoid setting behavioral limits and academic demands. Permissiveness is a subtle and powerful form of rejection, and these data indicate that African American males in particular are allowed to roam freely with little accountability for both their behavior and academic work. However, making academic demands must be grounded in the belief that all students can succeed and these data suggest many staff and faculty believe these students do not and/or can not succeed. If so, there is a vicious cycle of failure that is being perpetuated at Ithaca High School. This downward cycle must be stopped if any plan of transformation is going to work.

SUMMARY OF THE DATA FROM SURVEY TWO (SEE APPENDIX 5)

Survey 2 was distributed on June 24, 1998 to all staff, faculty, and administrators. This was near the end of the school year which is probably the reason that only eighteen people responded. This meant there were 80 fewer questionnaires completed than for Survey One. As stated earlier, the second survey was done as a result of meetings held between Professors Turner and Barr and the high school administrative team. The consensus of the group was that the first survey did not provide clear data to go forward.

1. Question One in Survey Two asked respondents to identify the main obstacle in building a multicultural perspective at IHS. Eight (8) of the 18 responses were blank or stated there no obstacles. The remaining 12 responses ranged from institutional/pedagogical issues such as class time too short, demands of a WASP response to learning, limited multicultural content in math and science, and uneven disciplinary actions. One person wrote that she/he didn't know what a multicultural perspective is.

2. Question 2 was designed to clarify ambiguities in data from Question 4 in Survey One by asking staff to describe if they had been in situations with Black students when they didn't know what to do. Ten (10) of the answers were blank. Seven (7) of the other responses showed how hesitant staff is to confront what is perceived to be inappropriate behavior with Black male students. They described their hesitation was due to their lack of confidence, personal fear, and not being sure they would be backed up by the administration. These data coupled with the data from Question 4 in survey one indicate a general atmosphere in the high school where staff members feels insecure and uncomfortable with direct contact with Black and Latino/Latina (mostly Black male) students.

3. The purpose of Question 3 was to ask respondents to identify two or three reasons how the institutional structure of IHS could be influencing the low achievement of African American and Latino students. This question was asked in the 2nd survey because many of the responses in Survey One externalized the problem.

There were 22 different ideas expressed with some overlap between them. Four (4) people said that there is a serious lack of teaching about individual responsibility and accountability, behavioral and attendance problems. Even though these four targeted accountability and responsibility as a major problem, there was a lack of agreement about who was responsible to make necessary changes. Two respondents felt the school was being too permissive and two others felt it was the lack of motivation from home and the lack of good education in the earlier part of their education. However, the responses to Question 3 (See Appendix 5), indicate strong feelings and anger about the lack of accountability at Ithaca High School. In addition, three people mentioned that tracking was the problem the problem and two spoke about the lack of trust between students and teachers.

These data continue to show a resistance to critically look at the internal structures of the school e.g. the curriculum and pedagogical approach to education in Ithaca High School. This denial or avoidance is inconsistent with the number of faculty and staff who are making pedagogical changes to bring more diverse perspectives and teaching approaches into their teaching. However, it is easier and safer for individual faculty and staff to make changes in their respective teaching approaches than it is to focus on the large and complex structural issues. Structural issues were avoided in both Survey 1 and 2.

Question 5A asked respondents to identify what they thought the most critical problems are at IHS. Eleven (11) focused on the students' lack of family support, poor communication with parents, and poor academic preparation before high school. These data again put the focus of the problem with the family and communication between the school staff and the family.

Question 5B asked what they could do about these problems? Fifteen (15) of the 20 responses centered on involving parents more, treat all kids equally and fairly, insist that students do what it takes to succeed, and four of the 20 were blank.

Question 5C asked what they could do with their colleagues about these problems. There were seven (7) blank questionnaires and the other 11 answers have a wide diversity of ideas. (See Question 5C, Appendix 5)

Question 5D asked respondents again to focus on structure, "What could be done to create a more positive environment for all students at IHS." Again five (5) respondents suggested more consistently defined behavior codes with clear consequences for all students. Three (3) were blank and four (4) other people focused their answers on the importance of improving communication (see answers 5, 6, 7, and 8). There were two who addressed the need for the school administrators to be more consistent and provide more pro active and positive leadership. Criticism about administrative practices and suggestions for changes had consistently been expressed in both of the surveys.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT STEPS

1. Acceptance and ownership of the problem and the change process by the faculty, staff, students, administration, and parents in the IHS school community.
2. Support that is both verbal and financial for this change effort from the Ithaca City School Board and central administration.
3. District wide acknowledgment that the problem is school system wide and a commitment to develop change strategies at all levels.
4. A study to learn the relationship between social class and academic success will be launched in January by David Bock, Don Barr, and two high school students and two Cornell undergraduates.
5. A school wide vision/goal is essential for a beginning step. The vision should center on determining what teaching and learning environment needs to be created where all students can learn.
6. A leadership team or teams of faculty, administration, staff, students, and parents should be organized. Selected members should participate in an educational training program as soon as possible. Members should receive support and benefits for this work.
7. Two superintendent days should be set aside to invite teachers from other districts who have curriculum material and instructional strategies that have been successful in reaching a diverse population of high school students.
8. A recruitment and retention five to seven year plan should be developed by the high school administration and the Director of Affirmative Action to hire more African American, Latino/Latina Americans, American Indians, and Asian Americans teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators.
9. There should be a room or space in the library for a multicultural resource room. This room should include instructional material in all the disciplines as well as books and articles on the systemic history of racism in the United States.
10. Procedures for writing and following up on annual multicultural goals should be implemented.
11. An open and honest dialogue needs to happen soon about the discipline policy and how it should be implemented.
12. Faculty and staff should be encouraged to discuss their anxiety and/or fear about communicating and/or disciplining and demanding academic work with African American, Latino/Latina students. This topic should be part of a school wide workshop.

PATTERNS THAT EMERGED FROM DATA IN SURVEY 1 AND 2

1. There is no general agreement that faculty and staff perceive a serious problem of low academic achievement with African American and Latino/Latina students. When respondents did accept the seriousness of the problem there was a consistent pattern of externalizing the reasons for the problem.
2. There was a consistent pattern that this problem is system wide, not just a high school problem.
3. Many people expressed feelings of fear and anxiety about communicating with, disciplining, and making academic demands on African American and Latino students, especially African American males.
4. The data show a lack of knowledge or acceptance of the fundamental nature of systemic racism in the United States and its institutions.
5. A large number of respondents did not write multicultural goals. It is not possible to determine whether or not they were asked to write them. There also appears to be no follow up at the end of the year to evaluate how successful staff were in meeting their multicultural goals.
6. There were some respondents who expressed the need for better understanding of how social class impacts on academic success at Ithaca High School.
7. There were many respondents who expressed concern and anger about what they perceived as a lack of clear disciplinary procedures and inconsistent disciplinary practice by the administration. There were several people who expressed concern about the lack of quick follow up when students aren't in school and/or cutting classes. Almost all of these concerns were directed at the lack of consistent leadership by the high school administrators.
8. There were several respondents who felt that Ithaca High School has a serious problem because there is not a feeling of community in the school. The comments focused on the size of the school, fragmented departments, and a general sense of individual isolation.
9. There were several who expressed anger and/or impatience with all this talk about race all the time. Some expressed things are going well at IHS; so why aren't other issues discussed more often.

APPENDIX 1

ITHACA HIGH SCHOOL JANUARY 14, 1998

The Ithaca City School District has made a long range commitment to transcend oppression in the education of all children. Race continues to be the form of oppression that shows the most serious educational problems in Ithaca and around the country; therefore, the focus of the beginning stage will be on transforming racism. Ithaca High School is taking the first institutional step in this mission by participating in a problem identification session. Below there are several questions I would like you to answer so we can begin to gather data on how different groups of people are identifying the problem.

1. What were your multicultural goals for the 1997-98 school year?
2. Please give two concrete examples of how you tried to reach your multicultural goals?
3. Describe two or three things that impede your ability to implement and maintain an assertive multicultural focus at Ithaca High School.
4. We often hear stories about racial incidents where a teacher or staff person experienced a difficult situation. We often feel relieved that we didn't have to face the same thing. Think about, and describe below a situation you would be uncomfortable with or threatened by, if it happened to you in your role at Ithaca High School.
5. Year after year aggregate data show that African American and Latino/Latina students' academic performance is considerably lower than other students.
 - A. Why do you think these data continue year after year? What do you believe are the root causes of this discrepancy?
 - B. What is a change you strongly believe needs to occur at Ithaca High School or in the district in order to transform the racially stratified performance and create an environment where all students can and will succeed?

APPENDIX 2

FACULTY AND STAFF SURVEY RACE AND EDUCATION

ITHACA HIGH SCHOOL
ITHACA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
JANUARY 14, 1998

BY
JAMES TURNER AND DON BARR

QUESTION 1: WHAT WERE YOUR MULTICULTURAL GOALS FOR THE 1997/98 SCHOOL YEAR?

A. Had no goals/ teach the same to all kids.	32
B. Expanded curriculum/pedagogical approach to represent more diverse views and cultures.	25
C. Try alternative teaching strategies to reach minority students and enhance learning for all students.	13
D. Recruit more minority students to my classes and to clubs, newspaper, international club, honor society, etc.	9
E. Self improvement through workshops, etc.	4
F. Improve communication between different ethnic/culture groups of students.	4
G. Increase self esteem, self worth by introducing positive role models.	3
H. Help recruit more African American/Latino/Latino teachers	2
I. Encourage minority student success in math and science and encourage minority students to enroll in AP classes	2
J. To be more sensitive to all cultures	2
K. Raise consciousness of fellow whites to racist assumptions we inherit	1
L. Increase events/activities which both involve and celebrate diverse student populations.	1
M. Increase teacher awareness of the diversity of ESL population at IHS.	1
N. Continue e-mail project with people from various populations of the world.	1
Total responses	100

QUESTION 2: Please give two concrete examples of how you tried to reach your multicultural goals?

A. Pedagogical/curriculum changes, e.g. restructuring courses to include different cultural perspectives. These changes included; the inclusion of different cultural perspective, expanding and diversifying the knowledge math knowledge base, designing cultural projects, using alternative assessments, using videos to teach about cultural differences, race issues, and other forms of oppression, more authentic writing, and expanding the video project.	49
B. Blank	19
C. Planned activities that enhance interaction between different groups of students. Emphasize mutual respect and make sure everyone speaks in class	12
D. Teach all students the same	8
E. Continue my own education about race and other forms of oppression	4
F. Encouraged students to have higher expectations	3
G. More individual support and help for minority students	3
H. Recruited students of color to my class	2
I. Select library books with multicultural goals in mind	1
J. Conscious decision to explore all avenues of assistance for students including reaching out to parents.	1
K. Have an exciting, worthwhile class	1
L. Encourage students to use cultural backgrounds in creative writing	1
M. Created new course to attract all students without high math requirements.	1
N. Learn Asian students names the first week of class	1
O. Developed and used relationships with community organizations, e.g. GIAC tutorial program	1

P. Encouraged and attracted students of color to participate in school performances	1
Total	108

QUESTION 3: Describe two or three things that impede your ability to implement and maintain an assertive multicultural focus at Ithaca High School.

A. Left blank/ couldn't think of anything	20
B. Poorly prepared students, unsupportive home life, lack of work ethic, low motivation, resistance to raise the level of work, poor attendance	19
C. Time, schedule, too many students, not enough staff	15
D. Lack of resources -limited low reading material, no phones in classrooms to call parents, no \$ for multicultural speakers, mostly white videos available.	12
E. Nothing impedes freedom to teach. We're making progress	10
F. Lack of community building at IHS. Lack of administrative support, lack of commitment to multicultural education, lack of specific vision and strategy, decisions by who cries the loudest.	8
G. Problems are not treated evenly, consistently. Different standards for different students.	7
H. Lack of diversity in classes	6
I. Lack of training in interpersonal skills, curriculum diversity, and basic knowledge of race and racism	5
J. The new standards	3
K. Fear, intimidated	3
L. Ingrained privileged world view at IHS. Inability to influence socioeconomic disparity	2
M. It's too easy to drop a level	1
N. Lack of African American/Latino/Latina staff	1
O. Limited communication with other educators	1
P. Over reaction to racism when it isn't there	1
Q. Students spend too much time out of class in school activities	1
Total	115

QUESTION 4: We often hear stories about racial incidents where a teacher or staff person experienced a difficult situation. We often feel relieved that we didn't have to face the same thing. Think about, and describe below a situation you would be uncomfortable with or threatened by, if it happened to you in your role at Ithaca High School.

A. Unfairly being called a racist/unfair when my expectations are the same for all	29
B. Verbally threatened including derogatory comments on door	23
C. Don't know, blank, there are none	17
D. Afraid of being physically threatened (3 people pointed out that this was related to any race)	11
E. Uncomfortable with student language, loud music, loud voices, e.g. use of nigger and street language	4
F. Found minority student guilty of plagiarism, etc. took disciplinary action administration tried to dissuade from taking action.	3
G. Uncomfortable intervening (disciplining) students of color when I don't know them.	2
H. Someone make fun of the way I speak	1
I. After hours makes me nervous, lock the door, not race motivated.	1
J. Racist and other inappropriate comments in faculty meetings	1
K. I treat Black students differently in the cafeteria - It's not fair to anyone.	1
L. E-mail threat from a student	1
M. Fear of losing my job to minority teacher	1
N. When intervening with students they mumble - it sounds disrespectful.	1
O. Would be uncomfortable if I were an African American teacher and when I entered the room everyone stopped talking	1
P. Told I couldn't competently teach a course because I am not Black	1

Q. As a person of color in a white school, I don't feel comfortable. I like censoring my thoughts and feelings because of unwillingness of others to deal with my reality.	1
R. Uncomfortable when parents argue students of color should be allowed to be more vocal, loud, boisterous and use in appropriate language e.g. rap songs.	1
Total	100

Representative sample of responses to Question 4.

1. Just about anytime I try to deal with a behavior problem with an African American male students who I don't know - I brace myself for a difficult confrontation. That's based on far too many experiences. I try be pleasant, non confrontational, but it doesn't seem to matter.
2. An experience I had which troubled me was when I asked students who were yelling in hallway while classes were in session to be quiet, I thought respectfully and I was called a racist and told to shut up. I was told to "tell the white girls," etc. I know that this is a kind of situation many white teachers feel they have experienced and It's not being talked about!
3. In the cafeteria, at lunch, I've had Black students fudge in line right in front of me. I don't say anything because I fear my objection will be seen as racist. What's racist is that, in ignoring the behavior, I'm holding the white kids to a different standard and doing the Blacks a disservice.
4. I'm threatened when kids hold back, when students I want to get to know "shut down" or become passive aggressive ... or something verging on that.
5. This happened: I had gently asked a group of students to keep their voices down. After the second request, I heard one of the students say "ugly white bitch" to my back. I brewed about it. Several days later I took the student aside and requested he not call me names. Haven't heard them since.
6. Students of color often are insubordinate with white teachers they do not know. I have been verbally abused and physically threatened by students who I don't like me just because I am a white, male, authority figure.
7. I'm on hall duty, checking passes and controlling access to H-courtyard. A student of a different race from me comes by, ignores my request for a pass, walks on ignoring my reasonable questions, and starts yelling loudly that I'm a racist for treating him or her the same as everyone else - story.
8. I once confronted 2 or 3 African American males when on duty in the cafeteria. I felt very uncomfortable when they then joined with a number of other African American students to present a "concerted front" of defiance. I may be completely wrong but I believe that there is a small but very vocal voice within our Black community that is very reactive when their sons or daughters are disciplined at the high school. As a result, I find that I am reluctant to confront Black students who engage in disruptive behavior.
9. I don't feel threatened by anyone. If you treat people with respect, they return it.
10. I dislike intensely hearing a student say something like, "You're just making me do that because I'm black," It has never happened to me but I've over heard it and heard about it when I've known that wasn't the case at all, and I've seen how

hard it is to change a students' perspective/interpretation. I'd hate for it to happen to me

11. Being charged with racism in a situation that is improvable and not having the support of the administration.
12. Most cases are made into a racial incident after the fact. I have been involved in a situation where the incident was handled by cooler heads, when some tried to make a racial incident out of it. This is what scares people.
13. Being wrongly accused by a student of racism, sexism (or any other ism). Specifically, situations arise where it becomes obvious that one student is at fault.. If the student is of another race than mine, I tend to address them in a more placating manner rather than take the risk of being misunderstood, unfair, or racist.
14. When a Black student, having messed up somehow, tries to weasel out by accusing me of being racist. I have the same expectations of him/her as anyone else.

QUESTION 5: Year after year aggregate data show that African American and Latino/Latina students' academic performance is considerably lower than other students. (two parts) Part A. Why do you think these data continue year after year? What do you believe are the root causes of this discrepancy?

A. Cycle of poverty, single parents, self fulfilling prophecy	30
B. Lack of support at home	24
C. Low self esteem, hopelessness, indifference, lack of motivation, poor attendance, don't believe education will make a difference	14
D. Institutional racism, prejudging students	13
E. Peer pressure - It's cool to fail	9
F. Too late at the high school level	9
G. Teachers have low expectations - don't reach out	6
H. Few role models	5
I. Don't know	4
J. Tracking - the perpetuation of white elitist leads to classes in isolation	4
K. Class size	3
L. Not doing enough to make school a place where all can engage. Not a nurturing environment	2
M. Standardized tests biased	1
N. Inconsistent treatment of students system wide	1
O. Attitude of some staff to stratify kids by social class	1
P. Different cultural perspectives	1
Q. Babies having babies	1
Total	129

Comments representing responses to Question 5 A

1. I believe tracking students supports inequality among students and suppresses those who could achieve if given a chance. Some teachers are not willing to offer opportunities to all students. Also, some teachers expect less of lower tracked students.
2. Families still traumatized by discrimination raising children in a defeatist atmosphere. Parents not reading to their children. Twisted conceptions of manhood. Fear from all of young Black men. American ideal is white and bright. Pop culture glorifies negative images. Elitist parents wasting our time and money on honors/regents debate.
3. Root causes may be linked more to socioeconomic level than race alone. Students who are under-prepared for school to begin with due to lack of parental involvement, environmental violence, parental level of education, etc. Would seem to affect children much more than the color of their skin. I teach several students of color, all of whom do B work or better, but each of whom seem to be from an upper-middle class background.
4. It is a socioeconomic not a race issue. I believe they do not have the family support system to help with homework, to be able to attend open houses, to advocate for their children. The minority students are no less talented or capable academically, but lack parent advocates who may not know how to help their children succeed in the school atmosphere. It does not seem to me that a quality education is a major priority in those homes.
5. The problem begins early on - not at this level. Students who experience difficulties in elementary grades due to (a) difficulties at home, (b) not having proper care (food, medical, etc.). Maybe students are not challenged in the right way and are tracked in some way. Here at the high school I feel we have many services available but I honestly don't know how successful/useful they are and how well utilized.
6. I don't consider myself a racist but in Ithaca especially a large % of the Black population is descended from one or two large extended families - I feel we're dealing with issues of genetic capabilities to some extent. There is a cross section of socioeconomic strata among African American in Ithaca. There's few positive role models for the Black kids in Ithaca.
7. Causes: lack of status and importance given by institutions at early age; culture of low performance internalized.
8. I feel that the issue is district wide. I have taught at other levels here and I have seen young children of color treated differently than their white peers. I have seen what feels to me to be compensatory type of behavior on the part of staff where the minority child is given extra "breaks" (usually behavioral, not academic) and is reinforced for differing expectations, leaving others resentful and the child

given the privilege "smug". Setting children up for these differences at a young age carries through to the high school level, and carries over into academics at all levels.

Part B: What is a change you strongly believe needs to occur at Ithaca High School or in the district in order to transform the racially stratified performance and create an environment where all students can and will succeed?

A. Stop turning our heads avoiding unpleasant confrontations, hold everyone to same standards, encourage real potential in language and tone, improve attendance	24
B. More racially diverse faculty	11
C. Start earlier- work on whole system, focus on performance promotion not age.	11
D. More parent/community support - value education	10
E. Eliminate tracking	7
F. Increase use of various teaching approaches, more relevant instruction	7
G. Curriculum revision, include career planning and bring students into decision making process, raise expectations.	6
H. Community building needed at IHS.	
I. More staff training	3
J. Smaller classes	3
K. Block scheduling	2
L. More positive role models	2
M. Strong media program K-12 -help students critique harmful messages.	2
N. Raise salaries to attract quality teachers	1
O. Build family to family links across race and class lines	1
P. All students assigned to study hall and not allowed out without honor pass	1
Q. Stop putting individual rights above group rights	1
R. Create economic opportunities for African American and Latino/Latina in Tompkins County	1

S. School uniform	1
T. De-stigmatize remediation, see and present as opportunity	1
U. More clubs, discussions, short theatrical pieces and assemblies	1
V. Need a boot camp alternative to teach discipline and self responsibility	1
W. Authentic assessment	1
X. Importance of learning foreign language	1
Y. New state standards will help	1
Z. Find a person who can bring minority parents together	1
AA. Continue special education resource room	1
BB. Leadership	1
Total	82

Comments representing responses to Question 5B

- 1 . Eliminate the atmosphere of intimidation. I feel the one major element we fail to provide for many of our students is fair, firm, and consistent loving discipline. By not having a "bottom line" we are setting low expectations for "at risk" students. We are under estimating their ability to meet attendance, behavior, academic standards. Stop playing the "numbers game" It's hurting the kids it's supposed to help.
2. Everyone needs to be held to a high standard. We have to stop looking the other way and avoiding unpleasant confrontation, because it reinforces this negative, unproductive, sometime disruptive and dangerous behavior.
3. Need to start very early in the educational process. Need to work to create an environment that is "race less" and "wall less" where kids are able to feel equally empowered with their classmates (educationally). Not sure how to implement this but it would have to be a progression of a teaching ideology that begins in the elementary schools.
4. Perhaps an across the board study skills program, started as early as 4th or 5th grade and continued through 9th or 10th would ensure that all students will have the tools to succeed.
5. Involve parents of these students more - bring them to school for seminars, teach them how to help with homework, organizational skills, attendance. Bring them to school to conduct their child to classes when the kids have been caught skipping. Teach them the work ethic so they can teach their kids. Have kids wear uniforms to eliminate the posturing & imaging. Consider an all Black elementary school for little kids with damn good teachers. Transformation must involve the oppressed. We are forever focusing on changing the oppressor but never the oppressed. If we don't change the parents and the impact and influence on their kids all the changes in the world in the school will not have an effect.

APPENDIX 3

SURVEY 2 Ithaca High School June 1998

Please respond to the following questions and turn them into to Ann Shaw by June 24.

1. What is the main obstacle you experience in building a multicultural perspective with students in your role as an educator at Ithaca High School?

2. Several responses to questions in Survey I indicate staff feel unsure at times about how to relate to Black male students who seem involved in problematic behavior. If you have experience in a situation with such students describe the circumstances; what did you see? what were you able to do? and what did you want to do but felt too unsure to act on it?

3. There were several responses to Survey 1 that pointed to external to school reasons for the low achievement and behavioral problems of some students. Are there two or three issues related to Ithaca High School as an institution and/or related to the current relations between teachers and students that might contribute to the problem of low achievement of Black and Latino/Latina students?

4. From your experience at IHS and your review of the data from Survey 1,

* what are the most critical problems (list no more than 3)?

* what do you think you as an individual can do about them?

* what can you do in conjunction with colleagues?

* what changes are necessary in the system of IHS/ICSD to make these institutions a more positive learning environment for all students?

APPENDIX 4

To: Faculty and staff Ithaca High School From: Professors James Turner and Don Barr
Date: June, 1998

We have had several meetings with the administrative team to discuss and analyze the data collected in January focusing on why Black and Latino/Latina students at Ithaca High School are disproportionately represented at the bottom of school achievement, school drop out, and behavioral problems. There was general agreement in these meetings to move forward with this work following a course that is thoughtful and inclusionary. Initially the plan was to have another general faculty meeting devoted to the issue, but that meeting has been postponed because of the need for clearer data and our recognition that all of you have several things on your plate at the end of the year. Therefore, we are asking you to respond to the four questions on the attached survey and return them to Ann Shaw by June 24th Please take time to give careful thought to these questions so we can analyze the data over the summer and be prepared to have a productive session with the faculty and staff at the beginning of next school year. Also enclosed in the packet is a copy of the coded data from Survey 1.

We want to thank you for your candid responses to Survey 1, and for your participation at the faculty meeting where the data were presented. Probing into these issues will not be easy or comfortable but always important. We are both committed to creating an environment where people feel safe to express their ideas and feelings. The refusal to be candid and honest is the only poor response. If at any time through this process you feel the learning environment is not conducive to open and constructive discussions, please let us know.

The questions in this survey attempt to clarify some ambiguities in Survey I and probe further into some patterns that emerged. For example a teacher during the discussion of the data from Survey 1 mentioned that question 4 was ambiguous because it wasn't possible to determine whether a person had actually experienced the situation. His comment is a good example of how important it is to give us direct feedback and a question in this survey attempts to get clearer and more helpful data on this issue.

We also would like to have four or five faculty members join us in analyzing the data over the summer and helping us propose what steps should be followed next. We should only need two or three sessions to accomplish this task. If you are interested in joining us, please call 255 7766 and 255 0531 or email to djb11@cornell.edu and jet8@cornell.edu

Again thank you for your initial commitment to this work. We are off to a positive beginning; and with everyone's open participation and commitment, we will create a teaching and learning environment at IHS where everyone has the opportunity to be successful. Have a wonderful summer!!!

APPENDIX 5

FACULTY AND STAFF PERSPECTIVES ON RACE AND EDUCATION
ITHACA HIGH SCHOOL
SURVEY TWO
JUNE 24, 1998

Professors James Turner and Don Barr

Question 1, What is the main obstacle you experience in building a multicultural perspective with students in your role as an educator at Ithaca High School?

Don't know/blank	5
None, I already teach a m/c perspective	3
Limited m/c content in math and science	2
Creating trust between students and myself	2
Class time too short/limited prep time	2
So much structure demands a WASP response	1
Demand of standards in curriculum	1
Don't know what a m/c perspective is	1
All students are not treated equally - students of color are given much more leeway and more advocates when a problem arises	1
Total	18

Question 2. Several responses to Questions in Survey I indicated staff feel unsure at times about how to relate to Black male students who seem involved in problematic behavior. If you have experience in a situation with such students describe the circumstances; what did you see? What were you able to do? and what did you want to do but felt unsure to act on it?

1. Blank	10
2. I disciplined a Black student and was accused of being a racist. This bothered me a lot because I thought I had a good relationship with the student.	1
3. I have seen a lot of angry young Black men sometimes I would like to grab them by the arm, but I'm afraid of getting fired or sued!	1
4. Not a problem for me personally - I know many students and their families outside of school - most of my students are either African American, low income, white, Latino/Latina, or rural.	1
5. I've seen quite a lot of budging and stealing in the cafeteria. I've expressed my frustration as a line waiter with the budging and reported theft to cashier, but they seem to accept it. Also obscene language in the hall. I want to object but don't want to be abused when I do it.	1
6. I saw a student who should have been in class swaggering around the halls wearing a head set and/or rapping out loud. I felt uncomfortable approaching this student.	1
7. I spoke with a young man who was outside my classroom talking to and distracting my students. I told him that class had started. he reacted angrily, swore, threatened me verbally and walked slowly away. I was able to stay in control and not engage in negative behavior toward the student. I wanted to confront him and hold him accountable for his behavior. I do not think that I would have felt different if the student had been of another race. I was simply shocked at the student's arrogance, rudeness, and complete disrespect for me and himself.	1
8. I saw a new female white teacher allow a Black male football player to come and go in class without any reprimands (He arrived late, left his backpack at his seat, and left the room often for most of the period.	1
Two Black males faced off in my class - for it seemed to be a fight to death. Everyone ran out of the way. A minute later they were	1

	death. Everyone ran out of the way. A minute later they were laughing with each other - some joke.	
9.	See - Black students acting up, not different from white male students. Do - Try to have them stop. Problem sometimes is accusations from students of picking on them because they are Black. This accusation stopped me from having some (same?) expectations for the Black and white in some circumstances.	1
Total		18

Question 3 There were several responses to Survey 1 that pointed to external to school reasons for the low achievement and behavioral problems of some students. Are there two or three issues related to Ithaca High School as an institution and/or related to the current relations between teachers and students that might contribute to the problem of low achievement of Black and Latino/Latina students?

1. I don't think so/blank	3
2. Issue not high school related. Patterns of learning and behavior pretty much set by the time students get to IHS.	4

Below are the responses from the other 11 people

3. None that I know of, except, more home visits to encourage parent involvement.

4. When students don't "behave" I see teachers getting stiffer, pulling away. We could all use some training in getting in close somehow -pulling away won't do it. Dominant sentence structure is incomprehensible/unfamiliar to Black kids. We need to learn each others' language first - not to pepper our statements with "he man" and that stuff, but to say things in structurally different ways. It's a multiple intelligence's thing - it can be learned and we all need training. A Superintendents conference day?

5. Blaming low achievement on outside influences is a convenient way to avoid looking at the deficits of our system such as:

- Tracking

- Scarcity of African American Latino/Latina teachers

- Lack of commitment to multicultural/multiethnic education

6. Less false praise and more pride from honest achievement

- Less over-facilitation and more individual responsibility

- Less peer pressure to hang and more individual desire to succeed

- More staff training for working with minority students.

7. The primary reasons that behavioral problems continue at IHS is that there are no serious consequences for students regardless of race or ethnicity. Low achievement by minorities is not driven by institutional causes. Minorities have access to our honors and AP classes. Each year teachers begin with high expectations for minority students and each year they are disappointed. Low achievement is explained by skill deficiencies and lack of motivation.

8. The Black and Hispanic students I have who are in Honors sections and who get A's and B's are students whose parents are fully involved in their children's education. Good grades are possible with support from home, regardless of race or ethnicity, The white students, as well as students of color, whose parents are not involved are the students who are "falling through the cracks," at IHS.

9. I think the crowded halls, short class periods and time between classes and open campus/free period policy all contribute to an unstructured, free-for-all mentality which doesn't promote student-teacher relations regardless of race.

10. Separate "unwritten " standards for different kids. Teachers burnt out on recurring discipline issues

11. I believe the lack of consistent approachable administration exacerbates the problems of low achievement and behavioral difficulties. Also there is an ever-widening gap (read: tracking) between high achieving and low achieving students. The students sense this and feel frustrated and apathetic. Finally, I don't believe that students feel accountable for their actions or responsible for improving the school climate. That being said, its obvious that several external forces also play a major role in the problems on low achievement/behavioral issues.

12. The mistrust of whites taught to children of some Black families by their parents, and the mistrust of those parents themselves contributes to low achievement.

13. Need to require all students to do assigned work or stay after to finish it. This lack of emphasis contributes to low achievement. Need to help all learn to be responsible about academic work and other requirements

Need to have in place team devoted to helping Black and Latino students who are not doing well - teacher can ask them for help - they can mentor, etc.

14. No the problem is external. Lack of motivation and self discipline - begin analysis in elementary schools.

15. There seems to remain a lot of distrust between students and teachers. Maybe some trust building activities would allow all to function better as teachers and students.

16. Attendance to class. Kids miss class and the follow-up is slow and too little too late. when kids miss class, they lose out on lessons. they return only to find that they do not follow what is going on. So they skip and so on goes the vicious cycle. Students who are most at risk are also those who need the most help, must need to be in class. We are far too complacent about skipping class. For not a lot of money, we could have a computer in each classroom, networked to the attendance office. within 5 minutes into class, the attendance office staff could have a list of students who are truant. Guidance counselors, social workers on staff and associate principles would be on the same network to identify students who are with them. Students identified as truant could be sought out immediately. We could address the problem in real time. Our ineffective response to class tardiness and truancy is a racial issue, it represents one of most egregiously institutionally racist policies. It's just too easy to ignore the problem of kids skipping class, it's just too easy to ignore these at risk kids.

There is far too much tracking at IHS. There is little rationale basis for having three tracks when two would suffice. the Regents/Honors distinction only separates kids. It does not function to increase learning for anyone.

Question 4, From your experience at IHS and your review of the data from Survey 1,

4A. What are the most critical problems (list no more than 3)?

1. Lack of parental support, parent involvement, teacher outreach. Lack of good communication between poor achievement/failing students and home.	4
2. Many students of color and students from low socioeconomic families enter high school with poor academic background and dreadful work habits.	4
3. Many students of color have low self esteem, non/erratic attendance, undone homework, and dising classes. When there is so much that is right with this school, why must these surveys always be directed at problems. but if you insist, it's simple. The problems is that we have an excellent student body, excellent teachers, and incompetent (3 out of 4 administrators). Lack of consistent, supportive, capable administrators and poor communication.	4
4. Blank	2
5. Tracking	2
6. We are engendering hostility rather than enthusiasm from many kids, they can't learn that way!	1
7. What one interprets multicultural to mean.	1
Total	18

4B. What do you think you as an individual can do about them?

1. Involve parents as much as possible, visit homes, gain respect for each other.	4
2. Treat all kids equally and fairly - treat with respect, and focus on teaching academics	3
3. Blank	3
4. Insist more strongly on them doing what is necessary to succeed and escalating with parents phone call, and working with GIAC. Don't accept failure.	3
5. Clarify multicultural education	1
6. Learn the language, give my all to each kid not to give up	1
7. Be an administrator	1
8. Address personal prejudice and stereotyping	1
9. The school has had too much administrative turn over. We have a department feudal system that does allow for much school wide reform. Us individuals are drowning. I see improvements this year. I hope and pray that the administrative team will stay together and keep the course.	1
Total	18

4C. What can you do in conjunction with your colleagues?

1. Blank	7
2. Discuss issues more openly without breaking into factions	2
3. Try to correct them or clarify m/c education	1
4. I'm doing it in the classroom and community	1
5. Share experiences observe each other, provide feedback	1
6. Try to provide a warm environment for students	1
7. Develop a team approach for helping students	1
8. encourage parent involvement.	1
9. Cooperate across disciplines with counselors, AP's, parents, and Assistant for Minority Affairs.	1
10. Try to put in place requirements for student to do work.	1
11. Continue making our curriculum more m/c, making our classes more dynamic, and encouraging many learning styles.	1
Total	18

4D. What changes are necessary in the system of IHS/ICSD to make these institutions a more positive learning environment for all students?

1. Define behavior codes, codes, disciplinary expectations, define consequences for all students, support teachers when dealing with behavioral/achievement issues with respect.	5
2. Blank	3

Below are the responses from the other 10 people.

3. Students of all races should be aggressively helped from pre-school onwards. The district should hire people who monitor and intervene (from earliest ages) for at risk kids. I believe that there is no reason why kids who "fail" in the early grades shouldn't be saved. I think that for a kids arriving in the high school at 3rd grade level is unlikely to succeed.	1
4. Think of one race, "the human race."	1
5. Schools meet with parents from each neighborhood rather than a meeting at school.	1
6. Narrative report cards	1
7. Split into two or three smaller schools or programs. There are too many kids lumped together here.	1
8. A place for kids to hang and talk	1
9. Everyone takes the racism course, not just those seeking tenure - has Supt. taken it?	1
10. Dump tracking	1
12. More public ways of acknowledging and rewarding achievement.	1
13. Across the board study skills sessions for 9th and 10 th graders; fewer free periods or ones with more structure (e.g. study halls) to ensure students' focus at school is academic.	1
14. Staff morale is low, staff does not function as a cohesive group (staff does not even know each other), therefore the motivation to work together on an issue as big as this is not there. we need a way of feeling that we are all in this together, seeking to improve the school environment for us all (students and staff.	1

15. Consistent open administration	1
16. Parents and teachers must present a united front, or at least, must respect each other (or appear to, in front of the children. Families that are comfortable in the school should be paired with families that are not ... Also frank racial discussions should be encouraged across ethnic lines at every level, including students (like the talk-in we had three or four years ago, where everyone said what they were thinking - in activities.	1
17. Need to have a competent, supportive, hard working administration who understands that one school works because one staff, department heads, and students are so good.	1
18. Need to have students understand how important academic success is and to experience it.	1
Total	22

