

Urban Prep Participates in Groundbreaking Study on Single-Sex Education funded by the Gates Foundation

Is All Male Alright?

An Intervention Study of Schools for Black and Latino Males

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As late as 1998, only 4 public schools in the United States offered single-sex educational opportunities. By April, 2006, this number rose to 223 U.S. public schools and 44 of these schools are completely single-sex. A significant policy change in ESEA 2002 reauthorization (also known as NCLB) paved the way for such single-sex classroom environments to be permissible. Simultaneously, schools and districts throughout the country are searching for understanding and interventions for addressing the persisting limited academic success of Black and Latino male students. The nature of these compounding academic outcomes raises substantive questions as to the schooling and social contexts Black and Latino males are experiencing, and more importantly how do we intervene? The prevalence of single-sex schools as an intervention to ameliorate the academic and social difficulties this population is experiencing begs for further examination.

This three year intervention study, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, poses two key research questions: 1) What are the school structures, processes and practices utilized by single-sex schools for Black and Latino males; and 2) Are single-sex schools more effective than comparable co-educational schools at serving the academic and social needs of low-income, Black and Latino male students? Through a mixed-method design, this study is conducting data collection in which two comparison points will be identified to answer the research questions: 1) the intervention theory and intervention implementation (e.g., instruction, curriculum, class size, teacher quality) of single-sex schools; and 2) student outcomes over time (e.g., achievement, attendance, academic engagement – behavioral and cognitive). Methods include questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, classroom and school observations, and document review. This data will be collected from Urban Prep Charter Academy for Young Men in Chicago and six other single-sex schools in NYC, Atlanta, and Houston along with 4-6 comparison schools over three years.